

THE UNIVERSITY OF HULL

**AN INVESTIGATION OF LEARNER CENTRED TECHNIQUES IN
DELIVERING THE TEACHING PROGRAMMES AT
THE COLLEGE OF EDUCATION IN SRI LANKA**

**Being a Thesis submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Education
In the University of Hull**

By

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Abstract

This study focused on the teaching approaches that help the development and consistent application of learner centred techniques in teacher education in Sri Lanka. More specifically, investigation was undertaken to find out *'Are teachers in ITE institutions using learner-centred techniques and if not, what are the best ways of implementing such 'changes'?* This study attempted to provide a treatment of the issues that pertained to the application and relationship between teaching method and learner interaction. The literature was reviewed on learner centredness and management of change. Importantly, Sri Lankan teacher education context was analysed in order to understand the suitable learner centred approach for their own settings. An in-depth review of literature revealed that an emergent research design case-study approach would help to explore the present practice in adopting learner centred techniques regarding the delivery of teaching programmes. Firstly, a quantitative approach (questionnaire) was deployed to gather the preliminary data. Then, the qualitative approach was deployed in this study and appropriate data were gathered through focus group discussions, interviews, observation and documentary sources.

The outcomes of the study suggested that the teachers understood and recognised learner centeredness in their own context. Almost all of them expected a certain degree of respect and control. The above values are borne out of their own Sri Lankan culture. The Sri Lanka teacher education system is nurtured by Buddhist philosophy. Moreover, the entire education system expects 'respect' and 'guru' status. Even though teachers understood the theory of learner centredness, they prefer to impart certain changes in implementing it in the Sri Lankan context. Therefore the study suggested that this college needed to change its teaching approaches in order to maintain effective learner centred practices. Final recommendations were made based on the empirical findings and literature implications.

Note:

Tamil and Sinhalese are my first and working languages. English is my second language, and I have not used it professionally except in this thesis. All the research was conducted in Tamil language. I apologise therefore, for any errors in English language.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The use of learner centred techniques within the teaching arena play an increasingly central role in ensuring educational provision that satisfies the adult learners in teacher education. Specifically, teaching delivery can be used to enhance the learning environment for both students and staff in teacher education. Education now appears to be shifting from a system where teachers determine what is perceived to be good quality to a system where student opinions are becoming far more important. The literature reveals an increasing concern about learner centred techniques as applied to teacher education and their implications for classroom based learning practices. This section provides a discussion on the aims, objectives, context and rationale, personal motivation and the theses outline.

1.2 Context and rationale

Globally, teachers in 21st century are conceived as professionals, able to keep abreast of basic disciplines, to assimilate a new pedagogy based on interdisciplinarity, to follow instructions on mass media, to be able to conduct a dialogue with their students, to prepare them to critically select and use public information, and to be acquainted with some basic principles of adult education, be better prepared to collaborate with parents and the community, and control their own continuing education process (UNESCO, 1990).

Further, adult education literature generally supports the idea that teaching adults should be approached in a different way from teaching children and adolescents. The last ten years have

certainly seen a revolution in the ways we talk about student learning and classroom instruction. Terms such as "student empowerment", "learning communities", "joint knowledge construction", "the learning paradigm", "cultural diversity", and "lifelong learning" dominate professional literature. All are based on notions of learner-centred education, variously represented as collaborative, cooperative, active, inquiry-based, and so on. These instructional approaches emphasize the student as the main agent of learning, who not only act on their initiative, but also, in conjunction with other students, make learning socially interactive rather than a one-way transfer of pre-packaged information (Hansen and Stephens, 2000). An essential factor for a learner-centred approach is placing the learning characteristics of all learners under the microscope with specific emphasis on low-performing learners. McCombs, *et al.*, (1997) explained that the focus in a learner-centred approach is on individual learners' heredity, experiences, perspectives, backgrounds, talents, interests, capacities, and needs.

In this perspective, the Sri Lankan teacher education system has ^a wide range of issues which needs to be addressed immediately. The Report on general education reforms (1999, p.3) indicates that *teachers are the most crucial and valuable resource within the system. They must be motivated, dedicated and fully committed to the cause of delivery of quality education. Their capabilities, availability, effectiveness and attitudes are key factors. Even if the physical infrastructure of a school is not of a uniformly high standard and the hierarchy of officials outside the school is deficient, efficient teaching delivery can fill in the deficiencies. But in Sri Lanka, the delivery of the teacher education programme is lagging behind.* The above report indicated the issue of teaching delivery in teacher education. In 2001, the Quality Assurance Unit conducted an overall survey (Report on Quality of Teacher Education, 2001, p.4) and informed that *Sri Lankan teacher education has several issues,*

which need immediate solutions. One of the main issues is the quality of delivery (teaching) of programmes in Colleges in Sri Lanka. Some Colleges are commendable and some are not... . New teaching approaches and methods should be introduced to impart the programme effectively. According to the above indications, it can be revealed that the teaching delivery of the teacher education programme is a potential researchable area for this study. Further this research study was borne out of a professional need to explore the teaching environment in order to enhance teaching practice. Mainly the researcher's previous access found that the quality of delivery has potential issues to address. And also the researcher's experience in the field of teacher education drives her towards the above enquiry.

Though the learner-centred approaches are introduced across the education system, in Sri Lanka still it has potential issues to overcome. Primarily, the teacher education programmes need to be delivered in a learner-focussed manner. Therefore, this study mainly focused attention on improving the learner-centred techniques in ITE. Further the implications will be used for managing change in ITE in Sri Lanka.

1.3 Main aim of the study

The main aim of the study is to investigate the use of learner centred techniques in the delivery of teaching programmes at the College of Education in Sri Lanka.

1.4 Research objectives

The objectives are:

- To offer a basis for the study in terms of a national and institutional context.
- To investigate the present practice in using learner-centred techniques.
- To identify the ways and means to implement the changes in ITE.

Essentially, the research is descriptive in nature and attempts to primarily understand student and teachers' opinions and views regarding learner centred techniques. Secondly, I attempted to understand staff and heads' opinions on teaching-delivery. There is also an evaluative aspect that seeks to assess the outcomes of these experiences in terms of the extent to which teaching delivery affects and informs changes within the college.

1.5 Main research question

From the above the main research question is:

Are teachers in ITE institutions using learner-centred techniques and if not, what are the best ways of implementing such changes?

1.6 Research sub-questions

The sub-questions that inform the main question above are:

1. What is present practice in ITE in Sri Lanka?
2. To what extent are learner-centred (LCTs) technologies recognised by teachers in ITE?
3. To what extent do teachers believe that they use learner-centred technologies in ITE?
4. To what extent do students believe that teachers use learner-centred technologies in ITE?
5. What are the reasons teachers give for not using LCTs in ITE?
6. What changes are needed for LCTs to be used regularly?

1.7 Significance of the research

This study is an initial attempt to research the usage of learner-centred teaching techniques in ITE in Sri Lanka and it will inform the College how to implement changes effectively in delivering the programme. This is an initial attempt in providing potential findings to the college.

1.8 Personal motivation

This research study was borne out of a professional need to explore the teaching environment in order to enhance teaching practice. Primarily, my previous access to the teacher education research arena found that the quality of delivery has potential issues to address. And also my experience in the field of teacher education drives me towards this enquiry. This research was clearly focused on the teaching environment and seeks to elicit students' and staff related views of the learner centred techniques in teacher education.

Further, the change management practices inspired me to link the study with changes in management practices. The literature suggests some strategies for effective change management. Knight and Trowler (2001) provide a useful description of the elements of managing change in higher educational institutions. Effective change management is not as simple as grafting innovation on to a traditional enterprise such as a university or College and experience has shown that this simply does not work (Drucker: 2001:19). In order for higher institutions to take on and respond to change, the intrinsic value of change itself has to be embraced by the department. Moreover change can occur only if the entire department is geared towards effecting such change. Drucker (2001) argues that the most effective way for leaders to manage change successfully is to transform higher educational institutions into

'change agents,' in other words, to transform institutions into enterprises that create change rather than simply respond to change in an ad hoc manner.

In this way, change management may be seen to be associated with the drive towards the trend of developing the use of more flexible approaches to the provision of education, and the application of change management in transforming the ways and methods in which individuals can satisfy their educational needs.

1.9 Methodology

The purpose of this study is to investigate the usage of learner-centred techniques within the classroom in teacher education in Sri Lanka. This study reviewed the philosophical traditions- positivism and phenomenology. The key idea of positivism is that the social world exists externally, and that its properties should be measured through objective methods (Thorpe, 2000). The positivist research orientation holds that science is or should be primarily concerned with the explanation and the prediction of observable events (Kincheloe, 1991). Since the aim of this study is to understand the present practice in using the learner-centred techniques through teachers' students' and Head's views and opinions and classroom observation, the positivist tradition does not seem to be appropriate for this study. One major criticism about positivism is that understanding human beings as individuals in their entirety and their proper context is neglected, resulting in a partial, distorted picture of social reality.

Under the umbrella of phenomenology, the hermeneutic/ interpretivism plays a vital role in forming a base for social research. In social research knowledge is concerned not with generalisation, prediction and control but with interpretation, meaning and illumination (Scott & Usher, 1996). The hermeneutic interpretive epistemology, in social and educational research focuses on social practices. It assumes that all human actions are meaningful and

hence has to be interpreted and understood within the context of social practices. Hermeneutic as research methodology is a way of systematically dealing with interpretation (Bolton, 1987). The in-depth understanding of philosophical traditions made the study realise that the hermeneutic interpretivist approach would be useful for this investigation. It allows the researcher to interpret the situation within her own research context and also it deals with interpretation systematically. Social practices are best understood in an interpretivist approach.

1.10 Research Strategy (Design)

It is believed that ^{a,} qualitative research approach is best suited to this study. According to Lincoln and Guba the purpose of a qualitative study is to 'accumulate sufficient knowledge to lead to understanding' (1985,p.227). They recommend the use of emergent research design, which means that data collection and data analysis are simultaneous and ongoing activities that allow for important understandings to be discovered along the way and then pursued in additional data collection efforts.

This qualitative approach to inquiry also involves a case-study approach, where people and settings are explored in depth and described in detail. An in-depth review of literature revealed that an emergent research design case-study approach would help to explore the present practice in adopting learner centred techniques regarding the delivery of teaching programmes. After reviewing all possible strategies the case-study strategy is selected for this study. The experiment strategy was rejected in this study from the philosophical stage. A survey method was also inappropriate for this study in terms of in-depth analysis. Action research needs considerable intervention or total intervention during the investigation. Due to the constraints of resources and time it was impossible to consider action research for this

study. case-study method was finally chosen for this study in order to investigate present practice in using learner-centred techniques regarding the delivery of teaching programme in ITE.

1.11 Dissertation outline

Chapter 2 Literature review	This chapter discusses the meaning and application of learner centred approach to teacher education. In particular the chapter outlines the influences of philosophical and physiological basis of learner centredness and also it discusses the management of change in teacher education. Finally, it presents the overview of the Sri Lankan teacher education system and its development.
Chapter 3 Methodology	This chapter discusses the research methodology used in this research study. In particular the chapter discusses the types of methodologies used, the sampling design, research instruments, data analysis and ethical considerations.
Chapter 4 Data analysis and findings	This chapter discusses the information gathered through the focus group discussions, observation, questionnaire and interviews. The data was analysed quantitatively and qualitatively.
Chapter 5 Conclusions and recommendations	This chapter closes the research loop by discussing the research outcomes in relation to the research questions set in chapter 1.
Appendices	All the relevant appendices mentioned in this study were presented in this Section.

1.12 Conclusion

This chapter presented the rationale for the study and discussed the main research aim and study objectives. The context and rationale highlight the importance of the study. The main aim of the study is to investigate learner centred techniques regarding the delivery of the teaching programme at the College of Education. The outcome of the study could inform the

College on how to manage change in delivering the teaching programme more effectively. Further, the chapter discusses personal motivation and thesis outline of the study. Basically, the study introduction was formed in this chapter. In order to give the basis for the context, the following chapter will discuss the learner centred techniques, management of change and initial teacher education system of Sri Lanka.

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LITERATURE REVIEW

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CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Learner-centered approach

2.1.1 Introduction

The study mainly focuses on the usage of *learner-centred techniques* in ITE due to the issues faced by Sri Lankan teacher education system. Therefore it is vital to review literature on the above topic. Better understandings of learner-centred system will form a basis for this study and also it will strengthen the researcher's knowledge to develop potential questions for the data collection. Therefore section one of this chapter discusses learner-centred approach to teaching and also it discussed the management of change. Teaching and learning are social processes carried out in socio-political contexts (Bush & Bell, 2002). To bring about effective changes in this context, college leaders and teachers need to look at colleges from the perspectives of their learners. This study believes that reviewing the literature on management of change is vital to inform college^s, how to manage change more effectively in order to improve the learner-centred approach. Section two of this chapter discusses the management of change before moving to the national and college context. The national and college context form the basis for the study and explains the rationale behind the study. The national context was analysed historically and implications were linked with the college context and with the empirical evidence in the later part of the research.

2.1.2 Concept Introduction

The last ten years have certainly seen a revolution in the ways we talk about student learning and classroom instruction. Terms such as "student empowerment", "learning communities", "joint knowledge construction", "the learning paradigm", "cultural diversity", and "lifelong learning" dominate professional literature. All are based on notions of learner-centred education, variously represented as collaborative, cooperative, active, inquiry-based, and so on. These instructional approaches emphasize the student as the main agent of learning, who not only takes more initiative, but also, in conjunction with other students, makes learning socially interactive rather than a one-way transfer of pre-packaged information (Hansen and Stephens, 2000). An essential factor for a learner-centred approach is placing the learning characteristics of all learners under the microscope with specific emphasis on low-performing learners. McCombs, *et al.*, (1997) explained that the focus in a learner-centred approach is on individual learners' heredity, experiences, perspectives, backgrounds, talents, interests, capacities, and needs. She defined learner-centred, from a research-based perspective, as a foundation for clarifying what is needed to create positive learning contexts to increase the likelihood that more students will experience success.

Milambiling (2001) extended the learner-centred definition by characterizing learner-centred education as context-sensitive. She said that the culture of the learning context is as important to learning as the content and the methods used. Milambiling recommended curricula which address the culture of the learner within specific learning contexts. This strategy appears to have developed out of the backdrop of the traditional approach and seemed to result from the consequence of changing social pressures. Society itself is also

exacting pressures to make educational institutions more accountable. She pointed out that therefore the system gradually moved from the traditional to the learner-centred approach. The following Figure 2.2.1 indicates the movement from traditional to the contemporary or a modern approach.

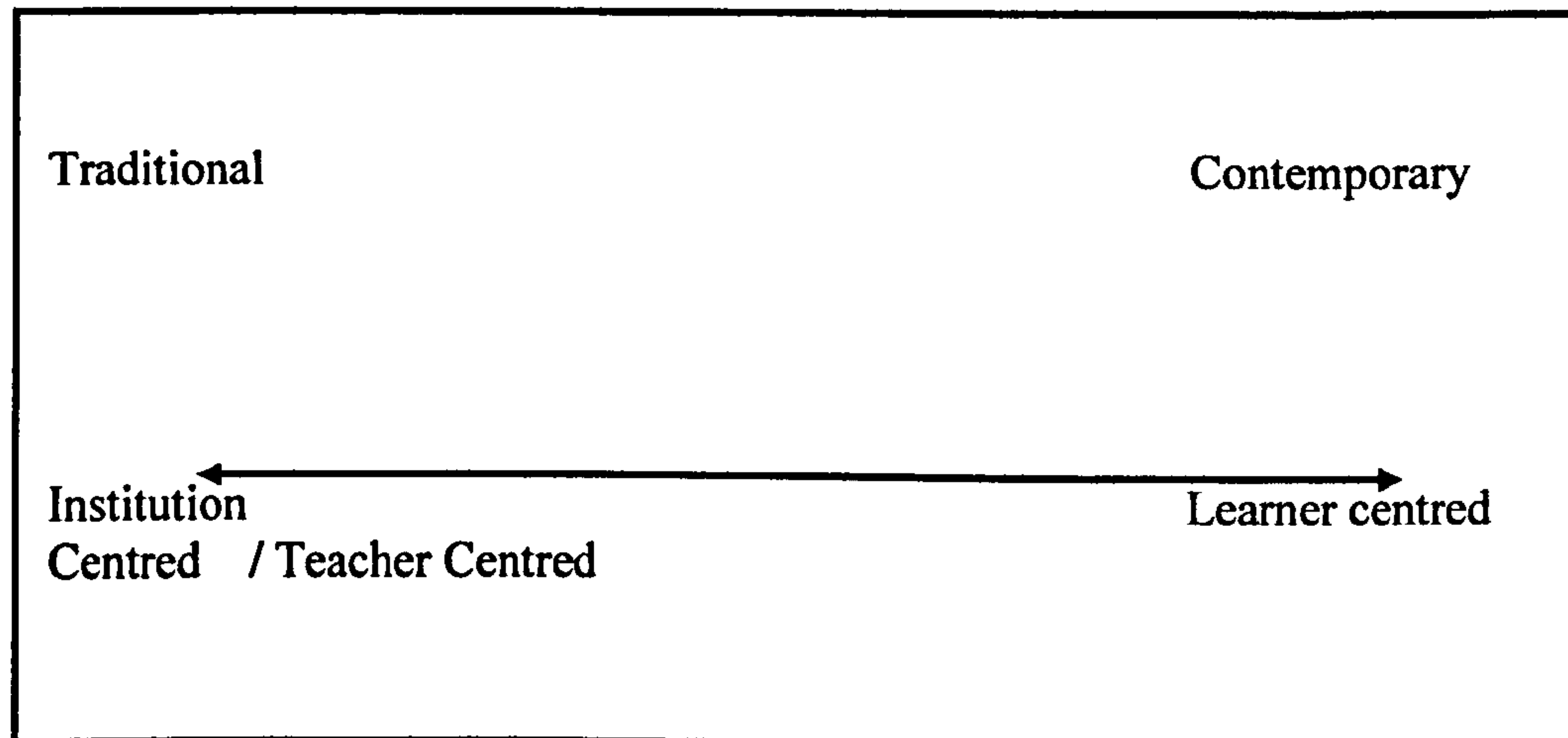


Figure 2.1.1-Institution-Learner Approaches

Figure 2.1.1 shows there are several teaching and learning approaches to education. It highlights the trend that moves from traditional approaches to contemporary approaches. A tension seems to be orchestrated between the institutional/teacher centred and learner centred approach, where the former approaches appear to be implemented through a lecturer centred process and the later approach (learner-centred) pays greater attention to the learner.

The following Table 2.1.2 shows the implications of three approaches briefly.

Dimensions	Teacher/Institution Centred Approach	Learner Centred Approach
Who is learning?	Learner	Learner
Who determines and manages; Goals, Strategies, Learning?	Curriculum designer Teacher or institution	Learner
When are design decisions made?	Generally in advance of instruction	Macro decisions in advance and micro decisions during the instructions
Who/What establishes the reason for learning?	An assessment of learner needs taking into account institutional goals	Learner

Table: 2.1.2 Implications of Approaches

The above table clearly differentiates the teaching-learning approaches to education. The learner appears to be rejected by the system in a traditional approach but the learner is the major deciding factor in a learner-centered approach.

A major paradigm shift in teaching, advocated during the last few decades, is that teaching should be learner-centered, not teacher-centered. In a learner-centered mode, the focus is shifted to the constructive role of the learner, which differentiates it from a teacher-centered

model in which knowledge is transmitted from teacher to learner. But learner-centeredness is an ambiguous concept. Does it refer to content that the student wants to learn and to learner control of instruction and assessment strategies? Or does it refer to something more holistic which engages the learners' whole academic and personal development? Such ambiguity has prompted some educators to analyze its definition and offer detailed suggestions about the conditions required for its effective application.

Learner-centered education is defined by McCombs and Whistler (1997, p.9) as:

The perspective that couples a focus on individual learners (their heredity, experiences, perspectives, backgrounds, talents, interests, capacities and needs) with a focus on learning (the best available knowledge about learning and how it occurs and about teaching practices that are most effective in promoting the highest levels of motivation, learning, and achievement for all learners). This dual focus, then, informs and drives educational decision-making.

From this perspective, learner-centered education involves the learner and learning in the programs, policies, and teaching that support effective learning for all students. Administrators are responsible for developing, maintaining and enhancing a school environment that enhances effective learning. They are also responsible for ensuring that teachers are knowledgeable about their students and about how learning occurs best. Teachers are responsible for having classrooms that promote effective learning for all and for being familiar with the instructional techniques that promote effective learning for all.

Similarly and further it was argued by Brandes and Ginnis (1986, cited in Burge and Howard 1988: 2–3) that there are seven major principles for a student-centered learning approach:

. . . the learner has full responsibility for her own learning . . . the subject matter has relevance and meaning for the learner . . . involvement and participation are necessary for learning . . . the relationship between learners should show helping styles and learner self-responsibility . . . teacher is a facilitator and resource person . . . learner sees himself differently as a result of the learning experience . . . the learner experience confluence . . . affective and cognitive domains flow together.

Similarly, Maclean (1987, cited in Burge and Howard 1988: 4) outlines five concepts for person-centered learning:

the emergent design of the course process, interdependence or a supportive climate, a reflective, creative and open-ended knowledge system, and reflection and critical self-assessment. . . . it emphasizes helping students to learn and thus begins with a concern for what the learner experiences rather than the factors that contribute to good instruction. Of primary importance is the encouragement of learner autonomy and person responsibility. Emphasis is placed on personal meaning and the value of knowledge generated through experience.

Burge (1988, 1989) also suggests some generic principles for learner-centered practice, grouped under a set of ‘Rs’—Responsibility, Relevance, Relationship and Rewards. Burge

and Howard (1988: 5) further elaborate these principles and outline several components involved in implementing a learner-centered view, which include:

. . . the learner's ability, resource and opportunities for access to learning; the choices in course content and course process; the relationships between theory and immediate, practical problems to be solved, and between one's own experience and knowledge and that of others; the diversity in how individual preferences in learning styles and needs are shown, and in the levels of adult development reached, in terms of cognitive, psychological, physical and moral development; and the support mechanisms needed and available for success in a course.

These components guided the development of a survey questionnaire in Burge and Howard's study (1988), which aimed to explore the attitudes and practices of some selected Canadian distance educators regarding a learner-centred view of education. This study highlighted a key issue in defining a learner-centred orientation to education—the individual diversity of students must be taken into account. In short, in a learner-centred perspective, the learner's experience/needs and the learning process are valued; and balanced emphasis is placed on the cognitive and affective domains in the learning process. These points have been further developed and demonstrated in the learner-centred psychological principles outlined by the APA (American Psychological Association 1997) and the premises of a learner-centred model as proposed by McCombs and Whistler (1997). While considering a learner-centred approach, it is important to pay consideration to philosophical aspects in learning and teaching.

2.1.3. Philosophical knowledge on learner-centered approach

The history of learner-centered education has one foot in philosophy and the other in psychology. Firstly then this study reviews some of the important contributions of educational philosophy to the development of learner-centered education. Signs of learner-centered education began appearing with the dawning of education, and formal education can be traced back to the Sumerians and the development of written language. The early teachers emphasized individual character and citizenship. Perhaps the earliest individual teachers to have a profound, direct effect on learner-centered education were the Chinese philosopher Confucius (551 B.C.-479 B-C) and the Greek philosopher Socrates (469-399 B-C.). Confucius stressed character and good citizenship, and Socrates stressed the individual. *Confucius believed that every person should strive for the continual development of self until excellence is achieved* (Ozmon and Craver, 1999, p.105).

Englishman Francis Bacon (1561-1626) introduced the scientific method as a way of thinking and learning, which was opposite to the way Aristotle had taught people to think. Bacon took exception with the Aristotelian method, which had dominated for almost two millennia and remained the popular method of the day. In contrast to Bacon, Aristotle began his thinking by making assumptions, and assumptions introduce thinking errors. Realizing that this convergent method was flawed, Bacon warned that if we begin our thinking with certainties, we end with questions, but if we begin with questions we end with certainties. He insisted that we rid ourselves of four idols, which cloud our thinking. Bacon said our thinking is limited by our lack of experience, by what others believe, by unclear language, and by influence of religion and philosophies. To escape these errors, Bacon insisted that we use problem solving, which begins not with uncontested

assumptions but with divergent or inductive thinking, considering all possibilities (Henson and Eller, 1999).

The Swiss-born philosopher Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) was one of history's greatest contradictions. With the birth of his own children, he gave away each child; yet, perhaps no one else has ever done so much to help children. In his adopted country, France, as perhaps was true universally at the time, children were seen as small adults. Even worse, they were treated so. Rousseau understood that such treatment was unnatural and damaging to children. In his book *Emile* Rousseau recommended a type of education that at the time was unknown, an education that was natural, child-centered, and experience-based. His intent was to protect the children from a corrupting society and permit them to develop naturally. Emile (a child) was given the freedom to explore and interact with nature. When Emile behaved inappropriately, his punishment was administered by nature, not by his tutor.

Similarly, in Switzerland, Johann Pestalozzi (1746-1827) opened a school with a learner-centered curriculum. Pestalozzi believed that the whole child should be educated (physically, mentally and emotionally), and that children should be nourished like plants while they learned by doing. Pestalozzi believed that teachers must respect children and base their discipline on love. He said that the school should be like a good home and the teacher should be like a good parent (Henson and Eller, 1999).

Further, John Dewey (1859-1952) used his life to exert more influence on education and philosophy than any other American, before. Dewey's works were made powerful

because he recognized that each child has both a personal psychological dimension and a social dimension and to be effective, education must begin with understanding how the child's capacities, interests, and habits can be directed to help the child succeed in the community. In opposition to Rousseau, who wanted to protect children from society, Dewey (Dewey, 1916) argued that the only way a child would develop to its potential was in a social setting. He believed that the school should be a microcosm of its community and that education is living, not just a preparation for life. Dewey's (1938) view of learner-centered education embraced the idea that education should be both problem-based and fun, *'Unless a given experience leads out into a field of previously unfamiliar no problems arise, while problems are the stimulus to thinking'*. Dewey believed that the experiences of each learner must come from within each individual learner. Dewey was saying that each experience should leave each student motivated and that the solving of each problem must lead to new, related questions about the topic (Dewey. 1938, p.48).

Another idea that enabled Dewey to advance the theory of learner-centered education was his recognition of what he called *Collateral learning*, an idea that has since been labeled *confluent learning*. Confluent or collateral learning recognizes that the richest learning involves our emotions, and Dewey (1938,p. 48) considered this type of learner-centered education the richest of all.

Collateral learning in the way of information of enduring attitudes, of likes and dislikes, may be and often is much more important than the spelling lessons or lesson in geography or history that is learned. For these attitudes are fundamentally what count in the future. The most important attitude that can be formed is the desire to go on learning

While all the philosophers focused on the learner, and some addressed conditions needed for learning to occur, these scholars were philosophers, and the role of philosophy is neither to prescribe nor direct behavior but to effect thinking. Any serious discussion of learner-centered education must include an examination of the psychologists' views on learning and teaching. One might assume that to be considered a serious and legitimate theory of education, learner-centered education should have a psychological knowledge base to support it. Following is a brief review of some of the psychological theory and understandings that support learner-centered education.

2.1.3. Psychological knowledge on learner-centered approach

During the 20th century, several psychological developments influenced the development of learner-centered education. Paramount among these were the developments of perceptual psychology, constructivism, and dispositions. The following paragraphs critically discuss each.

The role of Perception in Learner-centered Approach

In the mid-twentieth century, a considerable amount of research and thought was given by psychologists to the effect that perception has on behavior^u and ultimately to the power that perception has to shape the kinds of people learners will become. In 1962, Arthur Combs (1962) edited the yearbook of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, titled *Perceiving, Behaving, Becoming*, which argued that if students perceive themselves as good students and worthy individuals, they will work hard to protect these images; however, if they perceive themselves as poor students and people of

little value, they will behave accordingly. Teachers have tremendous power to shape their students' behaviors and futures by the way they treat them.

Combs and his colleagues (1962) explored the process by which young people grow up to be psychologically healthy and become the type of adults that they call adequate people. These perceptual psychologists say that a term that all teachers should know well is *efficacy* because highly successful teachers have a strong sense of efficacy towards their students and towards themselves; they believe that their students are capable of succeeding at a high level and that they are capable of ensuring that they do. Learner-centered teachers can nurture the development of positive self-concepts by: assigning problems that challenge students but are within their abilities; encouraging them to succeed, and; recognizing their success (Combs, 1962,p.99). Carl Rogers (1962, p.99) explains that '*self and personality emerge from experience*'. According to perceptual psychologists, learner-centered education is essential for healthy development. Earl Kelly (1962, p.118) says,

the growing self must feel that it is involved, that it is really part of what is going on, that in some degree it is helping shape its own destiny, together with the destiny of all.

These comments echo the very nature of learner-centered education, explaining the need to put the student in the center of learning and in an active role, and, furthermore, as Kelly indicated; when students are engaged in activities that nurture their development, they can even help shape the destiny of their classmates.

2.1.4 Constructivist approach to learner-centered education

Constructivism is a learner-centered educational theory that contends that to learn anything, each learner must construct his or her own understanding by tying new information to prior experiences. Constructivism has two sub-groups, one which focuses on the interaction among students, the other focusing on each student's perceptions.

During the early part of the twentieth century, the Russian psychologist and sociologist Lev Vygotsky studied children's interactions. He saw that when students worked in small groups to solve problems, by discussing problems, the learners were able to talk each other through to the solutions, which is to say that by helping other group members, they collectively solved problems more efficiently than they could solve them when working alone. He called this social learning approach 'negotiating meaning' (Henson et al., 1999). In supporting the above Panitz (1999) has clarified that collaborative learning is a **personal philosophy**, not just a classroom technique. It suggests a way of dealing with people, which respects and highlights individual group members' abilities and contributions. There is a sharing of authority and acceptance of responsibility among group members for the group actions.

The constructivist system is in sharp contrast to traditional education in that it is not teacher-centered ; but is learner-centered; not passive but active and problem-centered; and is based, not on competition but on cooperation. Because constructivists believe that individuals must construct their own knowledge, they believe that **all** knowledge is temporary (each concept is considered true until further experiences enable the learner to

refine it). Because learners in constructivist classrooms use a problem-centered approach, content is studied not as isolated facts but as broad concepts and interdisciplinary themes (Henson et al., 1999). The above argument is most similar to the Dewey's views.

Another leading psychologist who contributed significantly to constructivism was the Swiss educator Jean Piaget. Piaget focused his attention on the learner as an individual. As Piaget suggests, a child constantly gathers new experiences into his existing knowledge base. As his interactions with people and his environment widen, he changes and reorganizes his knowledge (Piaget, 1976; Piaget & Inhelder, 1967). You cannot "give" knowledge to a child; he must build it and this construction is unique and personal. In multiage classrooms this knowledge construction takes place continually; direct experiences with real world concepts and objects, and interactions with age-varied peers, all of which allow children to construct their own knowledge.

2.1.5 Dispositions and learner-centered approach

The review of literature supporting learner-centred education suggests several important dispositions including:

- Education should be experience-based;
- Each individual learner's own unique qualities and dispositions should be considered when planning experiences;
- The learner's perceptions should shape the curriculum;
- Learner's curiosity should be fed and nurtured;
- Learning is best when it involves the emotions, and

- The learning environment should be free from fear

Education should be experience-based: John Locke believed that the only way an individual can learn is through experience. Lev Vygotsky believed that all learning involves tying new information to prior experiences. Bacon, Montessori, Rousseau, Frobel and Piaget believed that the best experience occurs when learners are manipulating objects and solving problems. John Dewey is known for his expression, '*Learning by doing*', an expression used a centuries earlier by John Locke (McCombs and Whistler, 1997; Henson et al., 1999).

Each individual learner's own unique qualities and dispositions should be considered when planning experiences: Locke believing that the planning of educational experiences should begin by focusing on the learner, '*a good disposition should be talked into them before they be set upon anything*' (Garforth, 1964, p. 167). Locke recommended that teachers observe their students to learn their dispositions. By doing so, the curriculum can be personalised to meet each student's needs.

The learner's perceptions should shape the curriculum: this is similar to the previous; Locke expressed the important role that perception plays in learning. He says, that '*knowledge is seeing...till we ourselves see it with our own eyes and perceive it by our own understandings, we are so much in the dark and as void of knowledge as before*' ... '*learner-centred teachers must learn to view the curriculum through the learners' perceptions*' (Garforth, 1964, p. 12).

Learner's curiosity should be fed and nurtured: Locke understood that curiosity is the engine that drives learning. He advised that teachers always answer students' questions and when doing so, listen not to the learners' words but to the learners' thoughts. Dewey (1938, p.47) clearly used learner activities to nurture learner curiosity. *'In a certain sense every experience should do something to prepare a person for later experiences of a deeper and more expensive quality...the most important attitude that can be formed is that of desire to go on learning'*.

Learning is best when it involves the emotions: As mentioned earlier, Dewey (1938,p.48) wrote about 'collateral learning', that involves the emotions. He says that *'perhaps the greatest of all pedagogical fallacies is the notion that a person learns only the particular thing he is studying at the time. Collateral learning in the way of formation of enduring attitudes, of likes and dislikes, may be and often is much more important than the spelling lesson or lesson in geography or history that is learned'*.

Abraham Maslow (1973, p.159) gave an equally strong testimonial for emotionally tied learning, which he called intrinsic learning, *'as I go back in my own life, I find my greatest education experience, the ones I value most in retrospect, were highly personal, highly subjective, very poignant combinations of the emotional and the cognitive. Some insight was accompanied by all sorts of autonomic nervous system fireworks that felt very good at the time and which left as a residue the insight that has remained with me forever'*.

The learning environment should be free from fear: Locke Cautioned teachers that *'affection, not fear, is the incentive that spurs children to their duty'* (Garforth, 1964, p.13).

Rousseau felt a need to protect children from society, which he believed was not child-friendly (Hansen et al., 1999). Pestolozzi thought teachers should be as good parents and schools as good homes. His commitment to removing fear from schools greatly influenced Frobel, Herbert, and Montessori (Ozmon and Craver, 1999).

The above review of literature shows that the history of learner-centred education has one foot in philosophy and the other in psychology, and also that the learner-centred education has been developing for over five thousand years, and it continues to take on different shapes. The nature of all theory is to guide thinking; therefore, learner-centred education should guide teachers' thoughts, which will inevitably shape their behaviour. Because the nature of all knowledge is fluid and temporary, responsible use of this model requires educators to commit to a life-long pursuit of improving their understanding of learner-centred education.

While considering the learner-centered approach, it is important to pay consideration to the concept of learner autonomy. Without a certain degree of learner autonomy it is impossible to achieve learner-centered education. Therefore the following section discusses learner autonomy with a view to imparting the learner-centered education.

2.1.6. Learner autonomy

Learner autonomy is "a capacity for detachment, critical reflection, decision making, and independent action" (Little 1991:4). Even in this simple definition it is clear that "autonomy" is not any one specific thing - it is a capacity, and like any other capacity, it will grow with practice, or be lost through inactivity. McGarry (1995: 1) notes that "*The*

majority of students are still being taught in ways which promote dependence and leave them ill-equipped to apply their school-learned knowledge and skills to the world beyond the classroom", and from this we may recognise that the role of the teacher in promoting autonomy may be central to its success. It is not true, however, to say that the non-autonomous classroom is devoid of any relationship with the outside world; on the contrary, it is a place where skills and capacities may be developed and tried out, before, and during, contact with the world beyond. McGarry concisely sums up, then, the essential arguments for autonomy:

"Students who are encouraged to take responsibility for their own work, by being given some control over what, how and when they learn, are more likely to be able to set realistic goals, plan programmes of work, develop strategies for coping with new and unforeseen situations, evaluate and assess their own work and, generally, to learn how to learn from their own successes and failures in ways which will help them to be more efficient learners in the future" (Ibid.).

Holec (1981: 3, cited in Benson & Voller, 1997: 1) describes it as 'the ability to take charge of one's learning'. On a general note, the term autonomy has come to be used in at least five ways (see Benson & Voller, 1997: 2):

- for *situations* in which learners study entirely on their own;
- for a set of *skills* which can be learned and applied in self-directed learning;
- for an inborn *capacity* which is suppressed by institutional education;
- for the exercise of *learners' responsibility* for their own learning;
- for the *right* of learners to determine the direction of their own learning.

It is noteworthy that autonomy can be thought of in terms of a *departure* from education as a social process, as well as in terms of redistribution of power attending the construction of knowledge and the roles of the participants in the learning process. The relevant literature is riddled with innumerable definitions of autonomy and other synonyms for it, such as 'independence' (Sheerin, 1991), 'language awareness' (Lier, 1996; James & Garrett, 1991), 'self-direction' (Candy, 1991), 'andragogy' (Knowles, 1980; 1983a) etc., which testifies to the importance attached to it by scholars.

In the same vein, Leni Dam (1990, cited in Gathercole, 1990: 16), drawing upon Holec (1983), defines autonomy in terms of the learner's willingness and capacity to control or oversee her own learning. More specifically, she, like Holec, holds that someone qualifies as an autonomous learner when he independently chooses aims and purposes and sets goals; chooses materials, methods and tasks; exercises choice and purpose in organising and carrying out the chosen tasks; and chooses criteria for evaluation. To all intents and purposes, the autonomous learner takes a (pro-) active role in the learning process, generating ideas and availing himself of learning opportunities, rather than simply reacting to various stimuli of the teacher (Boud, 1988; Kohonen, 1992; Knowles, 1975). As we shall see, this line of reasoning operates within, and is congruent with, the theory of constructivism. For Rathbone (1971: 100, 104, cited in Candy, 1991: 271), the autonomous learner is a self-activated maker of meaning, an active agent in his own learning process. He is not one to whom things merely happen; he is the one who, by his own volition, causes things to happen. Learning is seen as the result of his own self-initiated interaction with the world. Within such a conception, learning is not simply a matter of rote memorisation; 'it is a constructive process that involves actively seeking meaning from (or

even imposing meaning on) events' (Candy, 1991: 271). Such "inventories" of characteristics evinced by the putative autonomous learner abound, and some would say that they amount to nothing more than a romantic ideal which does not square with reality. This is understandable for most of the characteristics imputed to the "autonomous learner" encapsulate a wide range of attributes not commonly associated with learners. For instance, Benn (1976, cited in Candy, 1991: 102) likens the autonomous learner to one '[w]hose life has a consistency that derives from a coherent set of beliefs, values, and principles...[and who engages in a] still-continuing process of criticism and re-evaluation', while Rousseau ([1762] 1911, cited in Candy, 1991: 102) regards the autonomous learner as someone who 'is obedient to a law that he prescribes to himself'.

According to the above, learner autonomy has an important role to play within learner-centred approach to the education. The concept of learner autonomy has its roots in Western thinking and it is now being taken by the rest of the World. For example, Gibbs (1979) sees autonomy as '*a combination of independence from others*' direction and a capacity for understanding and controlling one's own conduct. As he points out, intellectual autonomy is familiar to many readers of Western educational writing, as it is "*part of an individualistic, anti-authoritarian ideology which is very deep-rooted in Western capitalist democracies*" (p121). Brookfield (1993) also comments on an American tradition (exemplified by Dewey and Thoreau) of freethinking, and questioning 'received knowledge'.

The above has argued, the learner autonomy is a vital feature in learner-centered approach to education, and is important to discuss the theme in the Sri Lankan context.

2.1.7. Learner autonomy in the Sri Lankan context

Sri Lankan education is deeply rooted in the Buddhist belief that '*there is not true education except within the bond between the teacher and the learner, whether in school or at home*' (MOE, 1982, p.97). Educators subscribing to this Buddhist-based belief create severe conflict and contradictions with the modernisation aims of the state. In fact, one of the guidelines to reform warns against infatuation with the educational advances made in the West. The Ministry of Education report (1982. p.98) recommends that,

While there is much that we have learned and can learn from the developed West, let us at the same time look towards our own culture and, before it is too late, identify, appraise and adapt it in enunciating our philosophy of education, in shaping our schools and in formulating programs of education for our teachers.

If learner autonomy is a Western concept and best suited to the Western World, it does contrast with the Sri Lankan context. Sri Lanka is a strong Buddhist country. The Sri Lanka education is especially moulded with the Buddhist philosophy. According to the Buddhist philosophy, 'teachers' are the main players in education. Mostly, the community gives teachers a 'Guru' status.

The word guru means teacher in Sanskrit and other Sanskrit-derived languages . It originated in a Hindu context and holds a special place in Hinduism signifying the sacred place of knowledge (vidya) and the imparter of knowledge. The word comes from the root "gru" literally meaning heavy, weighty. Another epistemology claimed in Hindu scriptures is that of dispeller of darkness (wherein darkness is

seen as avidya lack of knowledge both spiritual and intellectual): 'gu' meant darkness and 'ru' meant remover (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main_Page accessed on 08/08/04). Also in Sri Lanka it is used in the same way (Dharmadasa, 1999). Furthermore the Policy Paper on teacher education of Sri Lanka (2001, p.4) emphasises that

While taking due note of the global trends... outlined above, one should not forget the role played by the teacher or the 'guru' who was held in high esteem in our traditional society which extended far beyond the 'teaching task' in the formal school.

Buddhism, according to western scholars, is a way of life developed in India by the Buddha in the 6th century BC. In Thai, "Buddhasasana" is the term used to refer to the Buddha's teaching. The key tenets identified by Buddhism are the four noble truths and the causality of phenomena. Buddhists believe correct human behavior is necessarily based on correct action, speech and thought, and good Buddhists devote their lives to seeking truth and knowledge. The Buddha always said that in the past, at present or in the future, he addressed suffering and non-suffering. This emphasis by the Buddha indicates that the concept of suffering and non-suffering is the natural and universal key for understanding all human beings.

As Sri Lanka is a Buddhist country, Buddhism has influenced the entire education system significantly. Buddhism teaches us the importance of humility, the most important universal virtue. Many people think that the ultimate goal in Buddhism as well as human

life is to become good. But according to, Buddhism, it is to become humble. Being good is not good enough; we ~~must become~~ humble persons. We must know our evilness, the existence of our ~~ineradicable~~ egoism. We must know our ignorance, the limitations of our intellects. We ~~must become humble~~ persons who can say, "I'm evil and ignorant".

Buddhism talks about the great respect to the teachers. It depicts in great detail the varied ways in which lay people of the Buddha's time showed respect to the Buddha and the monastic Sangha, (teachers in the ancient society) and the more standardized ways in which the members of the Sangha showed respect to the Buddha and to one another. Especially interesting is the protocol of respect surrounding the teaching of the Dhamma. Buddhist monks and nuns are forbidden from teaching the Dhamma to anyone who shows disrespect, and the Buddha himself is said to have refused to teach his first sermon to the five brethren until they stopped treating him as a mere equal (Chin Kung, 1989). The above philosophy is strongly embedded in the teachers' society in Sri Lanka. Teachers expect the respect of a sort of 'guru'. This is mostly in contrast with the learner-centred approaches to education.

Another criticism was leveled against the 'guru' status as:

...in Asian society the teacher is as respected as a wise person-a 'guru'. Given the rapid advancements in all spheres of development and the fact that the schools in most of Asia are seen lagging behind the development processes, the search for promoting partnerships between the school and society is a priority. Every support from society is required in order that the prestige of 'guru' is restored to the teacher...(Larkin, 1996, p.207).

The tension here is the tension of development. The former status of 'guru' is at risk because teaching has become more complex and demanding. If teachers are not seen to be meeting these new challenges, then society will withhold the status that it has formerly bestowed.

Similarly Gorrell and Dharmadasa (1994) pointed out that there is often a misleading image of teachers in Asia:

Typical assumptions about Asian countries are that high levels of respect for elders translate into similar levels of respect and difference toward teachers. ...however this picture of the teaching profession appears to be idealistic and inaccurate... (Gorrell and Dharmadasa, 1994, p.23).

The above status of teachers and the great respect for them, always contradict the concept of learner autonomy and learner-centred approach to the education. In a learner-centred approach, learners are the main players; teachers can not expect greater respect and power in a learner-centred approach.

Similarly, the Confucian says that the loyalty, filial piety, compassion, love, trustworthiness, responsibility, peace and equality are the eight basic Confucian moral principles and are represented by four Bodhisattvas in Buddhism. Di Tsan Wang Pu Sa (Earth Store Bodhisattva/Kristigharba) represents filial piety and therefore the Di Tsan Sutra is also known as the Filial Piety Sutra. This is because it teaches filial respect for both parents and teachers, who are both equally important in Buddhism and Confucianism. To treat one's parents with filial piety and to respect teachers are the innate virtues of human

nature (ChinKungat, 1989). When implementing the learner-centred approach to education the above teacher oriented philosophy and the system perhaps must reconsider the degree which they need to implement in the system.

Further the expectations of society are significant: *'teachers are expected to be knowledgeable, competent, dedicated, good models of behaviour, concerned about students'* (Gorrel and Dharmadasa, 1994, p.23). At the same time that teachers are seen as *'a breed of men and women who will conserve all that is best in culture and traditions'*, they are expected to *'forge ahead as agents of change'* (MOE, 1982). The following quotations from the above document indicates the different role of teachers:

Teachers should be exemplary in their conduct. They will be disciplined not only because they are always under scrutiny but because they are a member of a staff under the authority of a principal. Teachers will be conscientious and methodical, fired with a sense of commitment, and confirm rigorously to a 'regimen of work' (MOE 1982, p.89).

The above quotation indicates the teachers are obedient workers, and part of a hierarchical school structure. The following describes teachers as agents of social change, though only in a decent and orderly manner:

Education and society are constantly influencing each other. In Sri Lanka the interaction has been mostly that of school on community and this one-way traffic is likely to last so long as our people continue to leave education well alone. The teacher stands for decent and orderly progress and is

preferred to the more radical type of leader whose techniques are apt to be theatrical and revolutionary. Thus by reason of his /her academic status, professional training and locale... the teacher ideally fills the role of a catalyst of social change(MOE, 1986, p.84).

The ideal of teacher education in the rhetoric of the 1980s reform was to bring together two fundamental but seemingly competing perspectives, that of *'laying the foundation for the future while preserving indigenous cultures and beliefs'*, and *'meeting the country's needs at a particular time'* (MOE, 1982, p.90). These two perspectives entail a complex mixture of philosophical principles of education and economic goals for the nation, while delineating the direction of education at all levels. One view can be characterised as a *revitalisation* approach and highlights the philosophy of Sri Lankan education guided by *'a concept of people focussing in the uniqueness and dignity of the individual with the teacher providing the kind of environment in which the child will unfold like a flower'* (MOE, 1986, p.96). The other view can be characterised by its movement towards *modernisation*. Under this approach education is seen as a technical process, *'a view strongly influenced by the western idea of the role of human beings in society with competency as a criterion of achievement and the teacher as a clinician who diagnoses or prescribes what is needed to promote achievement in children'* (MOE, 1982, p.96).

In summing up, Sri Lanka is a strong Buddhist country. The Sri Lanka education system is especially moulded by the Buddhist philosophy. According to the Buddhist philosophy, 'teachers' are the main players of education. Mostly, the community gives teachers a 'Guru' status. Presently, the former status of 'guru' is at risk because teaching has become more complex and demanding. If teachers are not seen to be meeting these new challenges, then society will withhold the status that it has formerly bestowed. In contrast, the learner

centeredness expects learner autonomy and learners' freedom. Therefore in Sri Lankan context, perhaps there must be a certain compromise in both the teacher respect and the learner autonomy.

While considering learner centeredness and learner autonomy it is important to discuss the management of change in Sri Lankan context. Therefore the following section discusses the management of change in teacher education.

2.2. The Management of Change in Teacher Education

2.2.1. Different understandings of change

Change involves uncertainty, learning and a process of progressive clarification (Knight and Trowler, 2001: 21). Taylor (1999:82) argues that uncertainty is a prerequisite for change, and that it can be generated, in fact, through the process of planning. Without questioning the status quo, there is no reason to change. Continual improvement and innovation depend on the capacity of an institution for continual learning. Becoming an effective change agent requires "the organised abandonment of things that have been shown to be unsuccessful, and the organised and continuous improvement of every product and service and process within the enterprise" (Drucker, 2001:19). If we intend to consolidate our areas of strength and initiate reforms in areas of weakness we need to have strategies in place to measure the effectiveness of key outputs.

Change is a process not an event - for any innovation to work in practice people have to learn how to do it and learning takes time (Scott and Low, 1996). As Scott and Low (1996) point out, change is 'value laden' and staff opinion will inevitably

vary as to whether a particular change is worthwhile, according to each individual's assumptions about what is important in education. The academic leader's task is to create an environment in which people move from resistance, non-compliance or compliance to commitment to a vision (Ramsden, 1998:141).

A major part of institutional leadership is now interpreting, handling and shaping complexity, ambiguity, and paradox, whilst addressing the varied and various interests of a multiplicity of internal and external stakeholders (Gordon, 2002:101). Distributed leadership of change involves engaging the differing sets of interests, interpretations and identities of the staff involved in the change process, thereby allowing mutual adaptation of both the change project and those sets of understandings and interests (Knight and Trowler, 2001:22).

Change that is not systemic will be transitory and random in nature, but change that is significant will lead to wider alterations in the system that implements it. In other words, those involved in the change process should expect changes in areas that appear to be 'outside' the change-related area (Knight and Trowler, 2001:23). Changes cannot be owned by fiat; if those who are to put a change into practice do not own it (believe in it, understand it, have a commitment to persevere with it) then it will lapse (Scott and Low, 1996). Fullan and Miles (1992, p.67) pointed out that '*change is a journey, not a blue print; change is systemic; change is learning; change programmes do not run themselves and also change is resource hungry...all large scale change is ultimately local implementation*'. They further argued that change does not work at the school or classroom level, it is not going to work at the system level, no matter how good the idea or the innovation. When you have

individuals who are able to work with the change, no matter what its source mandated or locally developed you can get schools and systems working with the change. Evidence says that the school is the centre of change and focus on classroom practice makes change meaningful to teachers. It is the school's vision and collaborative work that put the change in action; the qualities of the change which demonstrably address real classroom issues give momentum to that action. Schools do need the support and commitment of other levels for a top-down, bottom-up balance, but change has to happen in one place, the place where the most work must occur.

Finally, the new perspectives on change have a different agenda from the earlier, technologically-based frameworks. When we are talking about change, we are talking about new ways to deal with education and its institutions which better allow us to address problems and find solutions on a continuing basis. New ideas on change see this as an issue of constant learning for all, not a one-shot implementation effort. These ideas on change also emphasize the value of collaborative work in the process of change, work that institutionalizes the interaction between different levels and participants in the system, that is addressed to both global and specific concerns, and that respects all elements of the system for what they can contribute, not for what they conventionally are. For change to be effective, we have to find new ways of interacting as human beings in organizational settings. These new ideas on change are even more complicated than the old ones and making them work requires a new mind-set and a different style. In tandem with that complexity are two givens: change is a constant and "wishful thinking and legislation have a poor track record for social betterment" (Fullan & Miles, 1992, 752). Understanding the factors that influence the success and failure of change opens the door to a fresh approach

and "...is the best defence and the best offence" (Fullan & Miles, 1992, 752) for improving schools.

2.2.2. Management of Change

The literature suggests some strategies for effective change management. Knight and Trowler (2001) provide a useful description of the elements of managing change in higher educational institutions. Effective change management is not as simple as grafting innovation on to a traditional enterprise such as a university or College and experience has shown that this simply does not work (Drucker: 2001:19). Leading is a dynamic process that attempts to keep contradictory forces in balance (Ramsden, 1998). In order for higher institutions to take on and respond to change, the intrinsic value of change itself has to be embraced by the department. Moreover change can occur only if the entire department is geared towards effecting such change. Drucker (2001) argues that the most effective way for leaders to manage change successfully is to transform higher educational institutions into 'change agents,' in other words, to transform institutions into enterprises that create change rather than simply respond to change in an ad hoc manner. Fullan suggests the following strategy: "Assume that people need pressure to change (even in directions which they desire), but it will only be effective under conditions which allow them to react, to form their own position, to interact with other implementers, to obtain technical assistance, etc" (Fullan, 1989:194, cited in Knight and Trowler, 2001:22).

Bush and Bell (2002) pointed out that change can be either imposed by external authorities or events or generated by the internal actors in a situation, although the final outcomes of a process of change usually reflect a negotiated compromise between the internal and

external perspectives. When change is imposed too heavily by external agencies, internal actors tend to become demoralized. Bush et al.,(2001) further explained that leaders have an important mediational function for their school or college's members between the external contexts and the internal processes, helping staff colleagues and students to understand and cope with externally imposed changes. They need to perform this function effectively to avoid staff feeling disempowered and resistant to, or alienated from the changes proposed by themselves or by external agencies. Glover et al. (1998), among others, refer to this as a bridging and brokering function. Teaching and learning are social processes carried out in socio-political contexts (Bush & Bell, 2002). To bring about effective changes in this context, college leaders and teachers need to look at colleges from the perspectives of their learners. Learners in colleges are often sharply and critically aware of the success of teachers' work (Ruddock et al., 1996) as a result of their lived experiences as people in complex socio-political circumstances of family, college, and community (Howard and Gill, 2000).

What changes can be introduced to improve learning and how they are introduced are also influenced by an educational organisations' culture (Schein in Bush & Bell, 2002), and the sub-cultures within it of different formal and informal groups of staff and students. These have a considerable influence on how teachers, students and college leaders relate to each other and work together (Ribbins, 1992). Heads, staffs, and learners in teacher education need to work together to create a positive culture towards learning that enacts particular values and practices (Hopkins et al., in Bush & Bell, 2002).

Busher (2001) pointed out that the middle leaders need to be perceived as modelling successful practice, if they are to have the respect of their staff colleges and students, since teaching is a practical activity as well as a managerial one. The change and educational leadership literatures clearly recognize the role and influence of the college leaders on whether change will occur in the college. It seems clear that transforming a college organization into a learning community can be done only through the active nurturing of the entire staff's development as a community.

Kleine-Kracht (1993) concurs and suggests that administrators, along with teachers, must be learners too, "questioning, investigating, and seeking solutions" (p. 393) for school improvement. The traditional pattern that "teachers teach, students learn, and administrators manage is completely altered...[There is] no longer a hierarchy of who knows more than someone else, but rather the need for everyone to contribute" (p. 393). This new relationship forged between administrators and teachers leads to shared and collegial leadership in the college, where all grow professionally and learn to view themselves as "*all playing on the same team and working toward the same goal: a better school*" (Hoerr, 1996, p. 381). Sergiovanni (1994b, p. 214), explains that "*the sources of authority for leadership are embedded in shared ideas*" not in the power of position.

Vision is an ordinary term these days, and at various times it refers to mission, purpose, goals, objectives, or a sheet of paper posted near the principal's office" (Isaacson & Bamberg, 1992, p. 42). Sharing vision is not just agreeing with a good idea; it is a particular mental image of what is important to an individual and to an organization. Staffs are encouraged not only to be involved in the process of developing a shared vision but to

use that vision as a guidepost in making decisions about teaching and learning in the school (ibid.). A core characteristic of the vision is an undeviating focus on student learning, maintains Louis and Kruse (1995), in which each student's potential achievement is carefully considered. These shared values and vision lead to binding norms of behaviour that the staffs support. Bringing about changes in perspective that will enable the ITE colleges to understand and value teaching and learning will require focused and concerted effort. To be successful it requires the active engagement of leaders, staff, and students in implementing preferred changes that enshrine important values.

2.2.3 Conclusion

The above section has discussed the learner centred approach, learner autonomy, and management of change. While considering the learner centred education the study paid attention to the physiological and philosophical perspectives in education. The following section of this chapter discusses the national context of teacher education in Sri Lanka.

2.3.1 Overview of Sri Lankan Teacher Education System

2.3.1.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of Sri Lanka and its teacher education system. It discusses the organisational structure, distribution of schools by province and further discusses the issues in relation to the teacher education. The later part of this chapter discusses the development of teacher education for a historical point of view.

2.3.1.2 Sri Lanka in brief

Sri Lanka is an island in the Indian Ocean, situated to the south of the Indian subcontinent with a land area of 65,000 sq. kilometres, laying a few degrees north of the equator. Although located close to the sub-continent, Sri Lanka is a separate island strategically situated on the main sea routes between the East and the West. This had a tremendous influence on its history.

The proximity to the Indian sub-continent created close affinities between Sri Lanka and India. The original settlers of the island migrated from India and the principal religions of the country. Buddhism and Hinduism were introduced from that country. The ancient culture, language, art and architecture, technology and social customs were of Indian origin. Political developments in India too, had their repercussions on this island. The island was subjected to frequent invasions from South India, whenever strong kingdoms were established there. Western powers too wanted to have a strong hold on this island in order to consolidate their power in India. Finally, when India gained independence, this island too, got its independence without any bloodshed.

Sri Lanka gained independence from the British in 1948 who ruled the country for 150 years. After independence, a democratically elected Westminster model type of Government governed the country. In 1972 it became a Republic and in 1978 an Executive presidency model was adopted. At the centre, there is the legislature, the parliament and the executive president, but the power of government is substantially devolved to the elected Provincial Councils. There are eight Provincial Councils functioning under the existing set

up. The grass root level local government system assures people's participation in managing their local affairs.

The population of Sri Lanka in the year 2000 is estimated to be 18.5 million and is increasing moderately at 1.2 percent per annum. The country has almost reached the stage of demographic transition, and it is estimated that by the year 2020 the population will stabilise at 22 million. The decline in the rate of population growth has led to a reduction in the young dependency ratio, which is a favourable development for the education sector as the decreasing numbers may enable the authorities to divert more resources for quality improvement. However, with the increase in life expectancy of the population, the elderly dependent ratio will increase in the future.

The population of Sri Lanka consists of a mix of many ethnic groups whose ancestors migrated and settled down in this country over the centuries. As a result the present population is a mosaic of different ethnic groups and religious denominations, within a multi-cultural milieu. Ethnically, the Sinhalese comprise 74% of the population, the Sri Lankan Tamils 12.6%, the Tamils of recent Indian origin 5.3%, the Muslims 7.1% and others 1%. Religion-wise, there are 69% Buddhists, 15% Hindus, 7% Muslims and 8% Christians of various denominations.

The per capita income in the year 2000 was US \$ 864. However, the quality of life as shown by the Human Development Index (HDI) compiled by the United Nations shows that Sri Lanka enjoys a high quality of life in comparison to countries having a similar or a higher level of per capita income (Appendix-4). Some of the components taken into

account in the compilation of the HDI, such as literacy at 91.8%, life expectancy of 72 years and infant mortality at 16.9 per thousand are impressive achievements in social development. The current expenditure on education is around 2.9% of GDP.

2.3.1.3 Education- prior to teacher education

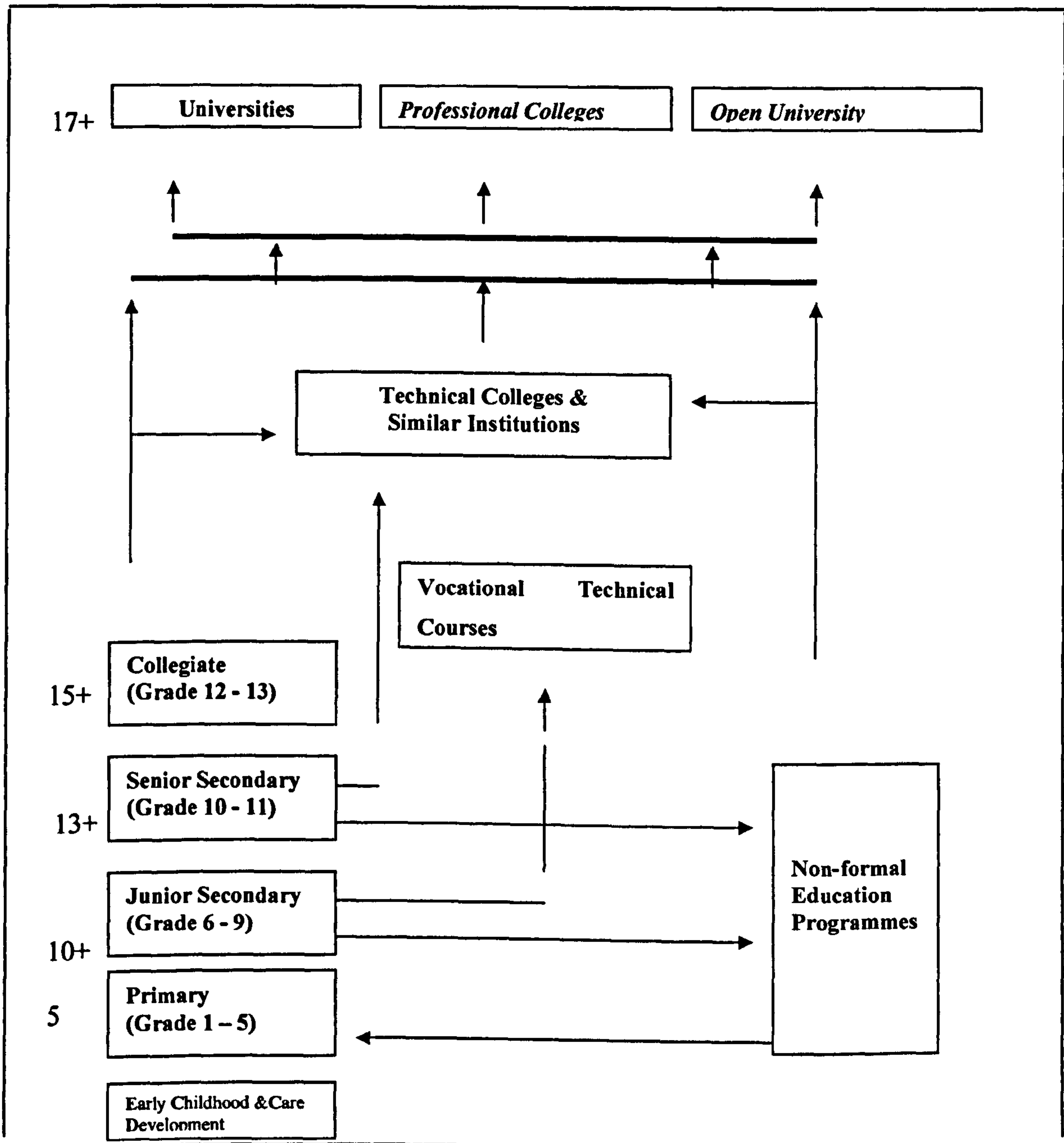
Education in Sri Lanka is compulsory for everyone between the ages of five to fourteen.

The total span of schooling spreads over a period of thirteen years as follows:

Primary 5 years	: grade 1 – 5
Junior Secondary 4 years	: grade 6 – 9
G.C.E (O/L) 2 years	: grade 10 – 11
G.C.E (A/L) 2 years	: grade 12 – 13

After completing G.C.E (A/L) classes, the student can enter the NCOEs (National Colleges of Education) as a trainee. GCE (A/L) certificate is the minimum qualification to enter NCOEs. According to their subjects in A/Ls, trainees will be selected for the following courses in NCOEs: Primary education, Physical education, Buddhism, Science, Maths, English, Language and Home science.

Figure 2.3.1.1 Education system in Sri Lanka



2.3.1.4 Teacher education system

A National Authority of Teacher Education (NATE) has been established by act of Parliament in order to coordinate teacher-training programmes in the country. It is the body responsible for policy development, monitoring and accreditation of an integrated national teacher education system.

The following teacher education programmes are offered in Sri Lanka (Ministry of Education, 1998):

1. Teacher education programmes offered to non- graduate as pre-service initial training leading to the National Diploma in Teaching. This is a full time residential course.
2. Teacher education programmes offered to non- graduates who are in the service as initial teacher training leading to a Trained Teacher Certificate. This course is offered full time and residential. The certificate can also be obtained through a distance education course.
3. Teacher education programmes offered for graduate teachers who are in the service as initial training leading to the Postgraduate Diploma in Education. This is a full time residential course, which can also be obtained through a distance education course.
4. Teacher education programmes for the professional development of trained Teachers (non- graduates) leading to the Bachelor of Education Degree through part time and distance education courses.

There are four types of teacher education programmes for teachers who are in service in Sri Lanka. These include upgrading, broadening, retraining and refreshing. These courses are conducted by in-service advisors of the provincial departments of education in co-operation with the National Institute of Education. These courses are conducted locally and would typically last between 1 and 5 days.

2.3.1.4.1 Teacher institutions

- 1. Colleges of Education:** offer a three-year pre-service teacher education programme leading to the National diploma to the teaching.
- 2. Teacher Training Colleges:** offer a two-year initial teacher training course for non-graduate who are already in service as uncertificated teacher
- 3. The National Institute of Education (NIE):** NIE offers the following courses:
 - a Distance teacher education programmes for untrained non-graduate teachers presently in service
 - b. Bachelor of Education degrees for trained teachers
 - c. Post graduate diploma in education for graduate teachers
 - d. Post graduate degrees in education
 - e. Short term in service training of teachers

These are teacher education programmes for teachers who are in service as professional development covering the four types of continuing education: Upgrading, Broadening, retraining and refreshing. In-service advisors of the provincial department of education conduct these courses in cooperation with the NIE. These courses are conducted locally and would typically last between 1 and 5 days. (MOE, 1999)

2.3.1.4.2 The Universities

Four out of eleven universities in Sri Lanka offer teacher education programmes, these are the universities of Colombo, Peradeniya, Jaffna and the Open University. They offer the following programmes.

- a. Post Graduate Diploma in Education
- b. Post Graduate degrees in Education
- c. Bachelor of Education Degrees (MOE, 1999).

Each institution engaged in teacher education has its own programme resulting in a multiplicity of courses varying in duration, course structure and content, and the level of certification. Questions have also been raised regarding the quality and effectiveness of some of these courses, especially in relation to the real needs of the schools and the community (NATE Sri Lanka, 2001).

2.3.1.4.3 Other Institutions involved in teacher education

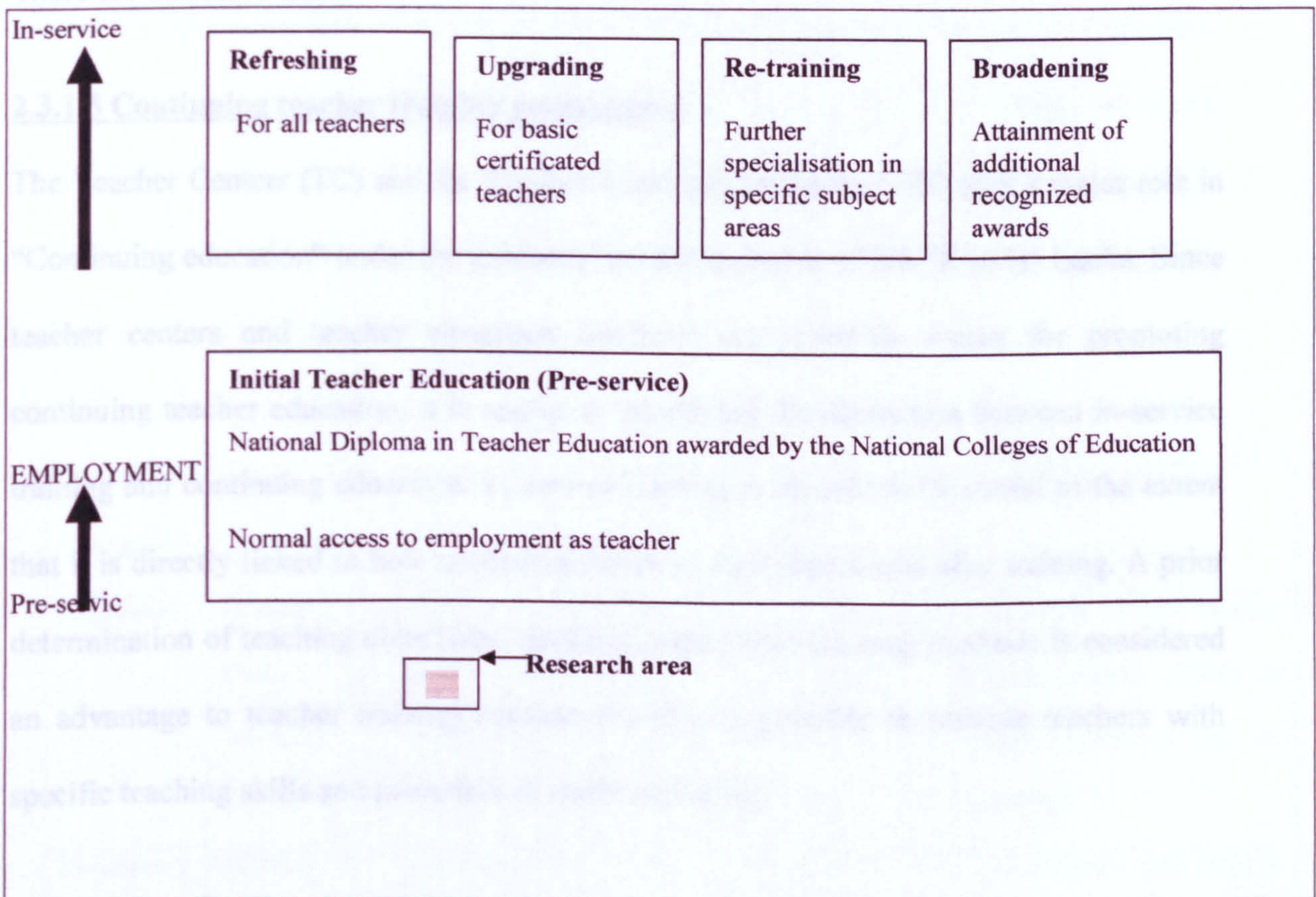
Apart from the colleges of education, the teacher training colleges, the institute of education and the universities, there are a number of institutions and departments that are involved in policy matters, planning and implementation of teacher education. There are the policy making bodies like the presidential Task Force on Education, the National Education Commission, the National Authority on Teacher Education (NATE), the council, the Colleges of Education Board, the different department and branches within the Ministry of Education and Higher Education.

All these institutions are involved in policy and decision-making or implementing teacher education programmes and in principle the Office of the CCTE would have to deal with them in order to co-ordinate and streamline programmes, content and administration and management. The most important co-operation partner for the CCTE is NATE, especially during the implementation process of the reform. Equally important for project planning, implementation and monitoring is the Directorate of the TETD project and the DG Educational Reforms.

2.3.1.4.4 Teacher education programmes

The following Figure 2.1.2 indicates the pre-service and in-service teacher education programmes in Sri Lanka.

Figure 2.3.1.2 Conceptual Framework of Teacher Training



Source: (NATE report, 2000).

The above figure indicates the types of teacher training programmes available in the system. After receiving the pre-service education and training, teachers are given the above in-service training by the system.

National Authority on Teacher Education

The National Authority on Teacher Education (NATE) has been established as an integral part of the restructuring of teacher education to form a co-ordinated national system. There are two types of teacher training programme conducted in Sri Lanka. (NATE, 2000).

(a) Continuing teacher training programmes

(b) Initial teacher training programmes

These are discussed next:

2.3.1.5 Continuing teacher training programmes

The Teacher Centers (TC) and the Teacher Education Institutes (TEI) play a major role in “Continuing education” under the guidance and management of NATE in Sri Lanka. Since teacher centers and teacher education institutes are primarily meant for promoting continuing teacher education, it is useful to understand the distinction between in-service training and continuing education. In-service training is thought to be useful to the extent that it is directly linked to how teachers perform in their classrooms after training. A prior determination of teaching objectives, teaching content and teaching methods is considered an advantage to teacher training because it makes it possible to provide teachers with specific teaching skills and procedure in teacher training.

Continuing education in contrast operates as support to teacher’s professional growth and will be concerned with creating conditions favourable to such growth rather than with

preparing teachers to teach in predetermined ways. Continuing education applies to teachers currently serving in schools, and to teacher educators who are granted study opportunities to further their academic and professional qualifications. Continuing education may be obtained through direct contact mode by attendance at courses or through distance learning mode. Continuing teacher education has been provided at different levels or depths of study from basic courses for those with limited qualifications to specialized courses leading to higher degrees.

At present, four different types of continuing education courses are identified. These include: upgrading courses, broadening courses, re-training courses and refreshing activities. They may also offer instructional courses to meet specific needs of teachers, teacher educators and educational administrators. All four courses are equally important. They differ, however, in the nature and level of awards, which they are designed to ultimately achieve degree, etc., and in their modes of delivery (MOE, 1999). The following Table 2.1.1 shows this:

Type of Education	Mode	Length	Designed by	Delivered by	Type of Education
Upgrading	Distance, Contact or Intensive residential	About 15 Modules or 150 hours or 3 weeks	NIE & NCOEE	TCC & NCOEE	In accordance with Teacher service Minute (TSM) or partial fulfilment of Dip. In. Teaching
Broadening	Distance	1-3 Years	NIE, Universities NCOEE	TCC	In accordance with TSM & other awards (B. Ed & PG Dip. Ed)

Re-training	On- Campus or Distance	Varying duration up to 3 years depending on subject	NIE, Universities NCOEE	Universities, NCOEs, NIE & TCC	Degree, Diploma in Teaching or equivalent or in- service to meet TSM needs
Refreshing	Workshops&/ or Seminars	½ - 2 days	NCOEE, TCC	Schools, TCC & Divisions	

Table 2.3.1.3 Continuing Education Programmes for Teachers (MOE, 1999).

The above Table explains the continuing education programmes descriptively. The National institute of Education (NIE) is playing a vital role in delivering the above programmes in Sri Lanka.

Teacher Centres

There are 84 Teacher Centres in the country. Each centre is affiliated to a College of Education

Objectives of the Teacher Centres

1. Improve quality of teaching through continuing teacher education programmes
2. Enable the teachers to do their block period in their local centres
3. Bring together teachers in specific disciplines
4. Allow those teachers who have so far received their training only through the distance mode to experience residential interaction.
5. Provide continuing teacher education courses at different levels or depths of study.
6. Provide continuing education for all teachers.

Each teacher Centre has been managed by a committee under the chairmanship of the zonal director of education. The management committee is responsible for planning, organizing and delivery of courses and programmes.

2.3.1.6 Initial teacher education

Initial teacher education (3 years –National diploma in teacher education) is mainly conducted by the colleges of education in Sri Lanka. The following 15 colleges of education function throughout the country:

	Name of the College	Province
1	Addalaichchenai	Eastern Province
2	Akmeemana	Southern Province
3	Batticaloa	Eastern Province
4	Bingiriya	North-western Province
5	Hapitigama	North-central Province
6	Mahaweli	Central Province
7	Nilwala	Southern Province
8	Pasunrata	Western Province
9	Polonnaruwa	North-central Province
10	Ratnapura	Sabaragamuwa Province
11	Sariputha	Sabaragamuwa Province
12	Siyane	Western Province
13	Sripada	Central Province
14	Uva	Uva Province
15	Vavunia	North-east Province

Table 2.3.1.4 Colleges of Education in Sri Lanka (NATE report, 2001).

The Initial teacher training programmes

Initial teacher education consists of a certain minimum number of semesters. Courses of academic studies are combined with practical exposure to classroom teaching, and a two-year preparation phase concentrating on the professional training with increasing teaching practice (Ministry of Education, 1999). Universities and colleges of education provide the initial teacher education programmes for suitable persons. The universities provide the degree courses (Bachelor of Education) and the colleges of education provide the National diploma in teacher education.

2.3.1.6 Summary

This section has outlined the teacher education system. Further it discussed the initial teacher education of Sri Lanka. It briefly mentioned the programmes and the institution. Each institution engaged in teacher education has its own programme resulting in a multiplicity of courses varying in duration, course structure and content, and the level of certification. The NATE coordinates the whole teacher education system in Sri Lanka. The next section specifically discusses the development of the teacher education system.

2.3.2 Teacher Education Development in Sri Lanka

2.3.2.1. Introduction

In order to analyse teacher education in Sri Lanka it is necessary to conceptualise the role of the state and its interaction with other forces that impact upon teacher education and teachers in Sri Lanka. This study provides a brief historical overview of the development of

teacher education from its beginning to the current reforms. Teachers in Sri Lanka have, since independence, been active in shaping the design of education and have played a critical role with the state in facilitating reform at all levels in the educational system.

2.3.2.2 Teacher education development-A historical view

The history of teacher education parallels the development of the system of formal education in Sri Lanka. Knowledge in the ancient civilization of Sri Lanka (543 BC) was passed down from father to son in a system of apprenticeship and had its origins in the arrival of King Vijaya, from India (Dharmadasa, 1988). With the introduction of Buddhism in the third century BC, the monks became the centre of secular as well as sacred education (Rahula, 1956). It is conceivable then that monasteries served as the first centres of teacher training in Sri Lanka. According to this tradition, the constant association between teachers and learners was vital to education, a principle that was very much present in the reformers' agenda to improve the quality of education in the 1980s.

The Portuguese, who controlled the maritime provinces in Sri Lanka from 1505 to 1658, influenced education on the island, but did not have a lasting impact on the education of teachers since they brought missionaries to serve as teachers on the island. Between 1658 to 1796 the Dutch left their mark on teacher education through the establishment of a seminary in Jaffna in 1690 in order to educate Tamil youth as catechist preachers and teachers. An additional seminary was established in Colombo in 1696. The Dutch introduced the study of Latin, Greek and Hebrew and sent students abroad to be trained for the clergy, who would later become teachers. Less than fifty years later the seminaries were phased out and in 1747 a normal school was started in the province of Pettah but this institution functioned only for a few years and ended with the coming of the British.

The strongest influence in teacher education in addition to Buddhism came from Great Britain. Initially, the British colonial administration (1802-1948) established the Colombo Academy to educate public servants and later teachers. In addition to the academy, a monitorial system to educate teachers was established for the first time in the early seventeenth century and was a beginning attempt at school-based teacher preparation (Dharmadasa, 1988). This system prevailed until 1929.

Parallel to this system of education, other attempts to set up more refined methods to educate teachers resulted in the creation in 1842 of the Normal School similar to the Colombo Academy with a three-year course of study. The Normal School spread to Galle and Kandy (two important urban centres in Sri Lanka). Diversification of the curriculum to suit the specific needs of the country, as defined by the British colonizers, gave origin to a Normal School for educating Sinhalese and Tamil teachers in 1847 (MOE, 1982).

When in 1858 the Normal School closed down, due mostly to financial problems, terminating the state system for teacher education and leaving a large number of teachers untrained, the missionary schools, which had been developing parallel to the normal schools, were the main organisers of formal preparation for teachers. The Normal School was again established in 1870. This institution provided courses in subject matter and pedagogy in three languages, English, Sinhala and Tamil, serving the diverse population on the island. During the same period, education for English teachers was left to the missionaries. By 1900 there were 15 teacher education institutions in the country: two were under the Roman Catholic denomination, three were Wesleyan, three belonged to the Church of England, one belonged to the American Mission, two were government schools

and four were private female schools Buddhist schools also continued educating teachers (MOE, 1988).

In 1903 the first Teacher Training College was opened and students were admitted to any of three streams: English, Bilingual and Sinhala. The curriculum consisted of principles and practice of teaching, with academic subjects as a secondary emphasis. In the late 1910s, teachers colleges for Tamil and Sinhalese teachers were established. Teachers educated in these teachers colleges were the first recipients of the newly instituted Teacher's Final Certificate (MOE, 1988). The system of teacher education spread to the rural areas as well as with the creation in the early 1930s of three rural education centres. By 1939, twenty-three teacher-training colleges were functioning, providing education in English, mother tongue languages, academic subjects, and rural education. Admission to these education institutions was based on a written examination and an interview. Admission was open to persons, who had passed either one of the standard British examinations, namely the London Matriculation Examination, The Cambridge Senior Examination or the Senior School Certificate.

The description of the evolution of teacher education in Sri Lanka signals a series of influences, most importantly from former colonizers, that have shaped the format, the curriculum, and the type of person who received education in these institutions. Though attempts were made to be 'inclusive' by creating three streams, still the examinations and content of the programmes were modelled after those of the colonizers and the 'hidden curriculum' of teacher education supported values alien to indigenous cultures (Dharmadasa, 1988). Dharmadasa, (1988, p.23) explained his view as,

The programmes reinforced English as a language of instruction, relegating Sinhala and Tamil to 'second class' status....the use of standard British examinations to admit prospective teachers into teacher training colleges was a mechanism used to educate an elite group of teachers who would in turn educate an elite group of pupils. This situation encouraged the creation of, on the one hand, an elite group of teachers who identified with the British culture and who were concentrated in the better off schools and, on the other, a marginalised group of teachers who taught in the languages of the people, generally in the remote, poorer schools.

In 1943, major change in the policy governing teacher education came about with the Kannangara Committee, which recommended that all teachers at the basic education level should be educated and given a status in accordance with their educational attainment, qualifications and experience. The committee also made recommendations that the curriculum be divided in four sections (following a model that resembled that in Britain): the study of the theory of education, study of educational psychology, the practice of education, and general and special subject methods. The reform created two-year teacher colleges for primary and secondary teachers. The first year was focused on academic studies in ordinary school subjects, professional studies was the focus of the second year, with teaching practice being carried out in both years (MOE, 1988).

As a result of independence from Great Britain, the new Sri Lankan state took on the responsibility to finance the education of a large number of teachers who had been until then without teacher education. The number of training colleges were established and

were supported entirely by the government. The nationalist/modernist group in power at that time pursued capitalist ideologies originating from the West, and pressed towards 'modernisation'. These views though resisted by the nationalist/socialist group within the state elite, were advanced in this period. The 'modernist' state envisioned specialised education programmes directed at preparing teachers not only in general education but in those subjects needed for the economic 'development' of the country and a changing independent society. Consequently, the education of science teachers was given special emphasis. The principle of 'full pay' education was introduced for selected teachers who enjoyed paid study leave in an effort to improve the quality of teaching. This type of arrangement offered to selected teachers to obtain higher credentials may be seen as an attempt to educate a cadre of teachers who would likely be supportive of the changes introduced by the state to bring about more efficiency and higher levels of accountability into the educational system.

In the early 1960s, the assisted schools and training colleges, which were under the management of religious denominations, came under the centralised control of the Sri Lankan government. The 1960s marks the implementation of a common curriculum in all the training colleges. The concept of teacher training was replaced by the concept of teacher education.

In the early 1970s, new changes were implemented in teacher education for non-graduate teachers. There was a two-year general course to prepare primary school teachers, and a three-year correspondence education course for primary school teachers.

In total there were 20 general training colleges for primary teachers and eight special training colleges for secondary teachers.

By 1975 these distinctions disappeared and all teacher education institutions were considered equal by the state. Formal teacher education for elementary school teachers was limited until the 1980s to the continuous reform of the British-founded teachers colleges. Some of these reforms were of a curricular character and attempted to address based on the goals of the indigenous resurgence movement, the different cultural needs for education in Sri Lanka. Teachers colleges had programmes for Sinhalese, Tamil and Muslim groups and three streams are examples of these actions. In spite of the rhetoric of equality and professional advancement for teachers, a dual system of education, certification and compensation continued to exist based on the British colonial model, with few teachers having access to formal education and the benefits associated with it. The rest of the teaching force remained, for the most part, without any kind of formal teacher education (Dharmadasa, 1988).

2.3.2.3 The organisational reforms in teacher education

The ideal of teacher education in the 1980s reform was to bring together two fundamental but seemingly competing perspectives, that of *'laying the foundation for the future while preserving indigenous cultures and beliefs'*, and *'meeting the country's needs at a particular time'* (MOE, 1982, p.91). These two perspectives entail a complex mixture of philosophical principles of education and economic goals for the nation while delineating the direction of education at all levels. 1980s teacher education programmes were a reflection of these two strong and contradictory

tendencies and seem to hold a compromise between preserving a centuries old culture and moving along in the path of 'modern development'. Although the advances in education and technology in the West are widely acknowledged, the view guiding Sri Lankan education is deeply rooted in the Buddhist belief that *'there is not true education except within the bond between the teacher and the learner, whether in school or at home'* (MOE, 1982, p.97). Whilst many educators in Sri Lanka subscribe strongly to this Buddhist-based belief, it creates severe conflict and contradictions with the modernisation aims of the state. This has meant the development of programmes to educate teachers that attempt to preserve the 'human factor' interaction as opposed to the intensive use of technology, such as or radio. It has also entailed the encouragement of Sinhala and Tamil as the languages of instruction.

Within this context, in addition to the long-standing teacher colleges, two approaches to educate elementary school teachers have emerged: distance education and colleges of education. Distance education for in-service education was implemented in 1984 to educate non-graduate, in-service teachers. This programme originated as a response to the limited numbers of teachers that teachers colleges were able to educate and as a way to accelerate the process of education. The distance education programme is an innovative approach to in-service teacher education in which a tutorial system brings continuity and support to the future teachers while following a community-based model. Students spend three to five years on a part-time basis using carefully designed instructional materials to develop their knowledge of subject matter content and pedagogy.

A pre-service teacher education approach began functioning in 1985 with seven colleges of education. This programme, which lasts three years, seeks to implement the policy of progressively giving up the practice of recruiting un-trained teachers into the teaching profession. At the end of their studies the graduates receive a 'Diploma in Teaching', in contrast with the 'Teacher Certificate' received by teachers colleges and distance education graduates. The pre-service programme or colleges of education –following a model originated in Britain-is characterized by an emphasis on studying and applying the educational goals of the state, recruitment of young qualified graduates from high school, and provision of a diploma that holds higher status than that of the current teachers colleges or the newly developed distance education. Students study full-time for two years in a student-centred programme and then undertake a one-year practice teaching internship (De Silva, 1986).

Distance education graduates have the higher personal costs for their education, in relation to both teachers colleges and colleges of education, the least resources from the government (De Silva, 1986). The distance education approach, for this reason, is quite successful in relation to its costs as far as the state is concerned. It may also be the one that more closely reflects the values and intentions of an indigenous approach to teacher education and is closely in touch with the contextual needs of the teacher, in great part because their candidates are also teaching throughout their preparation and because of the tutorial system built into the programme.

The 1997 reforms made the following changes in the system:

1. A National Authority of Teacher Education was formed to co-ordinate teacher training programmes in the country. It is responsible for policy development, monitoring and accreditation of an integrated National Education System.
2. All untrained teachers were trained using the expanded and improved facilities of the training system.
3. Ministry employs only teachers who have received training in a teacher-training institute.
4. All teachers must follow a two-year course in English, in addition to the special area of training. It is necessary for all trainees to attain proficiency in English in order to pass the examination.
5. A Teacher Educator's Service comprising academically and professionally qualified personnel established to fill the posts of lecturers and administrators in order to attract and retain high quality staff for the teacher training programmes.

Though the major changes are expected through the above reforms, in terms of teacher status, still they remain as same as before. To explain critically, the above changes need some more time to produce the expected outcomes.

2.4 Literature Implications for Considerations

The above arguments and criticisms suggest the following:

- In the Sri Lankan context it is important to consider a certain degree of compromise in learner autonomy and teachers' status.
- The need to acknowledge the present position of the 'guru' status in delivering the teacher education programme.

- Philosophical and psychological considerations of delivering the programme

Overall, according to the literature, we can judge a learner-centered learning context by examining the extent to which the following features are displayed.

- the individual diversity of students: their varying educational backgrounds, work experiences, learning styles and the full-time learner role;
- relationships: the relationships and interactions between teacher–learner and learner–learner;
- responsibility: (conceptions of) student and teacher roles in learning, self-responsibility;
- Implementation of Learner centered techniques in Sri Lankan context.
- the relevance of course material: student choices in course content and course process.

Further, the literature on change management emphasizes the value of collaborative work in the process of change, work that institutionalizes the interaction between different levels and participants in the system, that is addressed to both global and specific concerns, and that respects all elements of the system for what they can contribute, not for what they conventionally are.

Further the literature reveals that change can occur fully only if the entire department is geared towards effecting such change. The most effective way for leaders to manage change successfully is to transform institutions into enterprises that create change rather than simply respond to change in an ad hoc manner. People need pressure to change, but it will only be effective under conditions which allow them to react, to form their own position, to interact with other implementers, to obtain technical assistance, etc.

Leaders have an important mediational function for their school or college's members between the external contexts and the internal processes, helping staff colleagues and students to understand and cope with externally imposed changes. They need to perform this function effectively to avoid staff feeling disempowered and resistant to, or alienated from the changes proposed by themselves or by external agencies. The final outcomes of a process of change usually reflects a negotiated compromise between the internal and external perspectives. When change is imposed too heavily by external agencies, internal actors tend to become demoralized. To bring about effective changes in this context, college leaders and teachers need to look at colleges from the perspectives of their learners. There is no longer a hierarchy of who knows more than someone else, but rather the need for everyone to contribute.

It should also be noted that the literature reviewed above is primarily from an educator's point of view. Assumptions made by educators about what is needed for learners to achieve desired learning outcomes could conflict with those of the learners themselves. The present study will draw on the teachers' perspectives as well as learners' unique perspectives and experiences and examine the features of desirable tutor/lecturer practice.

The above overall justifications formed a basis for the following main research question:

Are teachers in ITE institutions using learner-centered techniques and if not, what are the best ways of implementing such changes?

The following sub questions are formed based on the above main question:

4.1 Research sub-questions

The sub-questions that inform the main question above are:

1. What is present practice in ITE in Sri Lanka?
2. To what extent are learner-centred (LCTs) technologies recognised by teachers in ITE?
3. To what extent do teachers believe that they use learner-centred technologies in ITE?
4. To what extent do students believe that teachers use learner-centred technologies in ITE?
5. What are the reasons teachers give for not using LCTs in ITE?
6. What changes are needed for LCTs to be used regularly?

The next chapter addresses the methodology which analyse the suitable strategies to adopt for this study.

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CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research philosophy

This chapter presents a description of the broad paradigm of *naturalistic inquiry and the specific methodology of hermeneutic phenomenology*, along with a justification for the use of this methodology in the study. Data collection and analysis methods are described and illustrated. Delimitations and limitations of the research are discussed, with consideration given to standards for trustworthiness of the findings.

All research is located within a context, a context in which assumptions are made about the nature of reality (ontology) and how we find out about it (epistemology). These assumptions are described as research philosophy. Methods chosen and the methodology applied needs to be consistent with the research philosophy. A number of authors support the view Bryman (2001), Scott *et al.* (1999), Spencer *et al.* (2003), Gomm (2004), that the methods of research are underpinned by philosophical positions about the nature of social reality and different positions in relation to testing the nature of that reality. In other words, deciding the best way to examine social reality is based on how I (as the researcher of this study) view the world. This view of the world from my perspective fits firmly with reflective practice, which in turn supports a qualitative methodology. In articulating and choosing a research philosophy it was also necessary to address how the practice of educational research connects with the wider investigations into the nature of our 'social' realities.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the usage of learner-centred techniques within the classroom in teacher education in Sri Lanka. This study reviewed the philosophical traditions- positivism and phenomenology.

3.1.1 Positivism

Educational research is essentially a social and practical activity, in which the researcher is engaged in the investigation and analysis of a selected and focused range of social phenomena. Investigation and analysis may ^{Proceed} in a variety of ways, for a variety of purposes, and with a variety of intended outcomes, all of which impact in varying degrees on the choice of research design, and the selection of appropriate methodology. This is never an arbitrary process, and decisions about methodology may only be taken after due consideration of the underlying philosophical issues that are both the driving force of, and integral to, any research process.

This study reviewed the literature regarding the principles underpinning the two most prominent research paradigms, namely, the scientific and interpretive. Ernest (1994:22) explains that the scientific research paradigm '*is concerned with objectivity, prediction, replicability and the discovery of scientific generalisation or laws describing the phenomena in question*'. Theoretically, by employing a scientific approach to education issues, general laws to predict future educational outcomes will be found, and people will be in the position of controlling educational products.

Easterby *et. al*, (2002) indicate that '*according to Auguste Comte, (1853) all good intellects have repeated, since Bacon's time, that there can be no real knowledge but that which is based on observed facts*' the above statement contains two assumptions: first, an

ontological, that reality is external and objective; and second, an epistemological, that knowledge is only of significance if it is based on observations of this external reality.

The key idea of positivism is that the social world exists externally, and that its properties should be measured through objective methods (Thorpe, 2000). The positivist research orientation holds that science is or should be primarily concerned with the explanation and the prediction of observable events (Kincheloe, 1991). Since the aim of this study is to understand the present practice in using the learner-centred techniques through teachers' students' and Head's views and opinions and classroom observation, the positivist tradition does not seem to be appropriate for this study. One major criticism about positivism is that understanding human beings as individuals in their entirety and their proper context is neglected, resulting in a partial, distorted picture of social reality.

3.1.2 Phenomenology

Under the umbrella of phenomenology, the hermeneutic/ interpretivism plays a vital role in forming a base for the social research. In social research knowledge is concerned not with generalisation, prediction and control but with interpretation, meaning and illumination (Scott & Usher, 1996). The hermeneutic interpretive epistemology, in social and educational research focuses on social practices. It assumes that all human actions are meaningful and hence have to be interpreted and understood within the context of social practices. Hermeneutic as research methodology is a way of systematically dealing with interpretation (Bolton, 1987). The in-depth understanding of philosophical traditions made the researcher realise that the hermeneutic interpretivist approach would be useful for this investigation. It allows the researcher to interpret the situation within her or his own research context and also it deals with interpretation systematically. Social practices are best understood using an interpretivist approach.

3.1.3. Hermeneutic Interpretivism/ Phenomenology

Scott and Usher (1996, p.18) deepened our understanding about hermeneutic interpretivism saying that ‘in social research, knowledge is concerned not with generalisation, prediction and control but with interpretation meaning and illumination’. Further, ‘hermeneutic interpretive epistemology in social and educational research focuses on social practices. It assumes that all human action is meaningful and hence has to be interpreted and understood within the context of social practices’.

The central concern of the interpretive research paradigm is understanding human experiences at a holistic level. Researchers of this kind interpret the complexities embedded in these experiences to seek meanings and illuminate their significance. Ernest (1994:24) holds that *‘the interpretive research paradigm is primarily concerned with human understanding, interpretation, intersubjectivity, lived truth (i.e. truth in human terms)’*. Interpretive research is often conducted in natural settings, and thus is sometimes called naturalistic inquiry (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Human experiences are shaped in contexts and best understood as they are found, in other words in their natural settings. It is in natural settings where human behaviours can be truly reflected and the meanings of these behaviours can be well interpreted.

Maykut & Morehouse (1994:45) concur that *‘the natural setting is the place where the researcher is most likely to discover, or uncover, what is to be known about the phenomenon of interest’*. Edson (1988:46) also feels that qualitative research is context-specific, that is, it posits that ideas, people and events cannot be understood if isolated from their contexts; studies concerned with human interaction are often conducted within this paradigm. Qualitative research is particularly suitable for institution-based research

(Hitchcock & Hughes, 1989:35), where human activities and relationships are intricately interwoven.

Similarly Van Manen (1990, p.19) views that '*the hermeneutic phenomenological research ...encourages a certain attentive awareness to the details and seemingly trivial dimensions in our everyday lives. It makes us thoughtfully aware of the consequential in the inconsequential, the significant in the taken-for-granted (Van Manen, 1990,P.8)...the aim is to construct an animating, evocative description (text) of human actions, behaviours, intentions, and experiences as we meet them in the life-world (Van Manen, 1990, p.19).*

The main concern of this study is to investigate the views and opinions of teachers, trainees and head of the institution regarding the learner centred approach in teacher education in a natural setting-their institution context. A comparison between the study's intentions and the central ideas of the interpretive research paradigm made the researcher realise that this approach would be appropriate for this investigation.

3.1.4.Possible mix methodology (Philosophy)

Leininger (1990, p.28) argues that 'one cannot mix research methods across quantitative and qualitative paradigms, but one can mix methods within each paradigm. Mixing methodology refers to mixing philosophies within the same paradigm. Quantitative and qualitative paradigms have different philosophical premises, purposes, and epistemic roots that must be understood, respected and maintained for credible and sound research outcomes (Morse, 1994, p.101).

Under the umbrella term of qualitative paradigm there are possible philosophical truths and beliefs that have to be taken into consideration for this study. A paramount contribution to this was Husserl's transcendental phenomenology, which introduced the word '*epoche*' to

the field of social research. The entire spiritual force of Husserl's transcendental phenomenology is conferring meaning by the knowing ego reflecting on itself, by bracketing or holding in abeyance one's preconceptions about the world and seeking to attain the genuine and true form of the things themselves (Hammond *et.al.* 1991).

Katz (1987, p.36-7) supported this as:

'Epoche' is a process that the researcher engages in to remove, or at least become aware of prejudices, viewpoints, or assumptions regarding the phenomenon under investigation. Epoche enables the researcher to investigate the phenomenon from a fresh and open view without prejudgement or imposing meaning too soon. This suspension in judgement is critical in phenomenological investigation and requires the setting aside of the researcher's personal viewpoint in order to view the experience itself.

'Epoche' can be used at the beginning of the research enquiry and the beginning of the data analysis. But in the interpretation stage, the research needs to employ the '*dasein*' position of hermeneutic phenomenology. Heidegger's 'Dasein' (the possibilities of being in the world or being there) concept moved away from the Husserl's 'epoche' (presupposition less) to an idea of that is made possible by the prior understanding of 'being in the world'. Ricoeur (1981) pointed out that the Heidegger showed that the belongingness to the world is the interpretive experience itself and that all understanding is mediated by interpretation. Thus the 'dasein' position has its own potential to contribute to the research study at the interpretation stage. The researcher had a belief that the mixing of philosophies under the similar paradigm can lead this study towards accurate outcomes.

Supporting the above some writers (Cohen and Manion, 1980; Creswell, 1994) suggest methodological pluralism overcomes the necessity for an either or approach to data collection;

Social scientists have come to abandon the spurious choice between quantitative and qualitative data: they are concerned rather with the combination of both which makes use of the most valuable features of each.

(Cohen and Manion, 1980, p.40)

And also Creswell (1994) sets out three possible methods of combined research designs:

Use the two-phase design, the dominant less dominant design or the mixed methodology design to combine quantitative and qualitative approaches in a single study.

(Creswell, 1994,p.177)

Taking each of these in turn, the **two-phase** design is where the researcher conducts a qualitative phase of the study and a separate quantitative phase. The advantage of this Creswell suggests, is that the two paradigms are clearly separate and it enables the researcher to present the paradigm assumptions behind each phase.

The second model suggested by Creswell is the **dominant less dominant** design. With this model the researcher presents the study within a single paradigm with one small component of the overall study drawn from the alternative paradigm. The advantage of this model is that it presents a consistent paradigm picture within the study and gathers limited information to probe in detail one aspect of the study. The chief disadvantage is that qualitative purists would see this approach, as misusing the qualitative paradigm and quantitative purists would be similarly concerned regarding the misuse of the positivistic paradigm.

The third model suggested by Creswell (*ibid*) is the **mixed-methodological** design. This represents the highest degree of mixing paradigms of the three approaches. The research would mix aspects of the qualitative and quantitative approaches at all or in many methodological steps for example in the introduction, in the literature review, in the use of theory, in the purpose statement and in the research questions. The model adds complexity to the design and uses the advantages of both qualitative and quantitative paradigms. One of the disadvantages however is that a mixed-methodological design requires a sophisticated knowledge of both paradigms and links paradigms which may be unacceptable to some researchers.

3.1.5.Triangulation

An alternative way of thinking about a mixed method approach to research is to consider it as part of triangulation. Originally conceptualised by Webb *et al.* (1996) in Bryman 2001, it is an approach to research whereby more than one method could be employed, resulting in greater confidence in the findings. Cohen and Manion (1994) point out that its original use was as a technique of physical measurement used by maritime navigators, military strategists and surveyors, where several locational markers were used to pinpoint a single spot or objective. Cohen and Manion (1994) suggest that in the social sciences it is used to explain more fully the richness and complexity of human behaviour by studying it from more than one standpoint by making use of both quantitative and qualitative data.

Cohen and Manion (*ibid.*) extend concepts of triangulation to include the work of Denzin (1970) who suggests a number of types of triangulation:

Time Triangulation:

This type takes account of changes over time in planning the research and uses cross sectional and longitudinal designs.

Space Triangulation:

This type tries to take account of the mono-cultural aspects of conducting research in one country by making use of cross-cultural techniques.

Combined Levels of triangulation:

This type uses more than one level of analysis from the three levels used in the social sciences, individual, groups and collectivities and gathers data from all three levels.

Investigator Triangulation:

This type engages more than one observer in the data-gathering phase.

Methodological Triangulation:

This type uses either (a) the same method on different occasions, or (b) different methods on the same object of study.

(Adapted from Denzin's (1980) typology in Cohen and Manion, 1994, p.84)

This study was predominantly a qualitative study, employing one quantitative method (Questionnaire). This fits within Creswell's (1994) **dominant less dominant design**. Secondly two types of triangulation (as proposed in Denzin's typology) were employed. Firstly **investigator triangulation** was employed through the use an independent observer during the lesson observation phase. I provided all the information about the study before the observation. As an experienced supervisor this independent observer observed the entire lesson independently and he expressed his views independently. Secondly **methodological triangulation** was used in that a quantitative method(questionnaire) to gather preliminary information on the subject of the research, for a qualitative study which used focus group discussion, semi-structured interviews and observations. At the preliminary stage, this study used the 'focus group discussion' in order to get the insights and opinions of the teachers and students. Bryman (2001) suggests this is

one of the key ways a quantitative method can be employed while undertaking qualitative research:

One of the chief ways in which quantitative research can prepare the ground for qualitative research is through the selection of people to be interviewed

(Bryman, 2001, p.450)

3.1.6.Characteristics of a qualitative methodology

The decision that this study be a qualitative study also suggests that it should exhibit certain characteristics that conform to a mainly qualitative approach to research. As we have seen qualitative research aims to provide an in-depth understanding of people's experiences, perspectives and histories in the context of their personal circumstances. Spencer *et al.* (2003), Bryman (2001), further suggests that many distinctive features of qualitative research are characterised by a concern with exploring phenomena from the perspective of those being studied and uses mainly unstructured methods that are sensitive to the context of the study. Qualitative research sets out to capture data, which is rich, detailed and complex, and employs a mainly inductive analytic process, developing explanations at the micro level rather than free laws which would be more characteristic of positivistic approaches. Qualitative research sets out mainly to answer 'what is', 'how', and 'why' questions.

Writers (Gomm, 2004; Scott and Usher, 1999; Bryman, 2001) approach the definition of qualitative research in a variety of ways. Spencer *et al.* (2003) suggests one way to do this is to define qualitative research in terms of a collection of research methods. These methods include those that attempt to capture naturally occurring data where behaviour is enacted in

its natural setting and 'generated' data that involves 'reconstruction', like recounting of experiences or beliefs. The range of methods for both approaches includes;

- Participant observation
- Observation
- Analysis of existing documents or visual data
- Discourse analysis
- Conversation analysis
- Biographical methods
- Diary keeping and journal
- Individual interviews
- Focus groups

(Adapted from Spencer *et al.*, 2003, p.31)

A variety of authors (Gomm, 2004; Scott and Usher, 1999; Bryman, 2001; Spencer *et al.*, 2003) set out the key features of qualitative methods. In addition to the characteristics already mentioned, for example a concern with meanings from the view point of the subjects of the research, the capturing of data which is detailed rich and complex, a mainly inductive rather than deductive analytic process, they also suggest there are other characteristics of a qualitative methodology. There is a concern, for example, for the researcher's role and perspective. There is also a preference for undertaking the research in naturalistic settings, hence the focus groups were conducted in the natural college setting and also the interviews.

3.2. Ideological approach to the research paradigm

The researcher may elect to use ideological perspectives to draw attention to the needs of people and social action (Punch, 1998). Creswell (1998, p.78) pointed out the essence of ideology as:

‘The researcher may include one or more of these perspectives in different aspects of a study such as in a conceptual perspective at the beginning of a study, in the approach to data collection, in self-disclosing comments throughout the qualitative narrative, or in issues chosen to study’. Postmodernism is a development in thought which rejects the assumptions of the enlightenment, modifying the discourses of modernity (Waugh, 1992), and challenging previous conceptions of reality and knowledge. Modernist science assumes a known subject, a known object and unambiguous knowledge based on secure foundations. On the other hand postmodernism argues that none of these can be taken for granted, and all must be doubted. It views the world as pluralistic, split into a multitude of sovereign units and sites of authority. It stresses that the social world does not come organised into disciplinary, connected components, so that any attempt to describe it that way is a construction of such a world, not a representation of it (Usher et.al, 1997).

Postmodernism opposes conceptions of knowledge as secure and disinterested; rather, all knowledge is produced through discourse, all knowledge is ‘constructed, contested, incessantly perspectival and polyphonic’ (Lather, 1991, p.20). Postmodernism therefore implies not a rejection of methods, but a questioning and a doubting of all methods.

Postmodernism thus implies openness to new and different ways of knowing, and an opening up of new questions about how we do research. It means constantly being vigilant in research and taking nothing for granted. According to the above considerations, the postmodernist way of thinking was applied throughout the process of this study.

3.3.The qualitative posture of the researcher

A ‘posture’ can be defined as a state or condition taken by one person at a given time especially in relation to other persons or things (Maykut & Morehouse, 1996). A qualitative posture is very different from the posture of a quantitative researcher because each research orientation is based on different sets of postulates regarding the nature of the world.

The qualitative researcher, or naturalistic inquirer is a part of the investigation as a participant observer, an in-depth interviewer, or a leader of a focus group but also removes him/her from the situation to rethink the meanings of the experience. To reach their goals, researchers in the traditional orientation look to reliable and valid non-human instruments of data collection and statistical analysis, while the qualitative inquirer looks to indwelling as a posture and to the 'human as instrument' for the collection and analysis of data.

'The human as instrument' is a concept by Lincoln & Guba (1985) to illustrate the unique position taken by qualitative researchers and builds implicitly on Polanyi's (1958) concept of indwelling. Lincoln & Guba (1985, p.193) argue that '*a person that is a human-as-instrument is the only instrument which is flexible enough to capture the complexity, subtlety, and constantly changing situation which is the human experience*'. Further they explained that 'human instrument is responsive, adaptable and holistic and a human investigator can explore the atypical or idiosyncratic responses in ways that are not possible for any instrument which is constructed in advance of the beginning of the study. A qualitative researcher learns about significant aspects of reality by indwelling in these complexities. These complexities as Lincoln & Guba states, cannot be figured out, cannot be understood by one-dimensional, reductionist approaches; they demand the human as-instrument; they demand indwelling. To restate, the human instrument is the only data collection instrument which is multifaceted enough and complex enough to capture the important elements of a human person or activity (Maykut & Morehouse, 1996).

In this study, the researcher came to the position of completing her research via a professional background as a senior education officer, an educator, supervisor and a senior lecturer in a teacher training college. Of all the feedback from colleagues, teachers, and

students the characteristics (of being sensitive to the words and actions of respondents) were confirmed over again and again. The claim was for a high level of emotional intelligence that translates into an ability to be tuned into the words and actions of others.

It is easy to make a claim at the beginning of a predominantly qualitative research process that bias and personal prejudice have no place in conducting doctoral research. However, this is easier said than done. I was already part of a learning culture (working in the Ministry of Education) and in an environment where learning was valued and viewed as a 'good thing'. In my qualitative posture as a researcher, to reduce potential bias I thought that working with my colleagues (independent observers) would assist me in recognising any bias. In this capacity the colleagues assisted me in highlighting and bringing into focus any intended or unintended bias in either the research process or research questions.

3.4 Research Strategy (Design)

The study researcher seeking to explore is best suited to a qualitative research approach. According to Lincoln and Guba the purpose of a qualitative study is to '*accumulate sufficient knowledge to lead to understanding*' (1985, p.227). They recommend the use of emergent research design, which means that data collection and data analysis are simultaneous and ongoing activities that allow for important understandings to be discovered along the way and then pursued in additional data collection efforts. This qualitative approach to inquiry also involves a case-study approach, where people and settings are explored in depth and described in detail. An in-depth review of literature revealed that an emergent research design case-study approach would help to explore the use of learner centred techniques in teacher education.

Case-study approach

After reviewing all possible strategies the case-study strategy has selected for this study. The experimental strategy was rejected in this study from the philosophical stage. Survey method was also inappropriate for this study in terms of in-depth analysis. Action research needs considerable intervention or total intervention during the investigation. Due to the constraints of resources and time it would be impossible to adopt this approach. The case-study method was finally chosen for this study in order to investigate the use of learner centred techniques in teacher education in Sri Lanka. According to Johnson and Christensen (2000) there are three types of case study that need to be consulted. They tabled the following types of case strategies:

Types of Case Studies:

Intrinsic case study	<p>The researcher's primary interest is in understanding a specific case. In this single-case design, the researcher describes in depth the particulars of the case in order to shed light on the case. The goal is to understand the case as a holistic entity as well as to understand its inner workings. A secondary goal is to understand a more general process based on an analysis of the single case.</p> <p>"The more the case study is an intrinsic case study, the more attention needs to be paid to the contexts." (Stake, 1995, p. 64)</p>
Instrumental case study	<p>The researcher's primary interest is in understanding something other than a particular case. The case is seen as important only as a means to an end. The goal tends to be less particularistic and more universalistic – the researchers doing this kind of case study are less interested in making conclusions that are specific to the case and its particular setting than they are in making conclusions that apply beyond a particular case.</p> <p>"The more the case study is an instrumental case study, certain contexts may be important, but other contexts important to the case are of little interest to the study."</p>

	(Stake, 1995, p.64)
Collective Case Study	<p>The researcher studies multiple cases in one overall research study in an effort to gain greater insights. The cases in the collective case study are usually studied instrumentally rather than intrinsically.</p> <p>Advantages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • A comparative type of study can be conducted in which several cases are compared for similarities and differences. • • One can more effectively test a theory by observing the results of multiple cases. • • One is more likely to be able to generalize the results from multiple cases than from a single case <p>Disadvantage:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • Depth of analysis will usually have to be sacrificed because of the breadth of the analysis.

After considering the advantages and the needs, this study will seek to undertake single intrinsic case study for investigating the learner centred techniques in teacher education.

Selection of Colleges: out of fifteen colleges of education one was selected purposefully. Denzin and Lincoln (1994, p.202) suggest that 'many qualitative researchers employ...purposive, and not random, sampling methods. They seek out groups, settings and individuals where...the processes being studied are most likely to occur'. The Aluthgama College of Education (Tamil) was selected because this is a female teacher training institution which was criticised by the PER (2003) report. The PER report mainly requested the directors to do further study particularly in the above college. This institution was also very accessible to the researcher.

3.5.Data gathering tools used

As the main aim of this study is to investigate the learner centred techniques regarding the delivery of teaching programme the needed data was collected through the following process:

1. Focus group discussion
2. Questionnaire: (Teachers and Students)
3. Observation (Teachers)
4. Interviews (Teachers and Students)
5. Interviews (Heads)
6. Documentary analysis

The question still remains what were the most appropriate methods that would remain consistent with a mainly qualitative study that would employ some triangulation and would effectively investigate the main research question? Unfortunately, there is no magic or formulaic solution to the choice of research method. Denscombe (1998) writes:

In good research the choices are (a) reasonable and (b) made explicit as part of any research report.

(Denscombe, 1998, p.26)

The choice of research method is partly to do with the research question, partly to do with the researcher and finally with the constraints of the research activity, for example, time and money. Bearing this in mind, the preferred and chosen method for this research at the preliminary stage was to use focus group discussion.

3.5.1The use of focus group discussion

The decision to use focus group discussion as one of my main instruments of data collection was very bound up with the decision to use a mainly qualitative methodology. Focus groups

were used because it was known that people had a certain experience in common (all are teachers and trainee teachers) and could discuss in a relatively unstructured way about that experience.

Researchers have used focus group discussions to examine ways in which people in conjunction with one another think about or experience the general topic of interest to the researcher. Focus groups have also been used extensively in market research, to collect opinion, and in my study generating the preliminary themes about the learner centred approach were the key areas for my investigation. Bloor et al. (2001) suggest that focus groups have a part to play as a complementary method in social research. They can be used as pre-pilot methods, to provide a contextual basis for survey design, as a contemporary extension of survey and other methods, to provide an interpretive aid to survey findings and to communicate findings to research subjects.

There was another very good reason to use focus groups as one of the main data collection methods for my research in that they enabled more participation in the research process. It gave the firm basis for the research theme. Bloor (ibid) summarises rather well the use of focus groups in research:

In the access they provide to norms and meanings focus groups are not just the time-pressed researcher's poor substitute for ethnographic fieldwork, they are a mainstream method to address study topics in increasingly privatised societies, which are less open to observational methods.

(Bloor *et al.*, 2001, p.17)

By contrast, Krueger (1988) highlights some disadvantages in conducting focus groups. He noted that the researcher has less control over the group and is less able to control what information will be produced.

- Focus groups produce relatively chaotic data making data analysis more difficult.
 - Small numbers and convenience sampling severely limit ability to generalize to larger populations
 - They require carefully trained interviewers who are knowledgeable about group dynamics.
- A moderator may knowingly or unknowingly bias results by providing clues about what types of responses are desirable
- There is uncertainty about the accuracy of what participants say. Results may be biased by the presence of a very dominant or opinionated member; more reserved members may be hesitant to talk.

Similarly Sherraden (2001) points out some limitation of focus group discussion. He says, moderator requires special skills - stimulating and managing a guided group discussion is not as easy as it sounds, and the skill of the moderator can have a tremendous impact on the "success" of the group, i.e., whether discussion flows freely. 'Moderating focus groups is much like writing poetry: anyone can do it, but few do it really well' (Ellison Research, 2001). Twenty years of experience in the field of education enabled the researcher to overcome the limitations and made the focus group a success. And triangulating the data with other sources also made the study to collect more reliable data.

In my research the focus groups did generate rich data, and the use of them fitted in with my own philosophical position using mainly a qualitative methodology. Eight focus group discussions were held, four with teachers and four with students (trainee teachers). They each lasted nearly two hours and were undertaken at times and places convenient to the participants. Seven to twelve members participated in each group.

The focus groups started with a short presentation by the researcher, giving an overview of the research, and to set the scene. This was followed by a short commentary on the importance of confidentiality, and that it was expected, in the most professional way, that all participants would uphold any confidences spoken during the research period. The discussion was manually recorded by two of the researcher's colleagues, as it was felt important to keep a record of the focus group activities, for ethical reasons, as well as to add to the validity of the research.

Learner centred techniques were discussed at the beginning of the focus group discussion. A similar understanding was developed in terms of learner centredness in teacher education. The valuable themes emerged at the end (see appendix one).

3.5.2 Questionnaires

In order to collect the thick data about the research area, the questionnaire was chosen by the researcher. It was constructed through the emerged theme from the focus group discussions.

(A) Questionnaire (teachers): A questionnaire was given to all (sixty nine) teachers. The researcher personally delivered the questionnaire after a brief explanation about the questionnaire. Sixty five teachers returned the questionnaire (a response rate of 93 percent). The following themes were used to form the questionnaire (which emerged from the focus group discussion).

- Content and programme
- Subject delivery/strategies
- Learning environment
- Lecturers' characteristics

(See appendix two)

The collected responses were analysed quantitatively and qualitatively. Further it was analysed in the in-depth interviews.

(B) Questionnaire (Students): A questionnaire was given to all final year (three hundred and two) students to express their opinions. Two hundred and fifty one students returned the questionnaire. It was delivered directly with the help of colleagues. The following themes were used to form the students' questionnaire:

- Content and delivery
- Learning experience
- Expectations
- Support (learning environment)

The collected responses were analysed quantitatively and qualitatively. The overall questionnaire responses from the teachers and students formed a strong basis for the in-depth interviews on the learner centred approach to teacher education.

The use of self-completion questionnaire

Denscombe (1998) sets out some good reasons for using self-completion questionnaires:

When the research is going to cover a large number of people in many

- When you are asking fairly straightforward questions;
- locations;
- When there is good reason to believe you will get open and honest answers;
- When there is a need for standardised data;
- When resources allow for the costs of printing, postage and data preparation;
- When the respondents can read and follow the question.

(Adapted from Denscombe, 1998, p. 132)

In justifying my use of self-completion questionnaires as one of my data collection techniques, my research did cover a large number of respondents (three hundred students

and sixty nine teachers). Secondly, the questionnaire was designed to provide answers to some straightforward questions on learner centred techniques. Thirdly, I had no reason to believe that I would get anything other than open and honest answers given that my research was not of a sensitive or confidential nature.

There was no issue regarding administering the questionnaire. It was delivered directly without any cost. However, time to undertake the research was a constraint, and conducting a research using self-completion questionnaires seemed a method that would bring some early results, prior to undertaking the in-depth interviews.

As all the respondents (teachers and students) were familiar with ‘learner centeredness’ (through researcher’s and colleagues’ presentations), there were no anticipated problems with them understanding and reading instructions (i.e. it was correctly assumed that Tamil was the first language). Finally, in planning my research, I thought it would be useful to have some early feedback from participants to shape the final questions for the in-depth interviews.

3.5.3 Observations

Observation is a qualitative, non-numerical data collection method used widely in various areas of research. It is an active approach involving all of the human senses where reliability rests upon the researcher rather than upon other external sources (Fox, 1998). The observation technique is derived from the concept of naturalism, which, according to Hammersley and Atkinson (1989:6-7), proposes that, as far as possible, the social world should be studied in its ‘natural’ state: undisturbed by the researcher.

Observational techniques are methods by which an individual or individuals gather firsthand data on programs, processes, or behaviours being studied. They provide evaluators

with an opportunity to collect data on a wide range of behaviours, to capture a great variety of interactions, and to openly explore the evaluation topic. Marshall and Rossman (1989) define observation as "*the systematic description of events, behaviours, and artefacts in the social setting chosen for study*" (p.79). Observations enable the researcher to describe existing situations using the five senses, providing a "written photograph" of the situation under study (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, & Allen, 1993).

Observation methods are useful to researchers in a variety of ways. They provide researchers with ways to check for nonverbal expression of feelings, determine who interacts with whom, grasp how participants communicate with each other, and check for how much time is spent on various activities (Schmuck, 1997). Similarly Sechrest (1979) suggests that social attitudes are best studied through observation in natural, real-life situations.

For this study fifteen teachers were selected randomly for the observation. They were informed and permission was obtained at the beginning. Two independent observers willingly helped in the observation process. The following were observed in terms of learner centredness:

1. preparedness
2. subject knowledge
3. subject delivery (application)
4. assessment
5. overall learning environment

A check list was used for the observation (see appendix three). Direct observation was manually recorded. The overall suggestions were made after triangulating the data with the independent observers. Later it was analysed quantitatively and qualitatively. The data

gathered from observation also helped to shape the final questions for the in-depth interviews.

3.5.4 Interviews

Phenomenological inquiry allows for a range of data collection methods. Van Manen (1990, p. 53-76), for instance, lists:

- obtaining experiential descriptions or protocol writing from others,
- interviewing,
- observing,
- using descriptions from literature or biographies,
- diaries, journals or logs,
- using phenomenological literature or art.

The current research used interviewing which, in Van Manen's terms, serves two main purposes in hermeneutic phenomenology:

1. as a means for exploring and gathering experiential narrative material that serves as a resource for developing a deeper and richer understanding of a human phenomenon.
2. as a vehicle to develop a conversational relation with an interviewee about the meaning of an experience.

(Van Manen, 1990, p.66)

Interviewing

For this study, both of the above purposes were significant, with interviews conducted with each respondent. The interviews were conducted in a semi-structured format. Lincoln and Guba (1985, p.269) suggest that the structured interview is the mode of choice when the interviewer has a clear understanding of the type of information that he or she wishes to elicit, whilst the unstructured interview is utilised when the researcher does not know what

it is that he or she does not know and is reliant on the respondent to tell him or her. In the present case, whilst a literature review had not led to the development of any a priori conceptual framework to guide the interview process, the researcher was sufficiently familiar with a number of ideas and themes from the literature to be able to follow lines of inquiry that suggested themselves from an interviewee's responses. In addition, the researcher had considerable experience of teacher education and was very familiar with the demands of learner centredness in an adult learning setting. She had undertaken preliminary research projects in the same area of interest. She had also worked for some time as a senior lecturer in a teacher training institute.

Two separate semi-structured interviews were conducted one for teachers and the other for students. In each category eight members were selected for the above interviews. The focus questions were asked in both the interviews. After the interviews, full transcripts were presented to each participant for further verification and amendment. A few amendments were requested where participants felt that their intended meaning had not been clear, but in general the required amendments concerned only 'untidy' verbatim language which the respondents wished to modify.

The interview technique consisted of the interviewer asking a broad opening question and then listening analytically to the response in order to follow up with more probing questions to obtain clarification or elaboration if desired. Minichiello *et al.* (1990, p.101) refer to the researcher's need to participate in the interaction yet at the same time maintain a 'critical inner dialogue'. This inner dialogue involved focusing on the direction of the informant's response, identifying the central ideas, considering which aspects might be useful in relation to the research problem, and deciding whether more information was needed to further illuminate a particular area. In some cases it was not necessary to ask all the planned

interview questions, since many responses were all-encompassing. Attention was given to Van Manen's (1990, p.66) reminder that 'it is important to realise that the interview process needs to be disciplined by the fundamental question that prompted the need for the interview in the first place'.

Each interview was tape recorded, with the prior agreement of the participant, and the tape subsequently transcribed in full. Minichiello et al. (1990, p.99) suggest that the tape-recorder might inhibit interaction due to feelings of vulnerability, especially in relation to potential later misrepresentation. In the current case, all informants were accustomed to being interviewed, and furthermore, assurances had been given, of the anonymity of participants, their right to view and amend the full transcripts of the interviews, and their right to withdraw from the study at any time.

The following describes the way in which the interviews were analysed. The procedure followed was that outlined by Tesch (1990, p.92-113) for 'interpretational analysis', where the interest is in the comprehension of the meaning of language, which, as previously discussed applies hermeneutic phenomenology. Analysis in interpretive methodology consists of the segmentation of data and the categorisation of those data segments according to an organising system that is predominantly derived from the data itself (Tesch, 1996). 'Material that belongs together topically is assembled conceptually and physically in one place'. In this research the unit of categorisation was the theme, which was an aggregation of data segments in which meanings were focused on a common concept. The main intellectual tool was comparison, with the goal being 'to discern conceptual similarities, to refine the discriminative power of categories, and to discover patterns'.

The procedure outlined by Tesch (1990, p.92-113) and followed in this research consisted of several steps:

Reading of the entire data set

This reading was more than a casual taking note of the content. Rather, it involved the researcher immersing herself in the data, reading and re-reading and 'dwelling with the data', to achieve a sense of the whole and to begin to understand some of the discrete elements contributing to the whole.

Delineation of 'meaning unit'

A meaning unit is described by Tesch (1990, p.116) as a 'segment of text that is comprehensible by itself and contains one idea, episode or piece of information'. Whilst one approach here would have been to delineate all meaning units within the text and then decide which were meaningful to the research questions, this was considered to be uneconomical, particularly since the researcher was familiar with ideas from the literature and had some sense of which material was or was not pertinent to the research. Accordingly, the procedure followed was that of identifying material that was relevant to the research objectives and then bounding the meaning units that contained that material.

Grouping of the meaning units into themes

Although each interview was treated individually so that themes could be identified in relation to the whole of a single respondent's experience, it was important to compare across the interviews in order to establish the range of themes vis-a vis one another, since although different respondents expressed material in different ways, underlying meanings might be the same. Across the eight interviews, several themes were identified. The meaning units were then taken from across the eight interviews and clustered around these themes, before being further grouped into sub-themes and, in some cases, even further grouped into specific aspects of the sub-themes.

Connection with literature

The final part of the research procedure was to connect the interpretations or findings with the literature on learner centredness , within the broader parameters of teacher education, as discussed in Chapter Two. According to Minichiello et al. (1990, p.70), using the literature allows for connections to be made with past knowledge, locates the research within current understandings in the field in question, broadens knowledge and makes the new information more comprehensible. Thus connections with previous research findings were made wherever possible, and new ideas were presented with recommendations for further research.

3.6 Delimitations and limitations

All research is subject to delimitations and limitations. Delimitation is concerned with the boundaries which define the parameters within which the research matter is located, while limitation is concerned with the restrictions and qualifications that can be placed on the findings. Much of the discussion concerning the delimitations and limitations of the current study arises through the use of a qualitative methodology which, according to Miles and Huberman (1984, p.16), offers certain benefits and problems as set out below.

The major delimitations of this research are that it is concerned with the phenomenon of learner centredness and that the boundaries of the research are determined solely by the perceptions of the subjects whose practice is being investigated. It is further delimited in its focus on a single case. Another delimitation is that the research is descriptive and interpretive rather than experimental and theory-oriented. In this study the phenomenon of learner centredness was described by teachers and students, this was interpreted by the researcher, and from this emerged a number of findings which were compared to existing

knowledge and led to some implications, recommendations, and suggestions for further research directions.

The major limitation of this research lies in its lack of generalisability. Limitations often arise from delimitations, and that is the case in this study. The boundaries described above limit what can be said in relation to the findings. The research involved a single case. The intention was not to generalise by drawing conclusions about all institutions. Rather, the intention was to discover something about the phenomenon of learner centredness in the particular institution. This has been done, with some implications and recommendations drawn and suggestions made for further research.

3.7 Ethical considerations in qualitative research

An important consideration in any research methodology (either qualitative or quantitative) refers to ethics in research. The question of ethics is closely linked to the concept of morality. In the strictest sense, positivism supports the position that 'facts' are amoral and therefore in the pursuit of knowledge, ethical questions are not important. In reality however this is difficult to maintain and researchers that support a positivistic view, do so in relation to some moral codes and ethical considerations. Lumby (2002, p.4) in defining ethics: *'conduct based upon adherence to a set of principles which may be explicit and codified or implicit and which may be impersonal or concrete and personal'*.

The decision to take up an ethical position in relation to the research being undertaken is in part governed by the philosophical stance of the researcher. It has been a consideration in my own choice of research methodology. Denscombe (2002 and Lumby (2002) support the view that that there are sound practice reasons for undertaking ethical research:

The acceptability of social research depends increasingly on the willingness of social researchers to accord respect to their subjects and to treat them with consideration.

(Denscombe, 2002, p.175)

This is closely linked to the question of consent. Denscombe (ibid) suggests that informed consent is the benchmark for social research ethics. It is now accepted that all social science research adheres to the principle of informed consent. It includes the following characteristics:

- All pertinent aspects of what is to occur and what might occur are disclosed to the subject;
- The subject should be able to comprehend the information
- The subject is competent to make a rational and mature judgement;
- The agreement to participate is voluntary, and free from coercion and undue influence.

(Denscombe, 2002, p.184)

Seeking subjects' consent and taking an ethical stance has been influential in this research. Firstly, the permission was obtained from the Ministry of Education. Secondly the college permission was obtained. Thirdly in a staff meeting, staff opinion was sought about filling in the questionnaire, observation and the interviews to ensure that the participants were willing to participate. Similarly the students consent was also obtained.

3.8 Validity and Reliability (Trustworthiness)

In their promotion of naturalistic research, Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest ways of overcoming the traditional claim that such research lacks standards for rigour. They put

forward a set of concepts to be used to establish what they refer to as the 'trustworthiness' of findings derived from qualitative research. The level of 'trustworthiness' refers to the extent to which the findings are 'worth paying attention to, worth taking account of (1985, p.290).

The concepts proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985) are, 'credibility' rather than internal validity as a standard for truth value, 'transferability' rather than external validity as a standard for applicability, 'dependability' rather than reliability as a standard for consistency, and 'conformability' rather than objectivity as a standard for neutrality (1985, p.300). Each of these will be discussed in turn in terms of its relevance to the current study.

Credibility

This is concerned with the extent to which the findings and interpretations are seen to be credible by those who were the sources of the data (Lincoln and Guba, p.296). This can be enhanced in several ways, as follows;

1. prolonged engagement : the investment of sufficient time to know the situation well, to overcome distortions and to build trust.
2. Persistent observation: to improve capacity to identify what is and is not salient.
3. Triangulation: the use of multiple and different sources, methods, investigators and /or theories.
4. Peer debriefing: use of a critical, disinterested peer to explore aspects of the inquiry
5. Negative case analysis: a process of revising an hypothesis until it accounts for all cases.

6. Referential adequacy: setting aside a part of the raw data as archival material for later testing of findings.
7. Member checking: the use of participants to check the data, analytic categories, interpretations and conclusions.

For the current study, the main methods of enhancing credibility were prolonged engagement, triangulation, and persistent observation. The interviews were only semi-structured, so that the discussion unfolded in an interactive manner and the respondents could understand the researcher's direction of thought and respond to it. In addition, the continuity of the researcher's engagement, assisted in building a climate of trust. Finally, several telephone calls occurred towards the end of the study, so that the researcher could clarify areas where meanings were not clear or fully enough explained. The observation was done with the help of an independent observer and the suggestions were made after triangulating the data.

Transferability

This is concerned with the provision of a 'thick description' or data base of the time and context of the study, to allow others to judge whether the findings might be applied to other sites. The researcher's task is to provide sufficient data to make transferability judgements possible on the part of potential applicers (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p.316), using a (preliminary) quantitative method in a predominantly qualitative study and using interviews in a particular case (single college) meant that the research cannot be generalised. However, some valuable insights and observations have been collected from adult students and staff in teacher education. Their situation was unique and my research sought to understand their circumstances, describe and interpret what they might mean. Those who want to use the results of my research will need to examine the underlying philosophy, the methodology,

the methods and analysis strategies to understand the extent to which the study might be applied to another situation. What may be capable of some transfer are the conclusions, the lessons learned and the larger theoretical concepts. In doing this it will also provide an opportunity to decide what is missing and what new research needs to be undertaken in the future.

Dependability and Conformability

Dependability is concerned with judgement about the extent to which the findings are grounded in the data and would be repeated with similar participants in similar contexts. Conformability is concerned with the extent to which the findings are attributes of the participants and context and not the researcher.

Both of these can be satisfied through the use of the so-called Halpern algorithm (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p.319). This involves an 'audit' consisting of the examination of, first, the *process* of the inquiry (fairness of representation, accuracy of records) to determine its acceptability or dependability and, second, the *product*, (internal coherence of data, findings, interpretations and recommendation) to determine its conformability. The two major steps involved are the keeping of records which can be used to provide the evidence required, and the engagement of an independent person to conduct the audit.

In this research first, records of raw data were kept, both in tape recordings of the interviews and manual transcripts. A clear description was provided of the process of selection of participants, and of the data collection and analysis procedures. During the data analysis phase of the study, the researcher contacted her supervisor to review decisions about themes and categories that were being developed. Finally, a clear report writing was made to give the reader direct access to the data.

3.9 Conclusion

Setting out the philosophy of this research study sets the scene for a full discussion on qualitative research using Creswell's (1994) dominant less dominant design and also includes both investigator and methodological triangulation (Bryman, 2001; Denscombe, 2002) the approaches adopted in this research. Predominantly qualitative methodology sits firmly and unashamedly within the researcher's own philosophical approach to educational research, that of reflective practitioner. Data gathering tools and instruments were chosen in order to remain consistent with this approach. These involved both quantitative and qualitative methods for example, literature review, questionnaires, focus group discussion, interviews and observations. The uses of these methods are justified and support the key research questions in this study. The chapter concluded with a discussion on techniques used for analysis and includes important questions of trustworthiness and credibility.

CHAPTER 4
DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

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CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter (chapter 3) discussed the methodology adopted in this study. This chapter discusses the data presentation and analysis on learner centredness which includes various themes lecturer related, teaching process related, course related and student related. Student and staff views and opinions are separately analysed in terms of the above themes. Each theme focuses mainly on the learner centred orientation.

A Brief Discussion on Learner centredness

Although this study explained the term learner centredness in the previous chapters it was felt that to give a brief explanation again about learner centredness. Literature suggests that *the subject matter has relevance and meaning for the learner* Brandes and Ginnis (1986, cited in Burge and Howard 1988: 2–3). A learner-centred view, which include:

... the learner's ability, resource and opportunities for access to learning; the choices in course content and course process; the relationships between theory and immediate, practical problems to be solved, and between one's own experience and knowledge and that of others; the diversity in how individual preferences in learning styles and needs are shown, and in the levels of adult development reached, in terms of cognitive, psychological, physical and moral development; and the support mechanisms needed and available for success in a course (Burge and Howard 1988, p. 5).

Garforth, (1964) says, that *'knowledge is seeing...till we ourselves see it with our own eyes and perceive it by our own understandings, we are so much in the dark and as void*

of knowledge as before' ... 'learner-centred teachers must learn to view the curriculum through the learners' perceptions' (Garforth, 1964, p. 12). The literature evidence also suggested that the colleges should pay attention to the 'social learning theory' and 'constructivist theory' and more emphasis must be given to the adult learning theory in order to change teaching practices towards quality approaches (Jeffrey, 1985; Ernest, 1995). Literature on change suggests that to bring about effective change in teacher education in Sri Lanka, college leaders and teachers need to look at colleges from the perspectives of their learners (Howard and Gill, 2000).

Further, the literature revealed the importance of discovery and inquiry instructional methods in terms of learner centredness. The 'inquiry' method is a tool for the curious, a tool for those who seek to understand their surroundings, and a tool that offers a methodical approach for acquiring knowledge (AAAS, 1994; Roblyer *et al.*, 1997; Lawry, 1998). Some other literature also suggests that teaching adults should be approached in a different way (Beder and Darkenwald, 1982; Knowles, 1984; Fever and Geber, 1988; Vella, 2002).

The literature evidence also suggested that the learner-centred approach is the most suitable method even for the adult learners and learner centred classrooms place students at the centre of classroom organisation and respect their learning needs, strategies and styles (McCombs, 1997; Edmond, 2000; Scherer, 2001; McDonald, 2002). Further literature suggested that the lecturers need to improve their competencies on planning, subject knowledge, method and evaluation for effective teaching (ITE Report, 1998). The document analysis also indicated the '*learner orientation*' as one of

the main purposes of teacher education. The Sri Lankan teacher education indicated teacher trainees as its primary customers. These customers are indicated as *learners* in the policy report and also indicate that the focus of the programme is the *learner* (NATE Report, 2001). Further literature suggested that the learner autonomy is as (Holec 1981: 3, cited in Benson & Voller, 1997: 1) ‘the ability to take charge of one’s learning’.

As the main aim of this study is to investigate the learner centred techniques regarding the delivery of teaching programme the needed data was collected through the following process:

1. Focus group discussion
2. Questionnaire: (Teachers and Students)
3. Observation (Teachers)
4. Interviews (Teachers and Students)
5. Interviews (Heads)
6. Documentary analysis

4.2 Data gathered from the focus group discussion

Focus group discussion (Staff)

Four focus group discussions were held, two in the morning and two in the evening, the same day. Staff were informed and permission was obtained for their participation. The focus groups started with a short presentation by the researcher, giving an overview of the research, and to set the scene. This was followed by a short commentary on the importance of confidentiality, and that it was expected, all participants would act professionally during the discussion. The discussion was manually recorded by two of the

researcher's colleagues, to keep a record of the focus group activities, for ethical reasons, as well as to add to the validity of the research.

Learner centred techniques were discussed at the beginning of the focus group discussion.

A similar understanding was developed in terms of learner centredness in teacher education. The following sub themes emerged while discussing the learner centredness:

- teachers' status
- control and freedom
- learner autonomy
- learner responsibility
- discipline and
- religious belief.

The participants mentioned several important remarks about the learner centred themes. For example one participant stated that *while motivating learner centredness in teaching we cannot forget about the teachers' status... as teachers we should be respected. I personally feel that more freedom will spoil better learning. I think we need to think about the balance between learner and teachers status.* In supporting the above another participant indicated that *our system may be a controlled one...but in comparison to the western world ours is a more disciplined one. We need these disciplined and controlled classrooms for better learning.*

In contrast, another participant indicated that *we need to give freedom to the students. They are adult learners. Not children. They know good and bad. Learner autonomy and freedom will enhance their ability.* And concerning the religious belief, she added *...we*

motivate the religious belief. It gives them an order and discipline. It is nothing to do with the learning style. The learners know about the limits. But as teachers we must give them a certain amount of freedom but in a controlled system.

While answering the question on ‘delivering the programme in enhancing the learner centredness’, one participant answered that ... *we deliver the subject according to the students’ motivation. But sometimes it cannot be done. We are given a heavy work load. We have to finish everything in a limited time. Nobody thinks about our workload.*

Another participant stated that *I personally feel that delivering the subject is an important matter. Learners are always following us. We act as models. We have to use the ‘delivering’ mode as an important tool in enhancing the learner centredness. The way in which we teach will directly impact on their learning. Therefore we must use the strategies which will motivate the students.*

In conclusion, the themes which emerged from the focus group discussions are presented in Table 4.1.

Table: 4.1 Key themes and sub themes

Key Themes	Sub Themes
Lecturer related	Lecturer performance, Feedback, Subject knowledge, Characteristics Experience, Confidence
Teaching process	Teaching methods/practice, Interactions/responsiveness Learning objectives, Delivering
Course related	Course evaluation, Assessments/feedback,

	Course relevance, Course materials
Student related	Expectations, Motivation, Needs

Focus group discussion (Students)

Four focus group discussions were held, two in the morning and two in the evening, of the same day. Students were informed and permission was obtained for their participation.

The focus groups started with a short presentation by the researcher, giving an overview of the research, and to set the scene. As in previous discussions this was followed by a short commentary on the importance of confidentiality, and that it was expected all participants would act professionally during the discussion. The discussion was manually recorded by two of the researcher's colleagues, as it was felt important to keep a record of the focus group activities, for ethical reasons, as well as to add to the validity of the research.

Learner centred techniques were discussed at the beginning of the focus group discussion. A similar understanding was developed in terms of learner centredness in teacher education. The following sub themes emerged while discussing the learner centredness:

- subject knowledge
- teaching delivery
- teacher performance
- teacher characteristics
- freedom and learner autonomy
- motivation
- flexible interactions

-adult learning

The participants mentioned several important remarks about the learner centred themes. For example one participant stated that *for me ... teacher's characteristics are very important. I expect polite, kind, enthusiastic and creative teachers. I don't like a strict and rigid person. They must see everything through our perspective.* In supporting the above another participant stated that. *most of them are very rude and strict...we are not children anymore. We know how to behave in a classroom situation. I personally like a very knowledgeable teacher. It means they have an understanding of their subject.*

Most of the participants mentioned interaction. One stated that *we like to interact with the lecturers. But we are rarely allowed to interact with them. They expect a controlled classroom. Sometimes they teach what they intend to teach not what we need to know. I need a person who cares about the student and who allows interaction and dialogue.*

While mentioning the 'freedom' one participant stated that *we need more freedom. As adult learners we know how to learn and sometimes what to learn. We need only ...a direction. But actually I feel the school is very controlled with no freedom at all.* as above another participant indicated as *they adopt only theory. Not in practice. They teach about freedom. But in practice we are not allowed to experience it (laughing). I like a free environment in which we can learn.*

As conclusion, the themes which emerged from the focus group discussions (Students) are presented in Table 4.2

Table: 4.2 Key themes and sub themes

Key Themes	Sub Themes
Lecturer related	Lecturer performance, characteristics feedback, subject knowledge, experience, confidence
Teaching process	Teaching methods, interaction, dialogue, students' needs, motivation, flexibility, learning environment
Course related	Course evaluation, assessments/feedback, course relevance, course materials
Student related	Expectations, freedom, autonomy, motivation, needs, support

Each theme was focused mainly on learner orientation. Students indicated that the main factor regarding learner centredness was the teachers. And they also highlighted that the teaching application (delivery) also an important factor.

The questionnaire for the teachers and the students was formed based on the themes that emerged from the focus group discussions. The following section discusses the data analysis of questionnaires:

4.3 Data analysis

4.3.1 Questionnaire (students)

The questionnaire was given to the whole student group in the college. Out of 260 students 251 responded. According to the above figure it can be seen that this was a 97% response rate. The following table (Table 4.1) indicates the quantitative responses:

Table 4.2: Total responses of the students

Questions	SA(strongly agree)	A (agree)	DA(disagree)	DA(strongly disagree)
Q1	*****	240	11	*****
Q2	*****	240	11	*****
Q3	*****	26	215	10
Q4	*****	20	220	11
Q6	*****	26	215	10
Q7	*****	26	215	10
Q8	*****	20	210	21
Q9	*****	20	210	21
Q11	*****	5	215	31
Q12	*****	5	215	31
Q13	*****	35	206	10
Q14	*****	35	206	10
Q16	*****	5	240	6
Q17	*****	5	240	6
Q18	*****	2	243	6
Q19	*****	2	243	6

The above table indicates the response rate of the students. According to the above table there was no response to the category of 'strongly agree'. This suggests that there may

be some issues which require investigation in the system. The following paragraphs analyse the above raw answers qualitatively.

Major themes:

Theme 1-Content and Delivery

Four structured questions were asked about the content and delivery in enhancing the learner centred approach. The first two questions asked about the relevance of the content and its area. The two following statements were given to the students as comment on their opinion:

1. The content of the programme was generally relevant to my professional needs
2. The content of the programme covered areas which will be important to my future professional needs

96% of the respondents were agreed upon the relevance and the area which it covered.

The third and the fourth question were asked about the course delivery of the programme. But most of the respondents disagreed with the high standard of delivery. Out of 251 respondents, 220 respondents disagreed.

Finally, a question asked for their open views about the programme. *‘Please indicate, giving reasons, areas that were not included in the programme?’* Almost all the students mentioned their open views. This is typified by such remarks as *‘no proper method of delivery... no flexibility and also we are forced to do some sort of heavy subject matter. .. They have to include a lit of material...’*

While mentioning about the course delivery one student indicated that...*I think it’s fundamental... teachers must pay attention to the course delivery with the intention of motivating us. The way they deliver the subject must motivate us.*

Summary of the theme

The key theme of 'content and delivery' was analysed under the sub-themes such as Course relevance, area covered, delivery and the range of teaching methods. The analysis indicated that the relevance of course content and the different delivery approaches are vitally important factors for the students. The sub-theme of range of teaching method and standard delivery indicated that the number of students were not satisfied with the present approaches in the programme.

Theme 2-The learning experience

Four structured questions were asked about the learning experiences of the students in improving the learner centred education during the programme . The first question was a statement about improving student performance. *'The programme has been valuable in improving my performance at work'*. 86% of the respondents disagreed with the student performance improvement whilst 10% agreed with the statement.

The second question was asked about the clear understanding of the teaching strategies. 86% of the respondents disagreed with the statement of 'clear understanding' of teaching strategy. As a learning experience, the fourth question was asked about the development of confidence. As with the previous response most of the respondents disagreed with the development of confidence. For example one student indicates *...before coming to the college I felt more confident about my abilities. But now I have a ...sort of fear. I cannot understand myself*

The last question on the learning experiences was asked about the learners' true experience in terms of learner centredness. *'List three aspects of learning experience*

which were particularly important to you...? Most of the students indicated that they expected more learning experiences instead of subject knowledge. This is typified as *'we haven't been given any particular learning experiences...only learning the subjects.. sometimes I feel bored about the training....*In a learner centred approach, the learning experiences which were gained by the students perhaps should be favourable. But the responses revealed that the students were not satisfied with the learning experiences. In contrast here is one student's *...I think it's phenomenal...I feel more confident about my ability and also I am capable of adapting to any school environment. I think I have been given this through this programme.* But the above answer was not representative of most students. Only 10% of the respondents agreed with the above. 90% denied that they had favourable learning experiences.

Summary of the theme

The key theme of 'learning experience' was analysed under the sub-themes such as improving performance, understanding strategies, confidence and more learning experience. The responses suggest it can be revealed that most of the students are not satisfied and they also mentioned that the programme failed to improve their performance. 86% of the responses revealed that the students haven't been given the clear understanding of teaching strategies. The analysis indicated that positive learning experiences are vitally important factors in enhancing learner centredness and yet most had not had such learning experiences.

Theme 3-Expectations

There were four structured questions on the theme of 'expectations'. The first question was asked about the 'programme expectation'. *'My personal expectations at the outset*

of the programme were generally met'. Nearly 86% of the students disagreed with the positive statement. Their answers suggested that the programme failed to meet the student expectations. Similarly, the same responses were given to the 2nd question which was asked on the school's expectations.

The third and the fourth questions focused on the students' curiosity development, achievement and the taking of challenges. This was answered responding by only 14% of the students. But the above responses perhaps should be clarified through the in-depth interviews because they need more explanation and clarification.

The last question asked for their own views about the programme. It asked '*In which way your professional development has been affected by the programme?*'. The students answered the above open question differently. Some respondents indicated very briefly as '*more control*'; '*no flexibility at all*'; '*not given proper guidance*'; '*no motivation*'; *etc.* but some responses argued that the students develop through their own capability, not through the programme. 86% of the responses elicited negative responses. But it seems to me that this open question should be analysed after thorough investigation. These responses will be analysed in the interview analysis.

Summary of the theme

The key theme of 'Expectations' was analysed under the sub-themes such as personal expectations, school expectations, undertaking challenges and sense of achievement. The analysis indicated that the students were failing to achieve their expectations through the programme. And they also mentioned that the programme failed to motivate them to take any challenges in the future.

Theme 4- Support (learning environment)

Four out of the five questions were structured questions. These questions were asked about the learning environment. In a learner oriented approach the learning environment is a vital factor for improving the friendly culture. Under the theme 'friendly culture' it was expected support, encouragement, help and interaction. The first question was asked about the teachers' interest in students' study. 86% of the responses suggested that the teachers are not interested in their studies. For example, one student replied *'teachers are interested in their work load.... They teach the subject... everything..Mostly exam oriented. One or two pay a little interest about our studies.. but not the majority..'*

Similarly 86% of the respondents disagreed with the 'teachers' encouragement' towards the student studies. Only 2% of the respondents agreed with the statement. The learner centred approach needs the teachers' encouragement and interest in order for the programme to be successful. But the respondents gave negative answers. The third question was asked about interaction during the programme. Almost 98% of the respondents disagreed with the favorable interaction. It appears that the student-teacher interaction was not satisfactory.

The next question about the friendly environment also met with a negative response. As adult learners the students perhaps should be treated in a friendly manner. The last question asked on the above theme was *'Describe how teachers have helped or constrained your development during the programme?'* While answering the above, the respondents paid attention to the constraints rather than the help. The same kind of response was given by students to this question as the previous one. Their responses

mostly centred around the following: *'more control'*; *'not flexible'*; *'teacher oriented approach'*; *'exam oriented taught course'*; *'no interest'* and *'not supportive'*. For example, One student mentioned that, ... *teachers are interested in finishing the syllabus...not a proper approachnot treating us as adult learners...too many limitations have imposed on us the system is too controlled.* Similarly another student replied that *...more control system... we do not expect a programme like this... I personally expect a certain degree of flexibility. No proper dialogue was initiated... but in contrast, another respondent mentioned that '... we are motivated and also they helped us in various ways... they are very interested in improving our development... I personally feel the teachers are very helpful '.* Only 2% of responses supported the above.

Summary of the theme

The key theme of 'support' was analysed under the sub-themes such as teachers' interest, encouragement, interaction and friendliness. According to the above responses it can be suggested that the most of the students were not satisfied and also they had not agreed with the positive statements on encouragement and friendliness. Just a few responses suggested that the teachers paid attention and showed interest in their students' development. The overall analysis of the above theme indicated that the students are not satisfied with the teachers' interest.

4.3.2 Questionnaire (teachers)

As previously noted in chapter three, the sample (teachers) generated sixty five responses in total. It was decided to group the data under four headings to reflect the responses made to the research questions. These headings were:

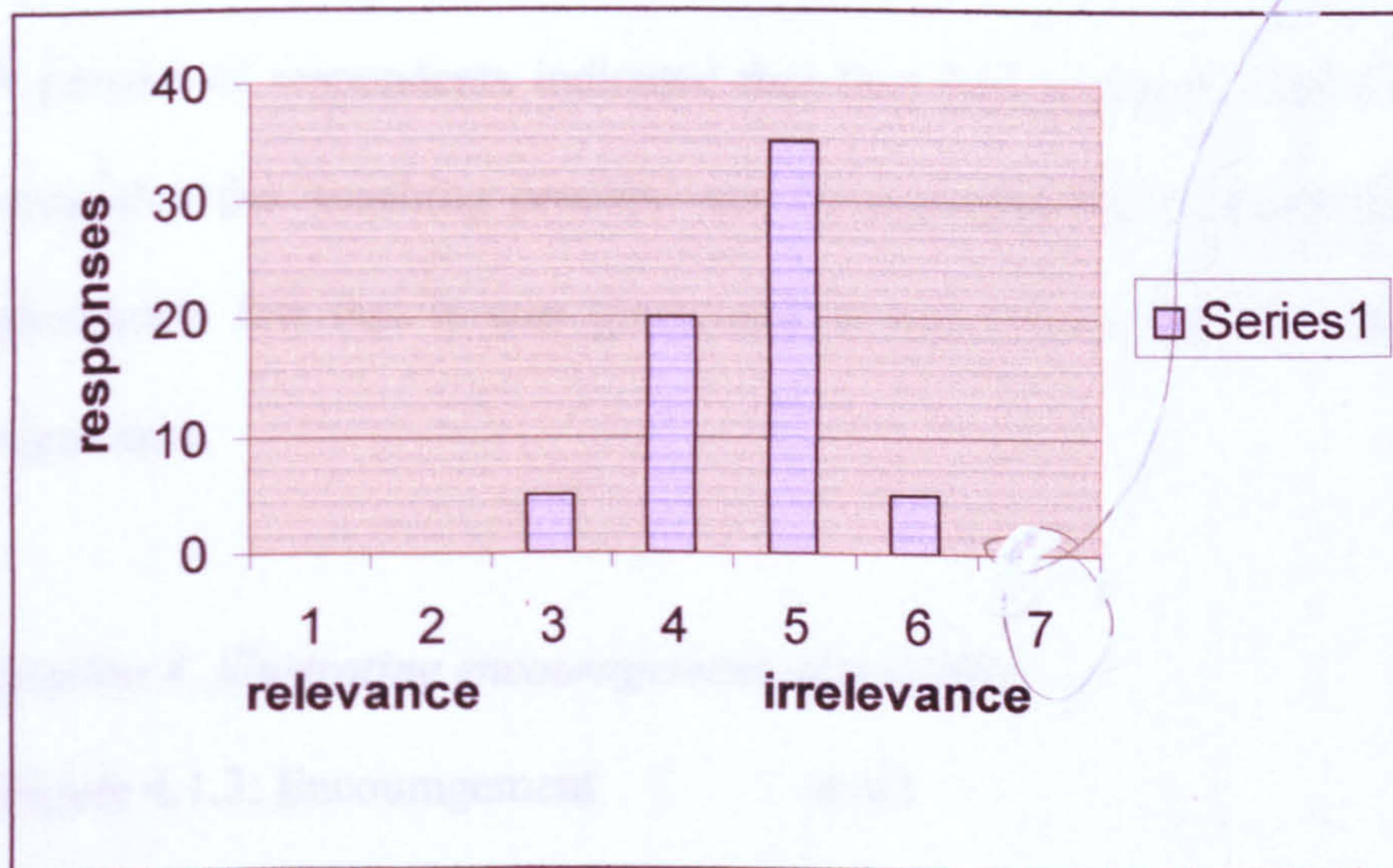
1. content and programme
2. delivery/strategy
3. learning environment
4. teacher characteristics

Further refining of the above data involved a comparison of results from the students' questionnaire responses and interview responses which are then analysed and discussed in chapter five. A series of graphs illustrate how teachers perceived themselves, as a good teacher in terms of 'excellent through to 'bad' position. Seven questions were asked about the theme of 'content and programme' in the course. Four questions were formed as structured questions and three were open ended. These are analysed here quantitatively and qualitatively.

Theme 1 Content and programme

Question 1. illustrating the link between course relevance and irrelevance.

Figure 4.1. 1: Course relevance n=65

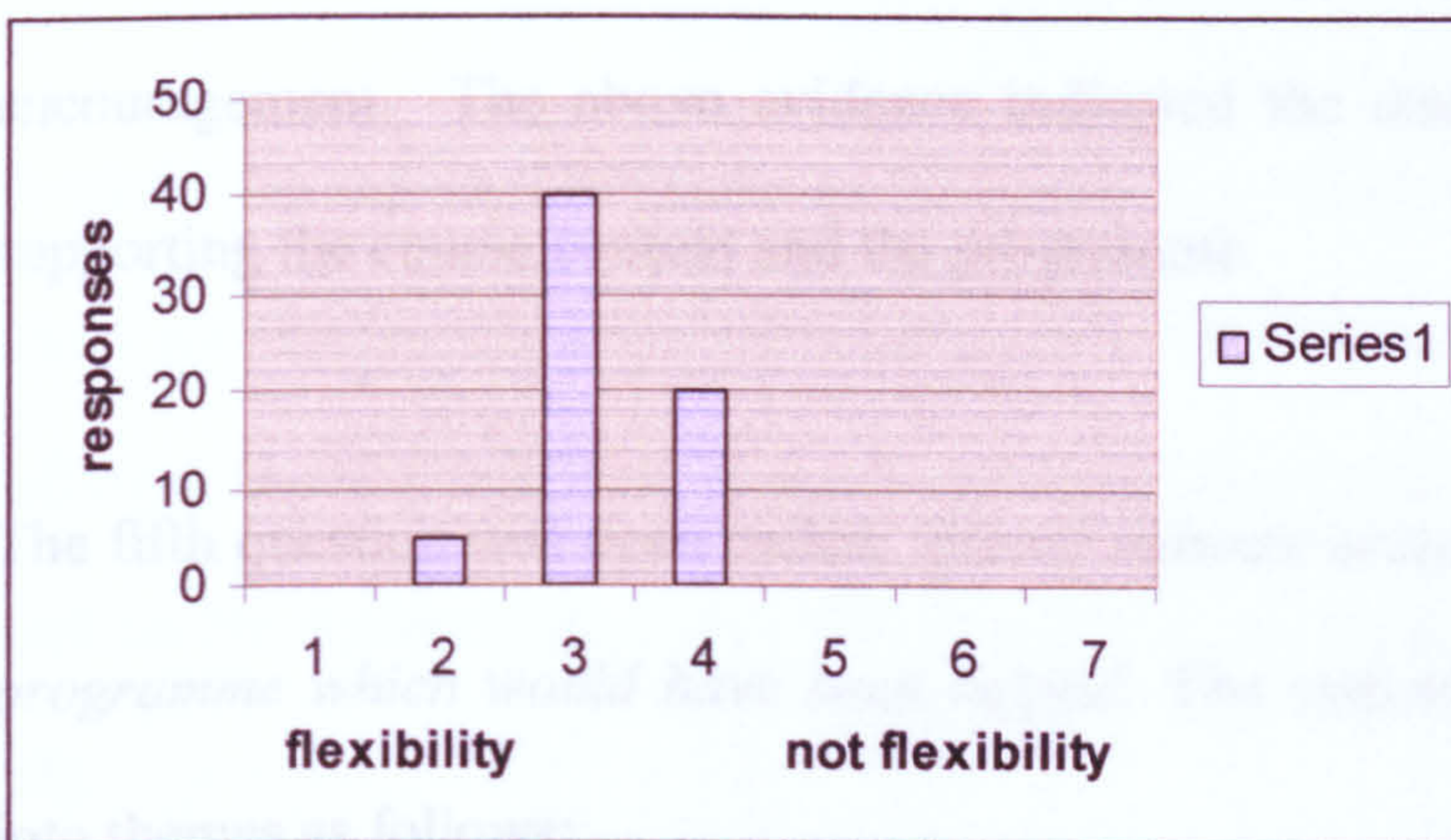


62 percent of respondents in the sample believed that the course and programme was irrelevant in enhancing the students' ability while 38 percent believing it was relevant.

The second question also emphasized the above responses. The great majority of respondents indicated that the content and the programme did not cover all the areas.

Question 3. illustrating flexibility in teaching.

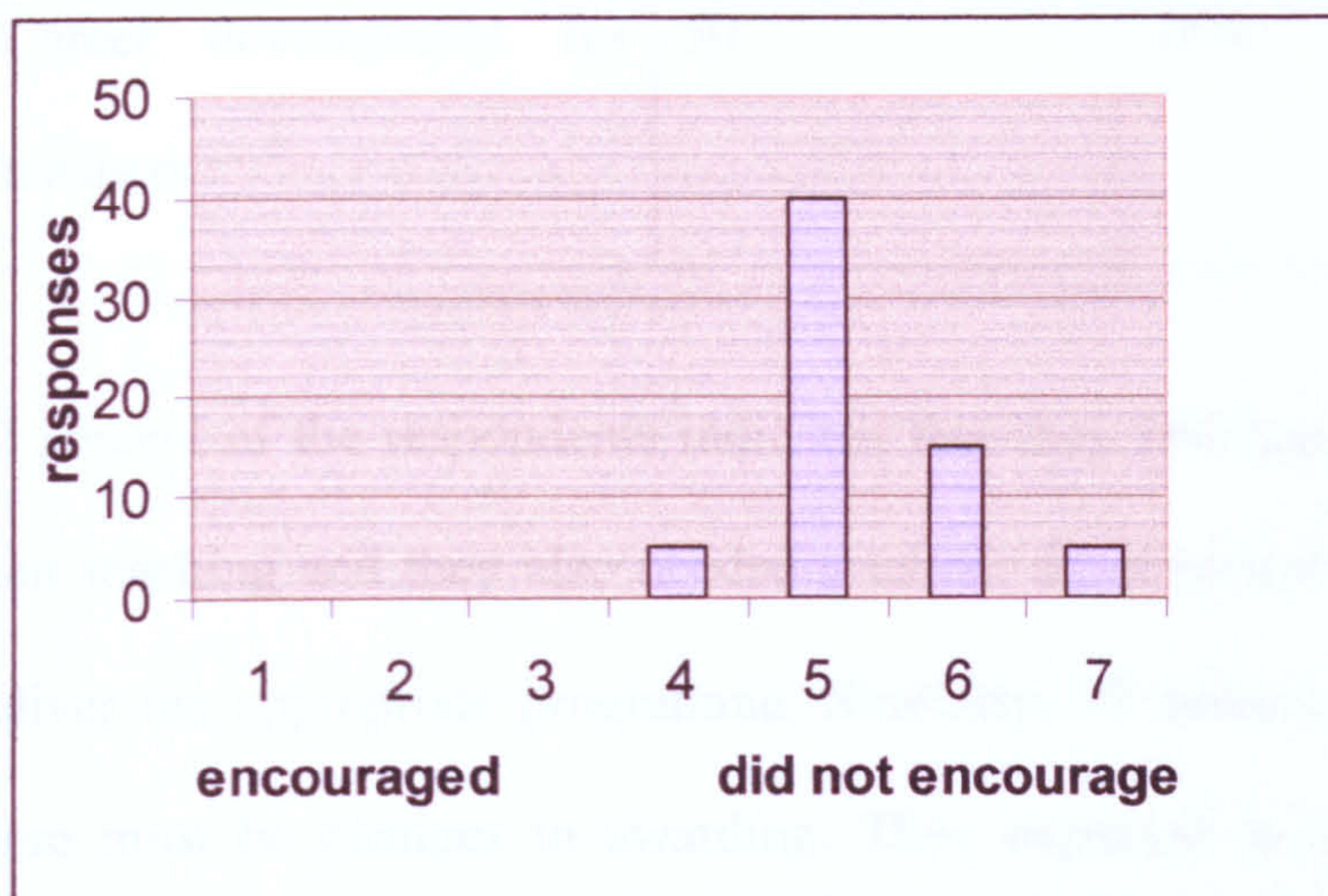
Figure 4.1.2: flexibility n=65



69 percent of respondents indicated that they had provided flexibility in teaching. This means that the 'teaching process' can be managed by the teachers. But 31 percent of respondents felt that it was given and it was pre-set by the course content and the programme.

Question 4. Illustrating encouragement of teaching.

Figure 4.1.3: Encouragement n=65



All the respondents (100%) indicated that the programme did not encourage their teaching. Nearly 30 percent of the respondents completely denied the statement of encouragement. The above evidence indicated the dissatisfaction of the teachers in supporting the course content and the programme.

The fifth question was open ended, *please indicate areas that were not included in the programme which would have been helpful*. The responses received were categorized into themes as follows:

Table 4.3: Areas to be included

n=65

Category	No. of responses	Percentage
IT usage	50	77%
Evaluation system	40	62%
Flexible approach	20	31%
Changes in awarding (Degree)	52	77%
New themes	45	69%

Career development for teachers	50	77%
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77 percent of the respondents indicated that they had needed IT facilities for enhancing their teaching and they also needed a career development programme on IT in order to deliver the appropriate programme. Similarly, 77 percent of respondents indicated that there must be changes in awarding. They expected to deliver a degree rather than a diploma. Nearly 69 percent of responses suggested the new themes to be included in the course content and 62 percent of responses suggested a career development programme was badly needed for them to deliver an appropriate programme.

The sixth question was, *comment on the issues regarding the content and the programme.*

Almost the similar responses were repeated by the respondents. Some indicated that they need more funding facilities, more research availability, course evaluation and assessment based on the research. And also they mentioned the career development programme for them.

The last question about the 'content and programme' was asked as *comment on the opportunities given to you for enhancing the learner centred approach in terms of content and programme.* Nearly 40 percent of the respondents indicated that the programme was an institution centred one. But they felt that they had been given an opportunity, through the teaching process, to deliver a learner centred education. One mentioned that *as teachers we are the navigators. We have the opportunity to deliver the content in a learner centred manner.*

Summary of the Theme

The key theme of 'Content and the programme' was analysed under the sub-themes such as relevance, area, flexibility, and encouragement. The analysis indicated that the majority

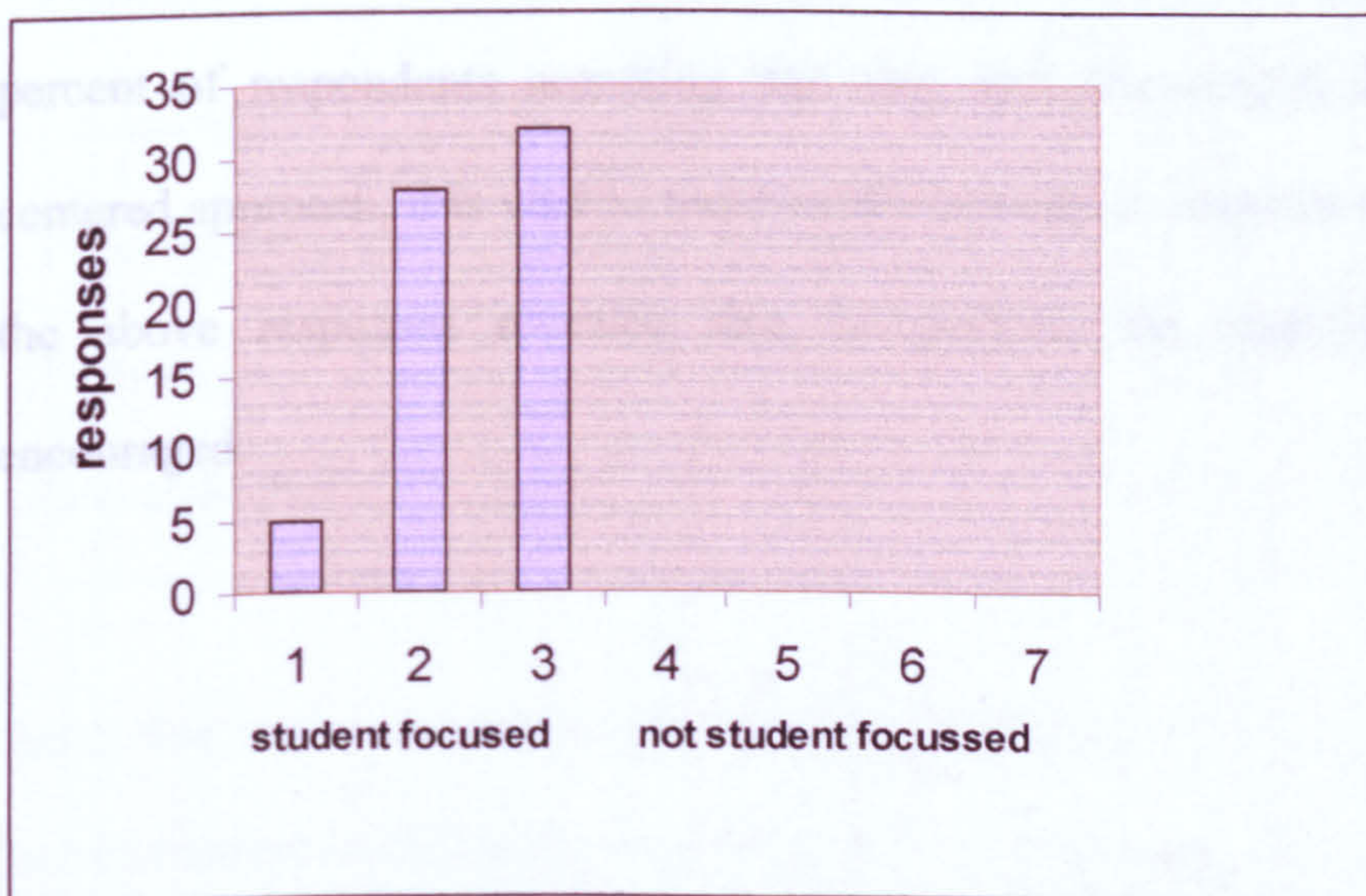
had felt that the content and the programme was irrelevant and also 62 percent indicated that the content was not covering the area which was needed. The great majority of respondents indicated that they had adopted a flexible approach in teaching. In response to the open question on the new themes, the respondents indicated that they need IT, new themes, proper evaluation, a career development programme and the changes in the awarding of certificates and also a lack of resources, funding unavailability, lack of research, and lack of proper course evaluation were indicated as issues by the respondents. The majority of the respondents agreed that they had been given an opportunity to foster the learner centred approach in terms of content and the programme. In contrast 6% of respondents indicated that in terms of content and the programme it was an institution-centred not learner centred one.

Theme 2 Delivery/ Strategy

Seven questions were asked about the theme of 'delivery/ strategy of the course. Four questions were formed as structured questions and two were open ended. These are analysed here quantitatively and qualitatively.

Question 1. illustrating the student focus in delivering the programme.

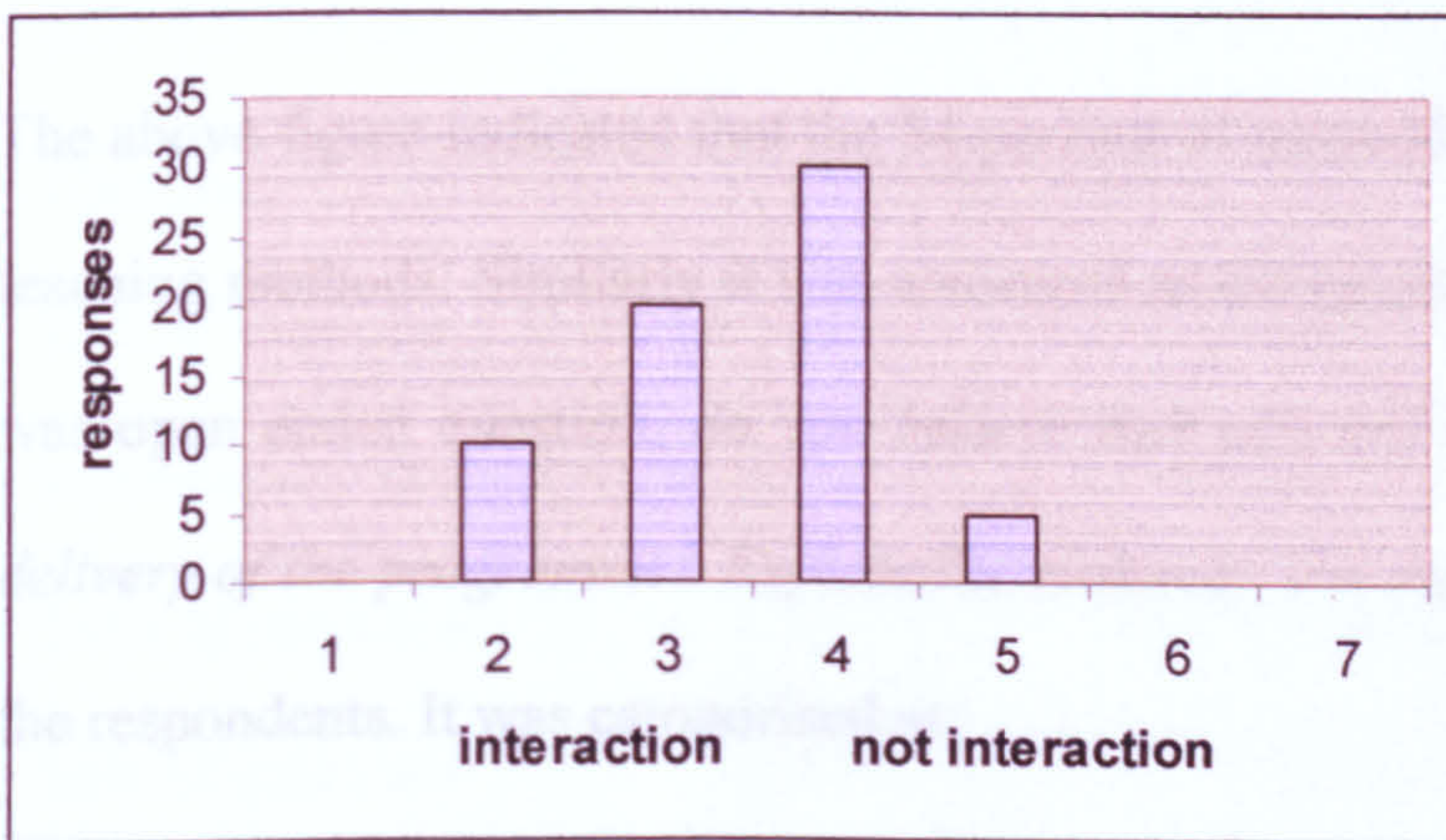
Figure 4.2.1: student focus n=65



The great majority of respondents stated that the course delivery was purely student focused. Among those, the 50 percent of respondents strongly believed that they had delivered the programme based on students' needs. The second question elicited a similar response because the teachers believed that they had used variety of methods when delivering the programme. While answering the 3rd question, 92 percent of respondents mentioned that they had used appropriate assessment when assessing the students. Even if its content was not relevant they believed that they had delivered the programme appropriately.

Question 4. illustrating the interaction.

Figure 4.2.2: interaction n=65

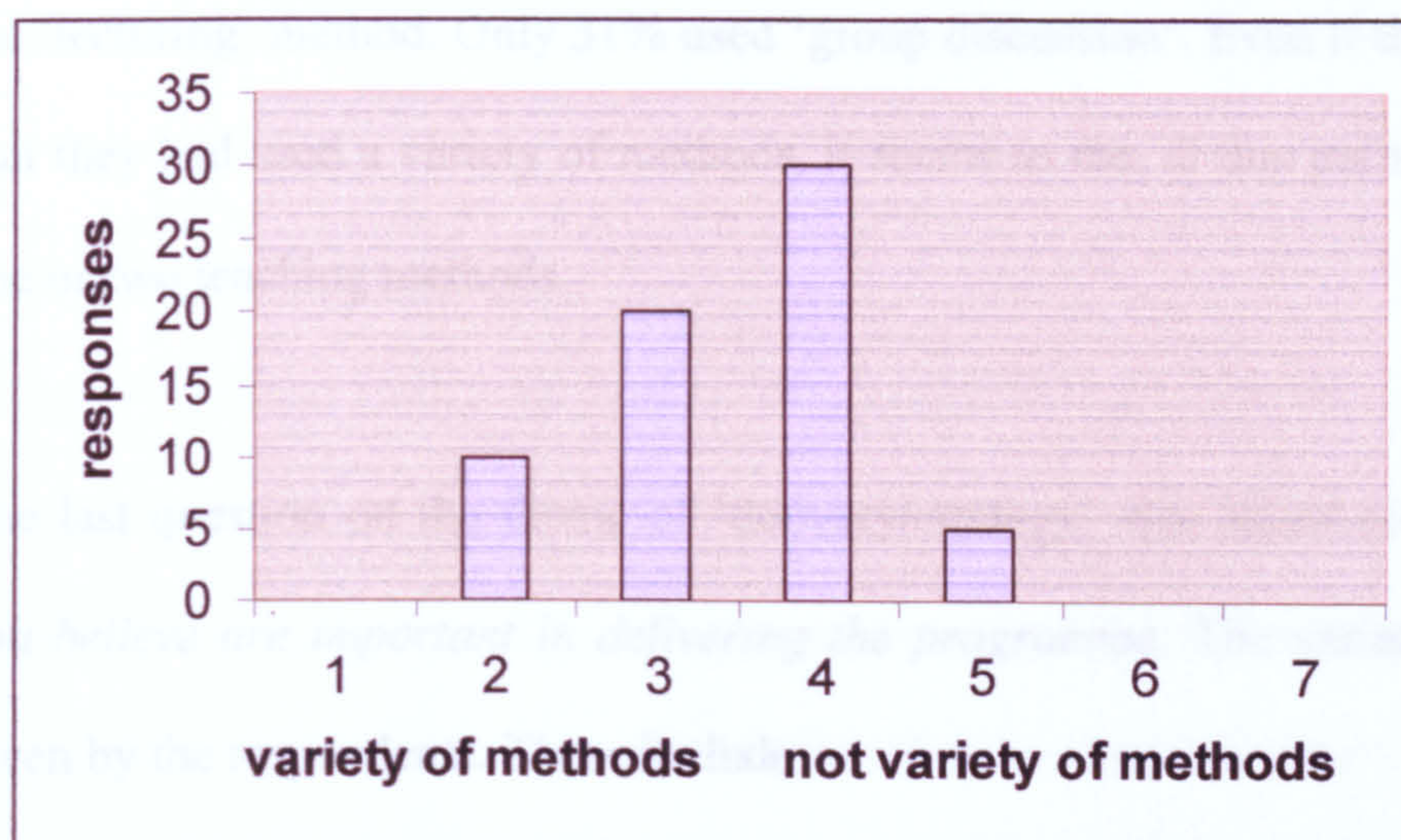


54 percent of respondents accepted that they had not encouraged interaction while 46 percent of respondents accepting that they had encouraged interaction. In a learner centered approach, it is vital to improve the interaction between students and teachers but the above responses revealed that, in general, the students' interaction was not encouraged.

According to the above table 46 percent of respondents stated that they had used the lecture method in delivering the programme. 54 percent of respondents indicated problem solving as a common delivery method. 54 percent of respondents indicated that they

Question 5. illustrating teaching methods.

Figure 4.2.3: teaching methods n=65



The above figure indicated that the 54 percent of respondents had not adopted a variety of teaching methods. Similarly it was answered as the previous question. The sixth question was open ended question, *do you believe that you use learner centered methods in the delivery of the programme? Explain the methods.* The variety of responses were given by the respondents. It was categorised as:

Table 4.4 teaching methods

Category	No of responses	%
Lecturing	60	92%
Problem solving	45	69%
Projects	40	62%
Group discussion	20	31%

According to the above table 92 percent of respondents indicated that they had used the lecture method in delivering the programme. 69 percent of respondents indicated problem solving as a common delivering method and 62 of percent respondents indicated that they

had used the project method. According to the table 31 percent of respondents mentioned that they had used group discussion. The above responses suggested that almost all used the 'lecturing' method. Only 31% used 'group discussion'. Even if they mentioned earlier that they had used a variety of methods, it seems to me, at this point, they had used only one or two teaching methods.

The last question on the theme of 'delivery/strategy' was asked *comment on the issues you believe are important in delivering the programme*. The variety of responses were given by the respondents. These include:

Table 4.5: Issues

Category	No of responses	%
Heavy content (lots of unnecessary themes)	40	62%
Lack of resources	65	100%
lack of guidance	45	69%
Lack of monitoring	65	100%
Lack of motivation	45	69%
Lack of concern about us/teachers(heavy work load)	65	100%

According to the table above, almost all the respondents indicated that the lack of resources, lack of monitoring and lack of concern about teachers as the main issues in

delivering the programme. 69 percent of respondents mentioned about lack of guidance and 62 percent of respondents indicated the heavy content of the programme as main issues in delivering the programme.

Summary of the Theme

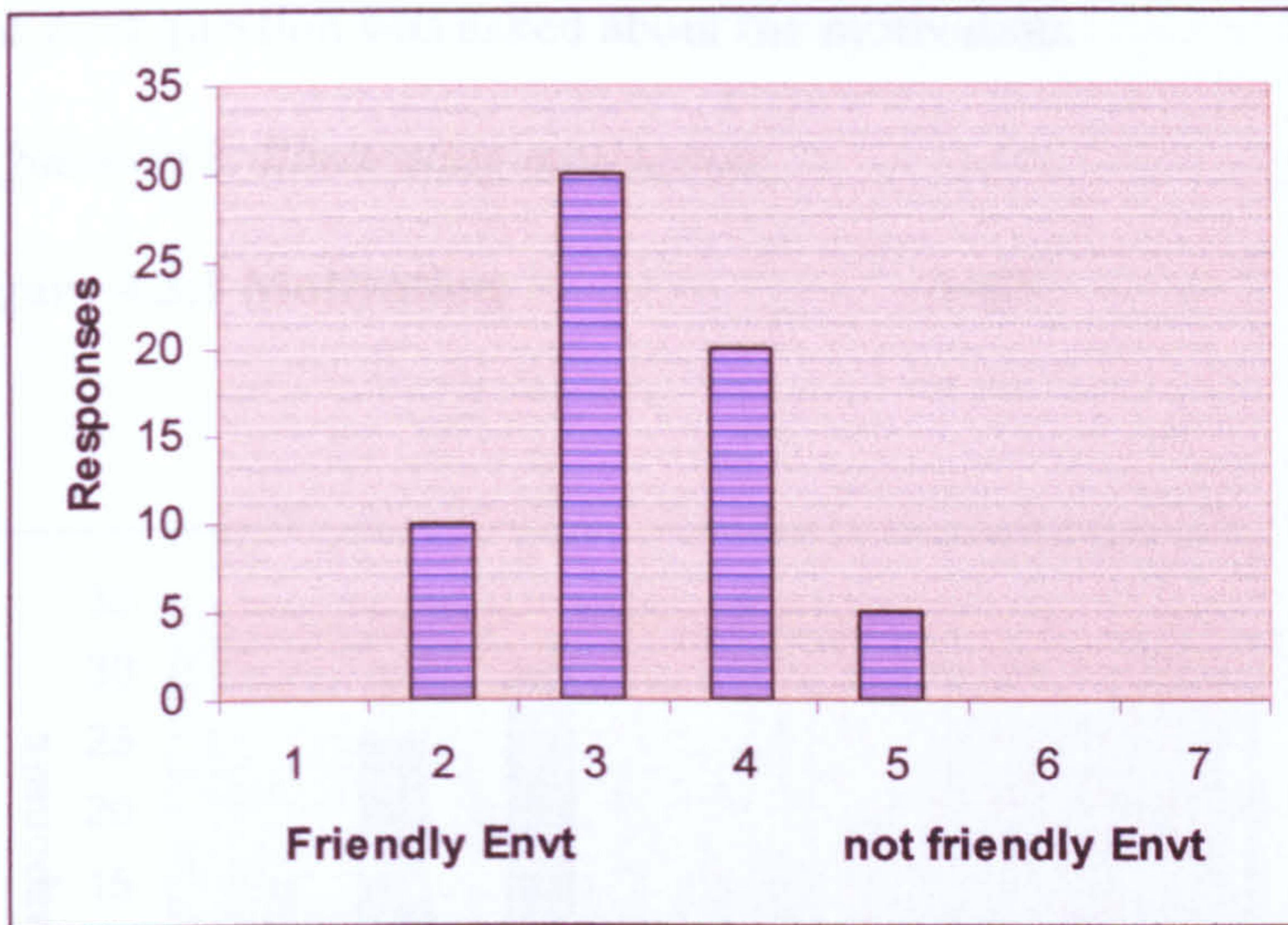
The key theme of 'Delivery/Strategy' was analysed under the sub-themes such as student focus, variety of methods, assessment, interaction, flexible methods, learner centred approach and the issues. The great majority of respondents stated that they had focused on the student. Similarly, they mentioned that they had used a variety of teaching methods. And also a majority of respondents indicated that they had used appropriate assessment methods in assessing the students. The majority of teachers said that they do not encourage interaction. Similarly, 54 percent of respondents replied that they do not use flexible teaching methods. In answering the question on the methods several respondents thought that they had used a learner centred method and also they mentioned the lecturing, projects and problem solving as major methods. Several respondents indicated that they had used group discussion as a method of delivering. While answering the open ended question on 'issues' they stated the following: lack of resources, lack of concern about teachers, heavy content, lack of guidance and lack of motivation.

Theme 3 Learning environment

Six questions were asked about the theme of 'learning environment'. Four questions were formed as structured questions and two were open ended. These are analysed here quantitatively and qualitatively.

Question 1. illustrating the friendly environment.

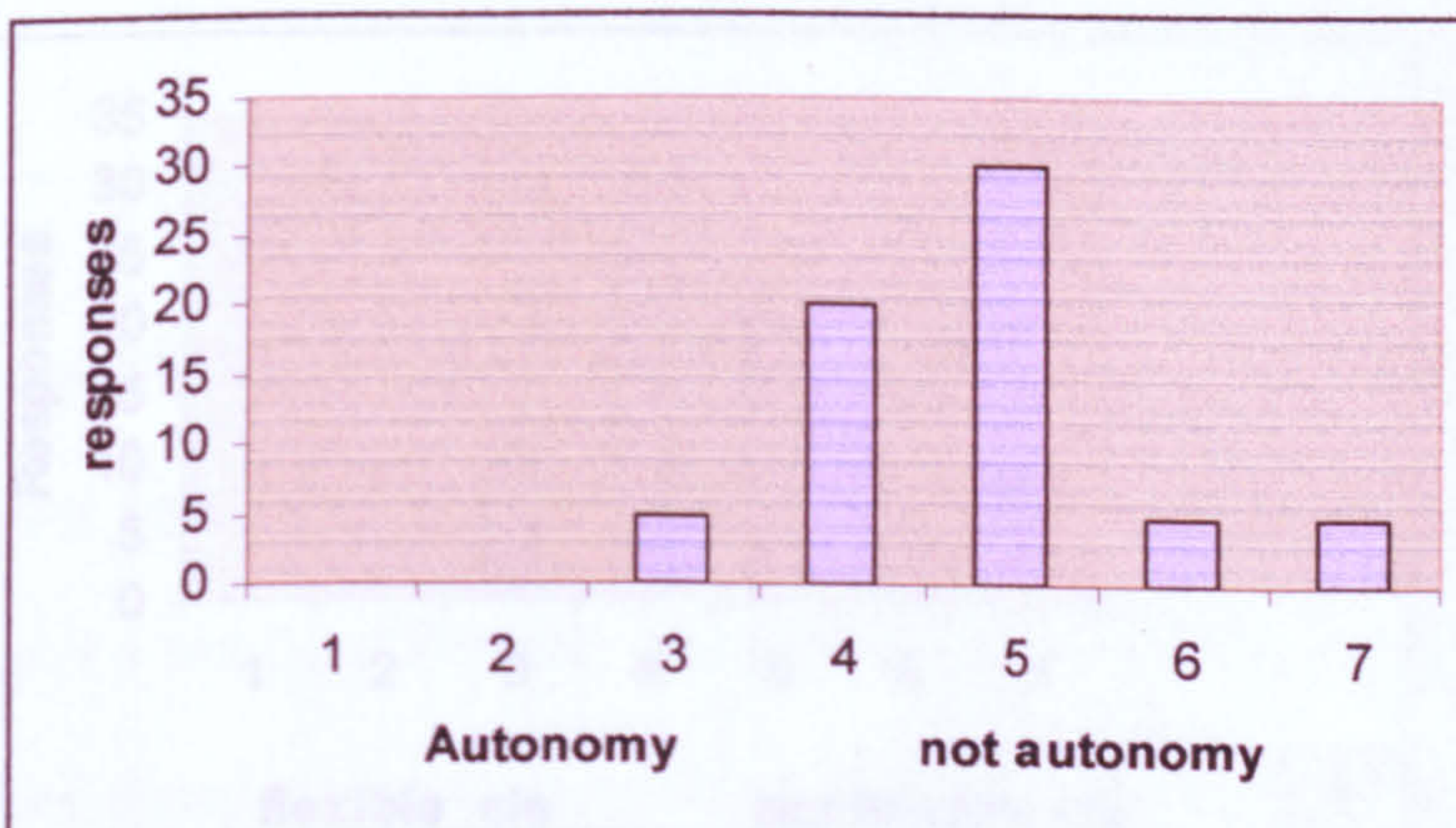
Figure 4.3.1: friendly environment n=65



62 percent of respondents indicated that they had encouraged and created the friendly environment while teaching. 8 percent of respondents agreed that they had not encouraged the friendly environment. Another 30 percent of respondents stated that they had maintained the balance between the friendly and unfriendly environment. It seems to me that they maintained a very controlled environment.

Question 2. Illustrating learner autonomy

Figure 4.3.2 Learner autonomy n=65



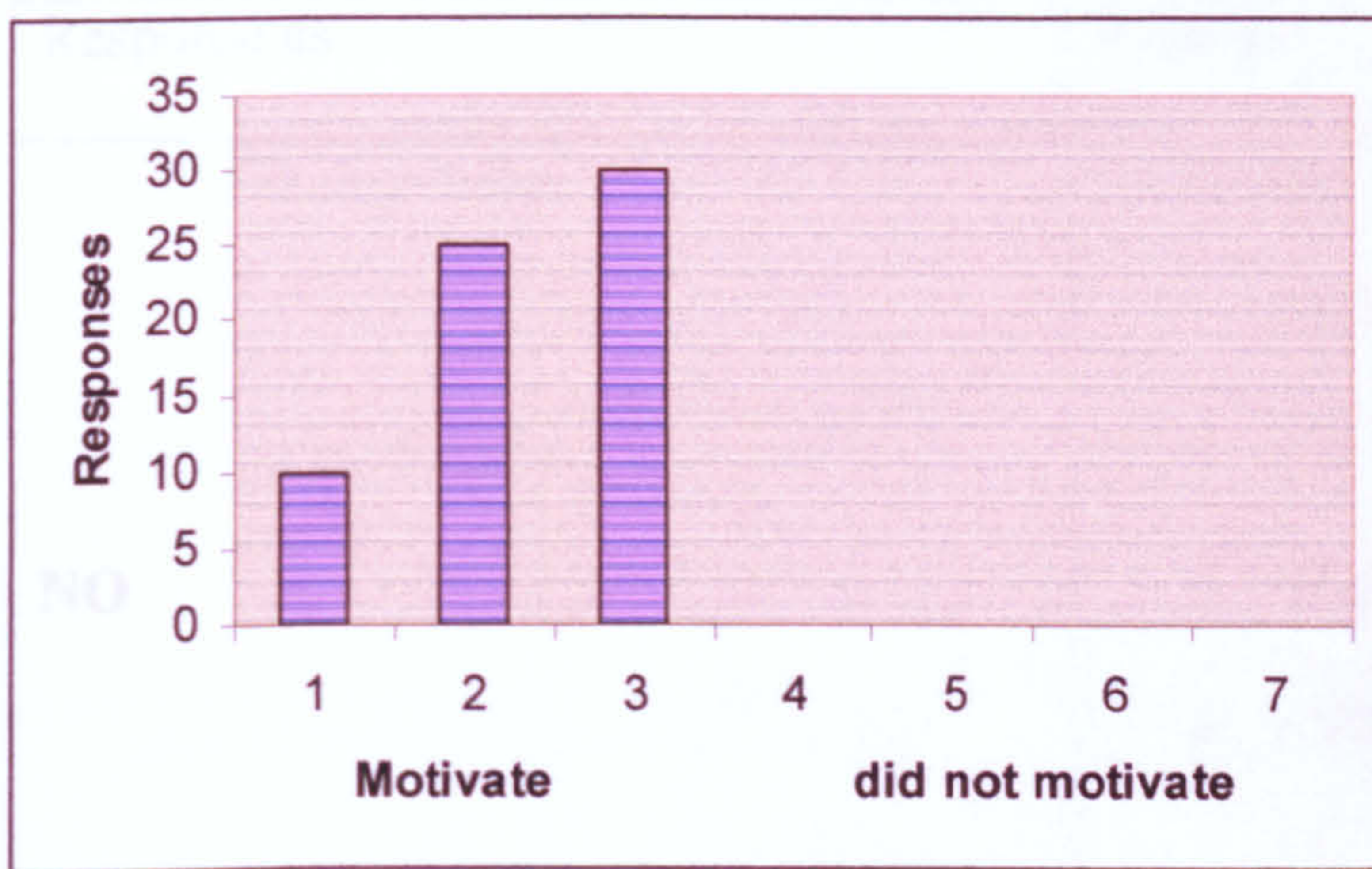
8 percent of respondents mentioned that they had encouraged learner autonomy. Another 30 percent of respondents were not so favourable to the positive statement. The majority of respondents (62%) indicated that they had not encouraged the learner autonomy.

The next question was asked about the motivation.

Question 3. Illustrating motivation

Figure 4.3.3 Motivation

n=65

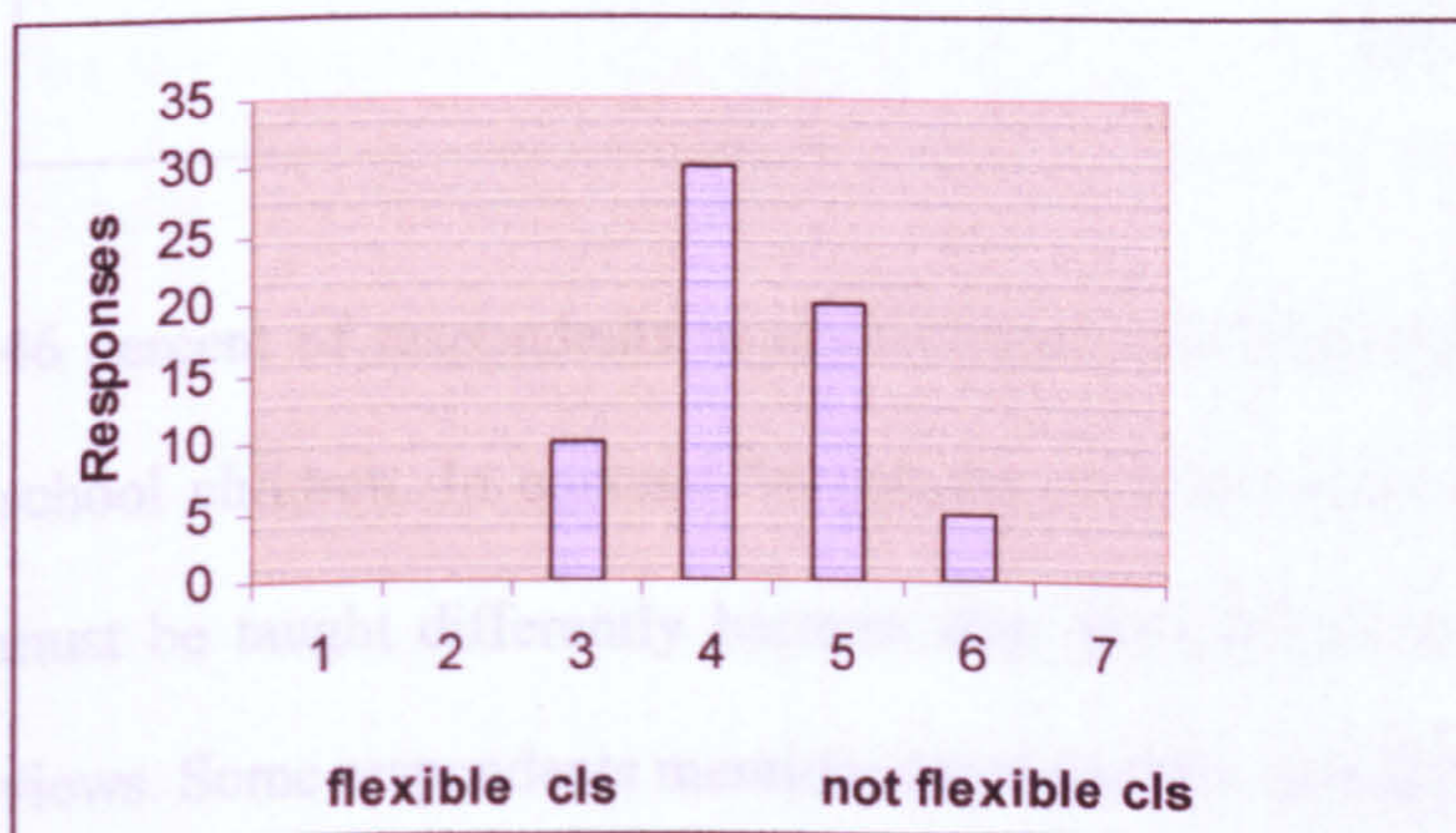


Almost all the respondents mentioned that they had motivated their students.

Question 4. Illustrating the classroom arrangements

Figure 4.3.3 Classroom arrangements

n=65



66 percent of respondents mentioned that they had arranged the classroom flexibly. But 34% of respondents indicated that they had not arranged the classroom flexibly.

The next question on the theme 'learning environment' was asked, *do you believe that the adult learners should be taught differently and why?* 46 percent of respondents answered 'no' and the rest (54%) answered 'yes'. The following table categorised their responses separately as:

Response as	Reasons
NO	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No difference between child and student teachers. 2. we don't need other methods 3. students need child treatment 4. I hardly see any difference
Yes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. different aspirations 2. different needs 3. well behaved 4. easy to finish the tasks 5. effective interactions

46 percent of respondents mentioned that they had taught them in the same manner as school children. In contrast 54 percent of respondents indicated that the adult learners must be taught differently because they have different aspirations, needs and different views. Some respondents mentioned that the level of understanding was much higher than

the school children. For example one indicated that *'they are adult... their age is different. They have high thinking ability so they have to be taught in a different way.*

The last open question was asked about the issues in enhancing the learning environment.

The responses given to the above were:

Responses	%
lack of resources	100
poor management	92
lack of motivation	99
lack of monitoring and guidance	92

The great majority of respondents mentioned the issues like lack of resources, poor management, lack of motivational activities and lack of monitoring and guidance.

Summary of the Theme

The key theme of 'Learning environment' was analysed under the sub-themes such as friendly environment, learner autonomy, motivation, classroom arrangement, adult learners and issues. The majority of the respondents indicated that they had encouraged a friendly environment. In contrast, the respondents mentioned that they had not encouraged learner autonomy. The responses revealed that the teachers were not favourable in enhancing the learner autonomy. In supporting motivation almost all the

respondents replied positively. Similarly to the learner autonomy the respondents further indicated that they had not adopted flexible classroom arrangements.

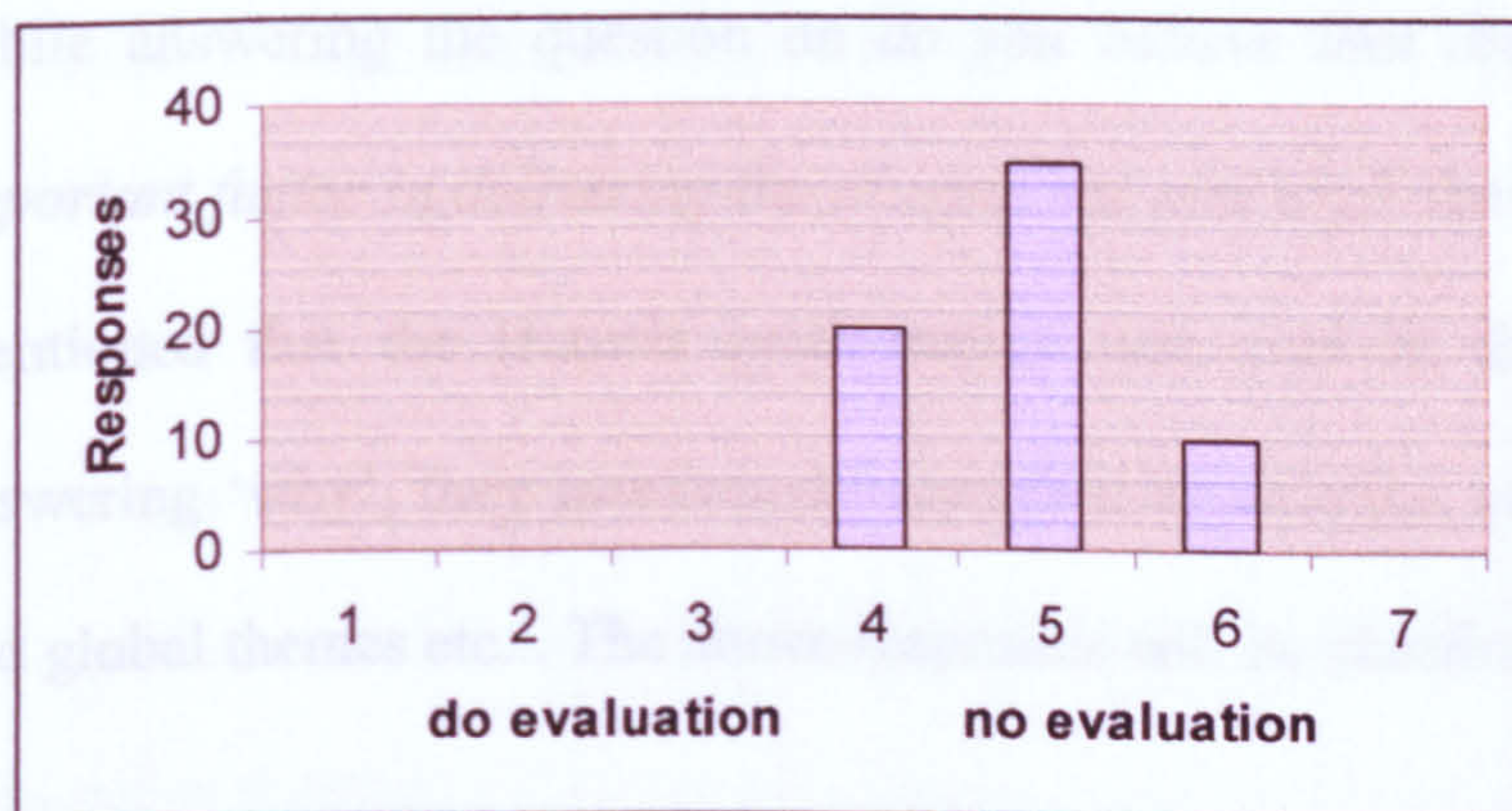
While responding to the adult learning approaches half of the respondents accepted that adults should be taught differently. But the other half denied the above. The first half of respondents further indicated that the adult learners have different aspirations, needs and wants. Therefore they should be treated in a different way. In contrast the other half of respondents stated that they were similar to the other children. Finally, the respondents mentioned the issues on 'delivery' as: lack of resources, poor management, lack of motivation and guidance.

Theme 4 Lecturer characteristics

Five questions were asked on the theme of 'lecturer characteristics'. Three questions were formed as structured questions and two were open ended. These are analysed here as before quantitatively and qualitatively.

Question 1. illustrating module evaluation.

Figure 4.4.1: Module evaluation n=65



After completing a module teachers are required to perform an evaluation on students' performance and also teachers' performance. It will give them feedback to assess themselves and also assess the module. 69 percent of the respondents mentioned that they had never used the module evaluation. And also another 31 percent of respondents indicated that they had not used the module evaluation. The next question was asked about the use of visual materials. Half of the respondents thought that they had used and the other half believed that they had not used sufficient visual materials while they were conducting classes. In the Sri Lankan context, the 'visual materials' mostly includes pictures, maps, charts, and other manual materials. It does not mean advanced electronic materials.

The next question asked was about self evaluation. It was felt by many in the sample that they do self evaluation. For example one mentioned that *I do self evaluation regularly. But I can't see any improvement.* Supporting the above another stated *that I do self evaluation every month. I improved m self by using self evaluation.* The above responses did not mention how they do 'self evaluation'.

While answering the question on *do you believe that the lecturer performance is an important factor in delivering the programme and why?* the great majority of respondents mentioned that the lecturer performance was vital in delivering the programme. In answering 'why', they mentioned : complete knowledge, adult learners, computer world and global themes etc... The above responses will be clarified in the in-depth interviews.

The last question was asked on the theme of 'lecturer characteristics' comment *on the issues you believe to be important in enhancing staff performance based on student*

evaluation. The majority of the respondents (77%) mentioned that they had never used student evaluation for their performance. They used external (Ministry) evaluation and the college's evaluation. For example one mentioned that *we knew about ourselves...we do self evaluation based on the external evaluation.* Another mentioned that *I never consider student evaluation... we consider the superiors' evaluation.*

Summary of the Theme

The key theme of 'Lecturer characteristics' was analysed under the sub-themes such as module evaluation, visual materials, self evaluation, performance and issues. The majority of respondents mentioned that they had never used module evaluation.. While answering the question on the use of visual materials nearly half of the respondents agreed that they had used visual materials. The great majority of respondents mentioned that they had used self evaluation. While indicating the issues the great majority of respondents mentioned the following:

-we do improve ourselves based on the external evaluation

The above responses indicated that the respondents like only their superiors' evaluation.

-we improve ourselves based on the superiors' evaluation

4.3.2 Analysis on Lesson Observations

Non participant observations were conducted. Fifteen classes were observed by the researcher and an independent observer. Teachers were informed at the beginning of the month about the lesson observations and they willingly accepted the observations. The observation was done with the help of a pre-arranged check list. It was constructed under five major themes:

-preparedness

-subject knowledge

- subject application
- assessments and
- learning environment.

The above five major themes were divided into several sub themes.

Four Science Lessons were observed:

18th November 2004: The subject was poorly planned. Visual materials were not used. The order was not maintained while explaining the subject matter. Sometimes the teacher used some examples which were irrelevant to the topic. She used the 'lecture' method throughout the lesson. Wider participation was not encouraged. It seemed to me to be 'boring'. The independent observer also made the same comments. And also she paid little attention to the assessment. She had fostered an unfriendly and also an unapproachable environment. No attempt was made to develop an adult learning environment. There was no free dialogue or interaction. The independent observer said that '*she developed a rigid and controlled classroom*'.

22nd November 2004: The content and delivery of the lesson illustrated the lack of planning. According to the notes of lessons and delivering methods she proved her poor planning and preparedness. No single visual material was used. She failed to maintain an order of continuity in delivering the subject. She also used only 'lecture' method. She tackled the subject in depth but she never tried to involve the students. At the end of the lesson, she asked a question from a student. There was no proper assessment of her teaching. The independent observer stated that *she needs teacher training. She paid more attention to the subject. It failed to satisfy the students.*

24th November 2004: it was poorly planned. No visual material was displayed. The teacher divided the class into groups but he had never used the groups properly. He

delivered the subject theme using 'lecture' method. He never asked questions. He tried to give more explanations and also he used more advanced concepts rather than a simple explanation. He did not encourage interaction.

24th November 2004: The subject was poorly planned. He failed to follow notes of lessons. He spent nearly ten minutes drawing a picture of a skeleton. The independent observer said that '*it was badly planned*' the students were not involved. He failed to encourage wider participation. The independent observer remarked that the above lesson was '*unplanned and disordered*'. All four lesson observations suggested that they failed to satisfy the students. As a knowledgeable person in the science subject the independent observer stated that *the above teachers need more career development programmes to develop their skills*.

The Four Education Philosophy lessons were observed:

18th November 2004: Although she had written everything in the lesson notes, the teacher failed to plan properly in terms of time and students' needs. Students were not allowed to discuss and not encouraged to interact. She wrote every main theme on the board and explained. She tried to give more explanations but students' participation was not encouraged. The independent observer remarked on the above class *she tried so hard but nothing happened. Students' were neglected. Some students had expected to participate in a dialogue but she failed to encourage them*.

22nd November 2004: Again the lesson was poorly planned. More time was taken to explain the previous themes. No questions were asked. Students only listened. Wider participation was not encouraged. She was explaining a sub theme throughout the lesson.

The independent observer explained the above class as '*boring*' and he also mentioned *she was lacking in knowledge. She failed to motivate her students. No assessment took place to assess her achievement.*

23rd November 2004: The teacher was an experienced individual. She maintained a friendly environment. She started her lesson with some good examples. But she failed to maintain the same rhythm throughout the lesson. She seemed knowledgeable in her subject and had used 'lecturing' and 'problem solving' methods in teaching. She asked questions from only two students. She failed to encourage wider participation but compared to the other lessons I observed she had more success in encouraging student participation.

24th November 2004: The teacher followed the lesson notes but her objectives were not clear. She started the lesson by repeating the previous lesson. Meaningful questions were asked at the beginning. But she also followed the same lecture method. Student participation was not encouraged. Assessment and feedback also failed to achieve its targets. The independent observer also stated that the *students were completely neglected.*

Three Social studies lessons were observed:

19th November 2004: The teacher started teaching by repeating material from a previous lesson. Questions were asked. She used visual material for some explanations. But it seemed to me it was poorly planned. The independent observer indicated planning was not properly done. She was fluent in subject knowledge but she failed to deliver it in an appropriate way. Again she did not encourage student participation. Students sat and listened.

19th November 2004: She began her lesson with a story. Students were looking interested at the beginning. But when she started teaching students were not encouraged to participate. She asked questions but did not receive any response. Then she followed the same 'lecturing' method in the rest of her teaching. She also failed to develop a friendly and approachable environment.

23rd November 2004: A good start. Students were given the choice of taking notes or listening. Most of the students took the first option. The teacher encouraged writing. She failed to follow her lesson plan. She completed only one third of her lesson plan. And she also completely forgot the assessment and feedback. She explained and repeated the terms again and again for note taking purposes. It seemed to me a very 'controlled' system. The independent observer stated that *she doesn't like explaining. She passed the time giving notes. She kept the students in a rigid manner. She entirely forgot about the learner centeredness while teaching. She dominated the lesson.*

Two Primary maths lessons were observed:

19th November 2004: The teacher followed the lesson plan. It was planned properly. But the planning failed to achieve the objectives which were shown in the plan. She asked the students to do some sums. She explained one sum and asked questions. But they failed to answer any of the questions. She tried to encourage wider participation but she failed due to her lack of skill. She was fluent in the subject knowledge but lacked in its application. The independent observer also agreed with the above comments.

22 November 2004: This was poorly planned. There was no lesson plan. She used some visual materials to support her explanation. She explained well. But she did not encourage the students. Students were only there to listen. She did not encourage wider participation

or interaction. It was also a controlled and rigid classroom. The independent observer said that *this teacher needs training on how to teach. She forgot that they are adult students. Also she did not ask any questions. No assessment was made at all.*

Two Optional lessons were observed:

23rd November 2004: The teacher was fluent in subject knowledge. He started the lesson with questions. Most of the students answered. And then he started the lesson for the day. He explained the topic in great depth. Sometimes it looked to me like ‘over explaining’. It was not a ‘controlled’ and ‘rigid’ class but not too friendly. He followed a certain ‘order’ and explained well. He also adopted the ‘lecturing’ method. Students were allowed to take notes. The independent observer mentioned that *note taking is a common method in the college. No proper student participation.*

24th November 2004: The lesson was poorly planned. The teacher dominated the class. Students were not encouraged to participate. She explained what she planned and asked the students to write in their exercise books. No assessment was made. She also failed to encourage interaction or wider participation.

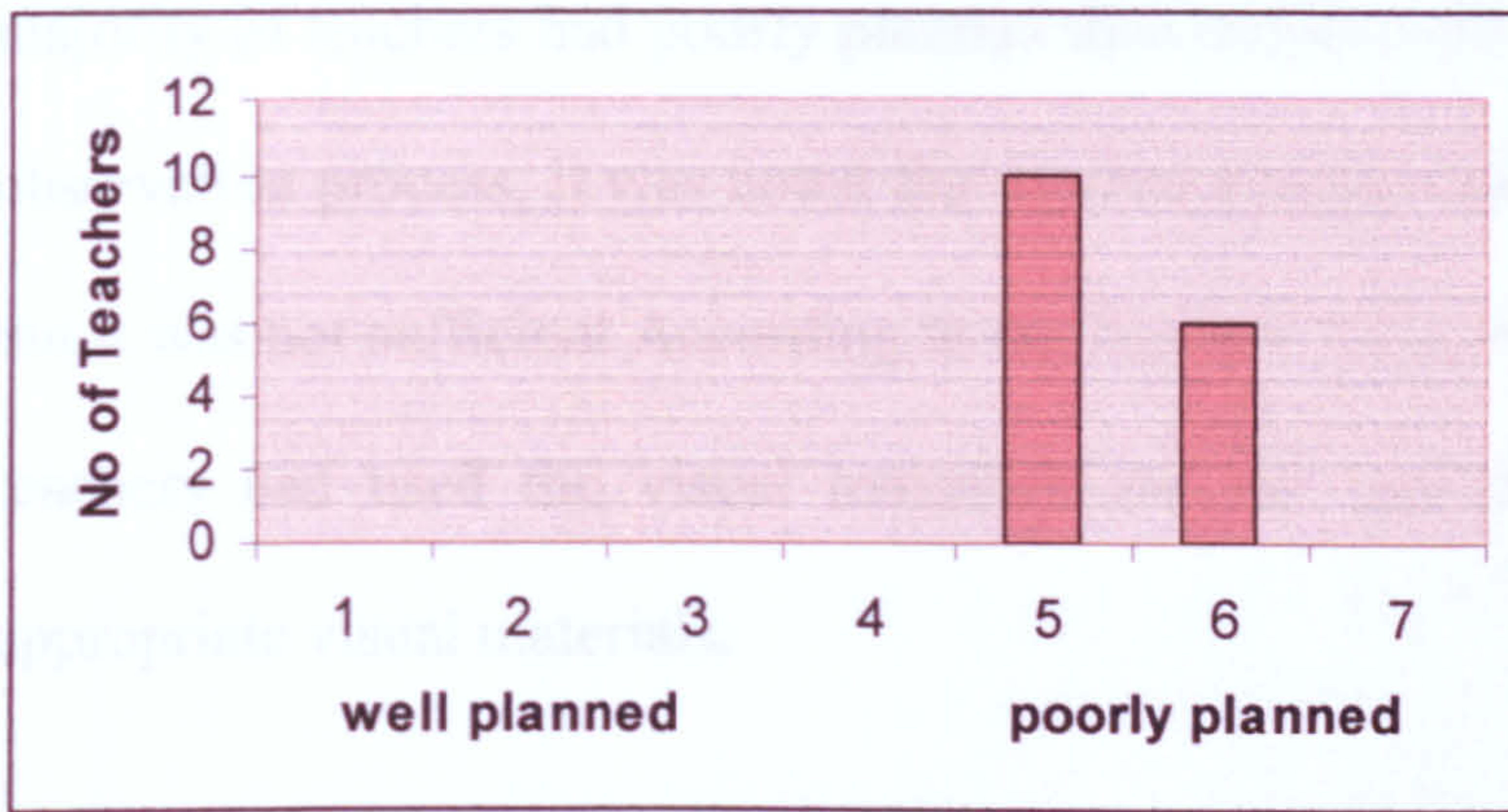
Quantitative analysis on the above observations (Based on the check-list)

(A) Preparedness

The theme of ‘preparedness’ was analysed under the sub themes such as planning, preparedness and use of visual materials. Fifteen teachers were observed for this study. The theme planning was scaled from 1 to 7. ‘One’ was given to the ‘well planned’ and in contrast the ‘seven’ was given to the ‘poorly planned’ structure. Out of fifteen teachers

ten were given '5' points and the remaining five teachers were given '6' points for their planning ability. The following figure illustrates the above:

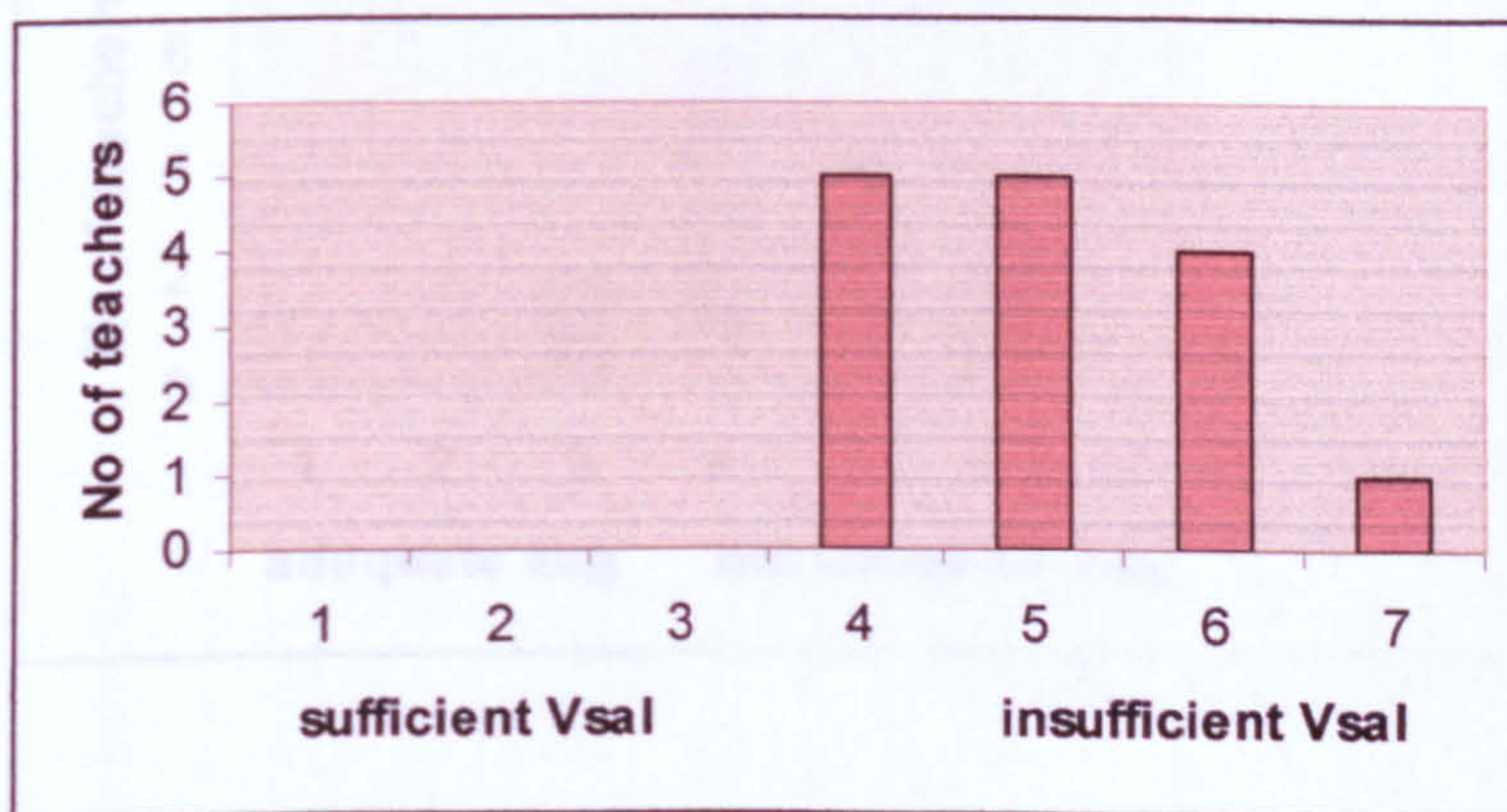
Figure 4.3.2.1 Preparedness



(B) Subject Knowledge

According to the above figure the majority of teachers were observed as poor planners. The lesson notes, unachievable objectives, and the way they were presented and assessment also reinforced the above. The independent observer also made the same comments. The theme 'preparedness' was given the same 'scale' for the teachers observed. And also it was observed the use of visual materials and aids were insufficient.

The following figure indicates the above:



According to the above figure the majority of teachers were observed as poor planners. The lesson notes, unachievable objectives, and the way they were presented and assessment also reinforced the above. The independent observer also made the same comments. The theme 'preparedness' was given the same 'scale' for the teachers observed. And also it was observed the use of visual materials and aids were insufficient.

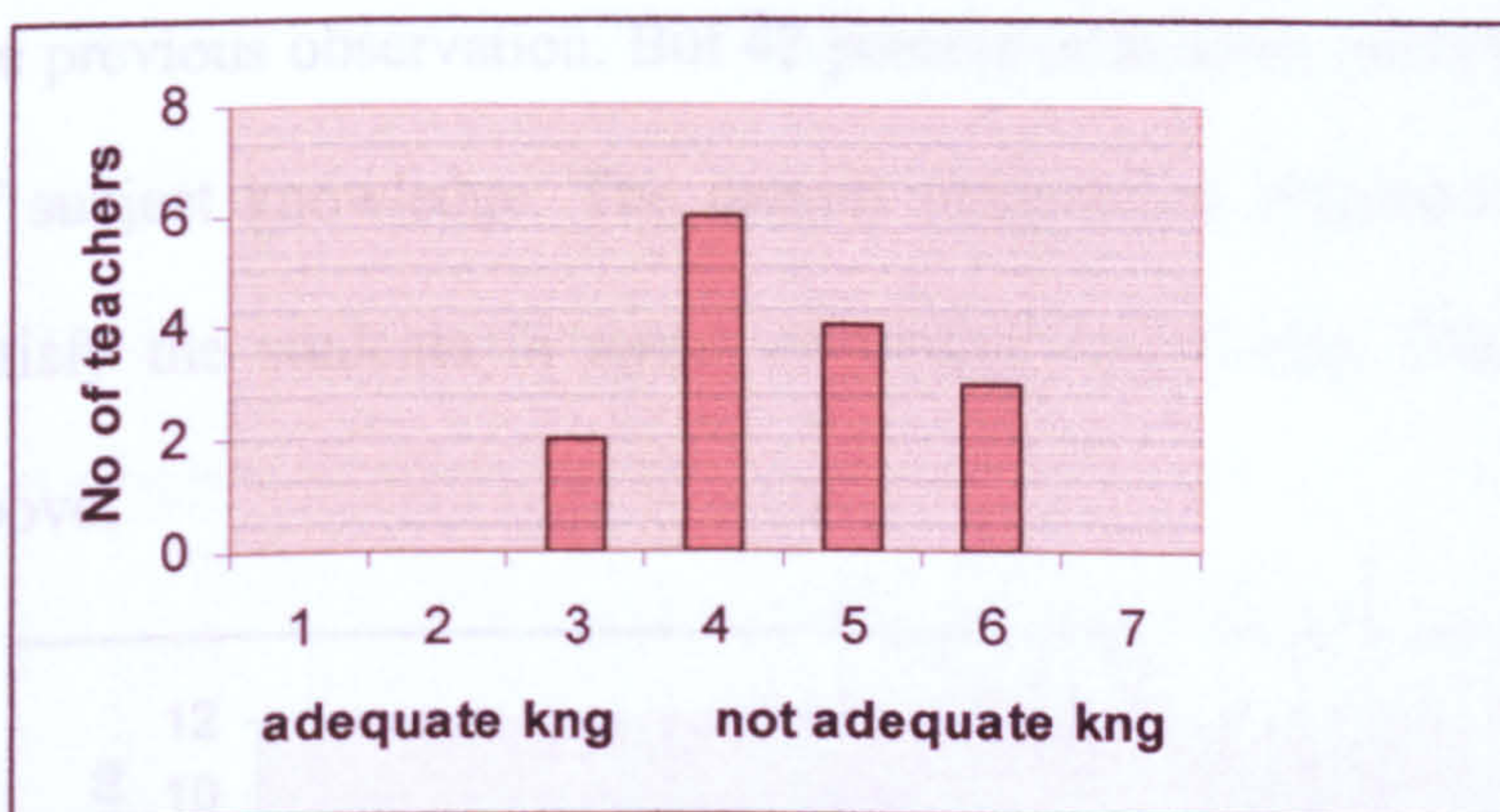
Summary of the theme

The theme of 'preparedness' was observed under the sub themes such as planning, preparedness and use of visual materials. The overall observation indicated that the great majority of teachers had poorly planned their subject and also had poorly prepared. In the observation process, it was noted that several teachers had used visual materials and aids but it was not sufficient. According to the figure 4.3.2.2, it was observed that 33 percent of teachers had used the visual materials and the rest of the teachers did not use the appropriate visual materials.

(B) Subject knowledge

The theme of 'subject knowledge' was analysed under the sub themes such as adequate knowledge, order of the theme, relevancy and student satisfaction. The same scale of points was used.

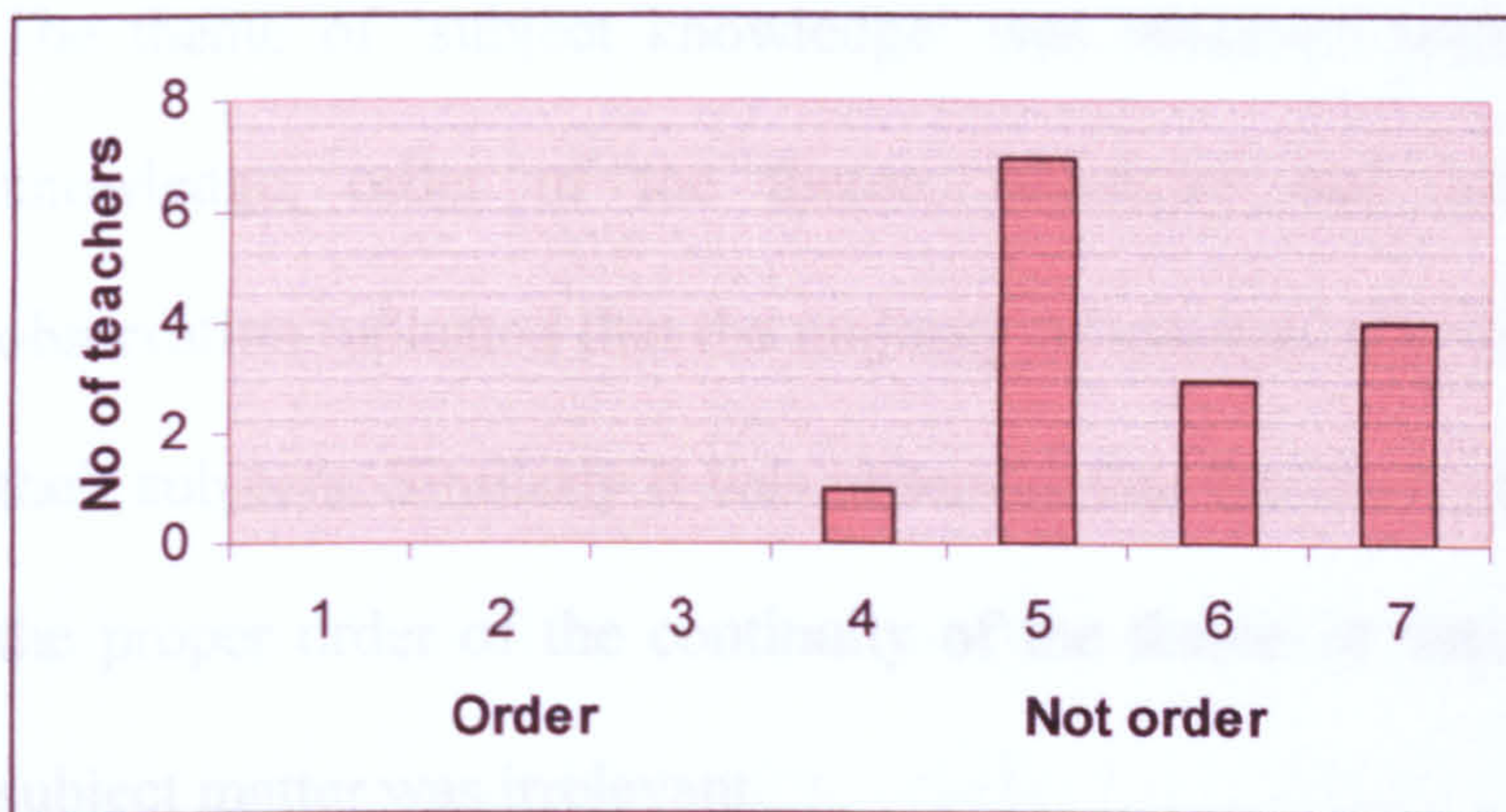
Figure 4.3.2.3: Illustrating adequate knowledge n=15



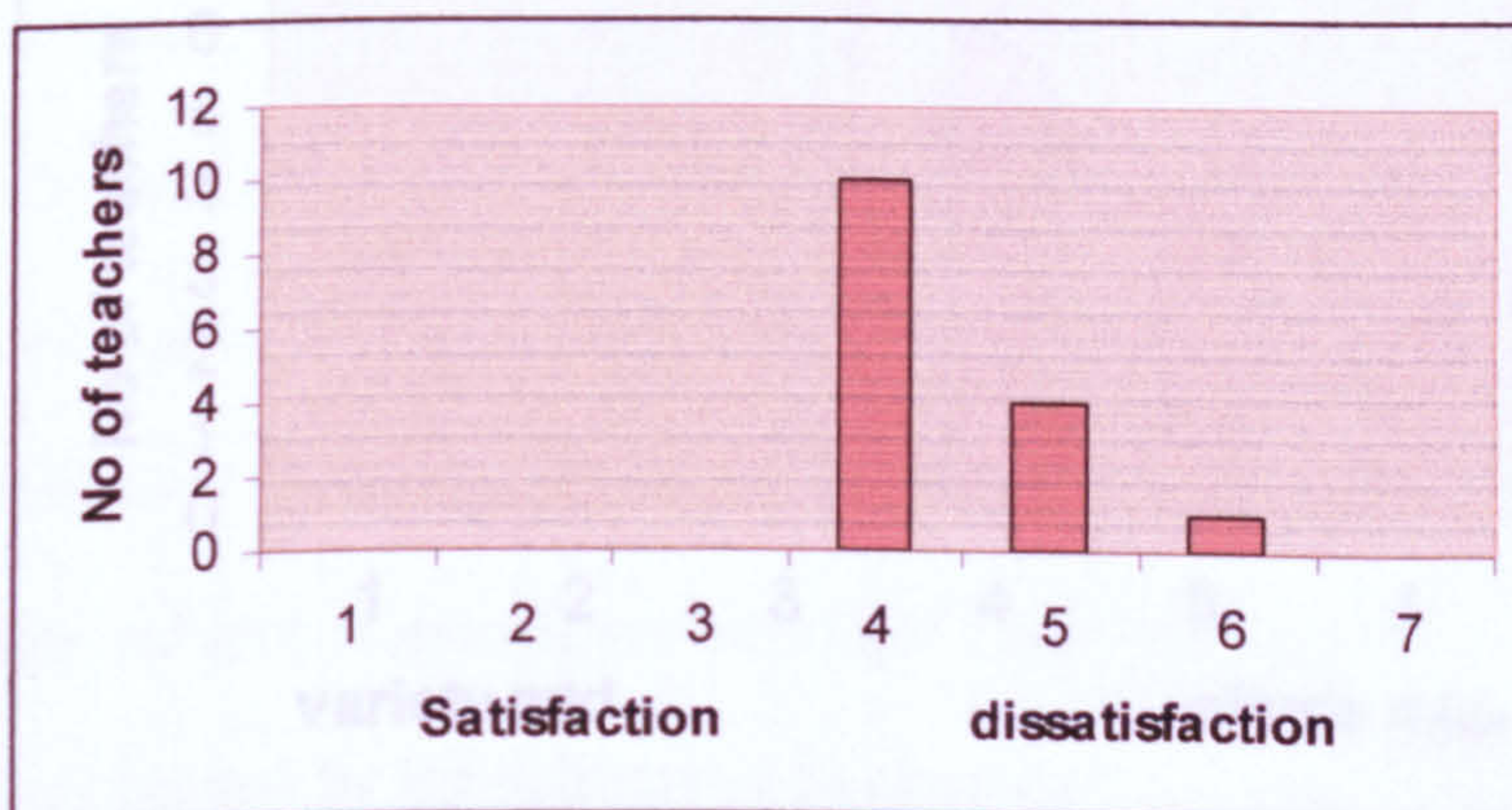
According to the above it was observed that 12 percent of teachers had sufficient knowledge to teach the subjects. Another 36 percent of teachers were observed to possess inadequate knowledge but there was room for improvement. The majority did not possess

adequate knowledge. These quantitative findings mostly reinforced the previous qualitative observations' findings made by the researcher and the independent observer.

The observation on 'order of the theme' indicated that the great majority of teachers had not maintained the proper order while teaching their subjects. The following figure illustrates the above:



The above figure viewed that all the teachers had poorly executed the order of the continuity of the theme. Similarly, the 'relevancy' also indicated that several teachers did not possess the relevant subject knowledge. It also supported the qualitative findings from the previous observation. But 42 percent of teachers were capable of improving their grasp of subject knowledge. The overall observation indicated that the teachers had failed to satisfy the students in terms of subject knowledge. The following figure indicates the above:



According to the above figure it can be seen that the majority of students were dissatisfied with the teachers poor grasp of subject knowledge. This was observed through the student interaction, participation, gestures, and motivation. And also it was supported by the independent observer's remarks. But to reach a firm conclusion about the students' satisfaction this observation needs to be analysed in the in-depth interviews.

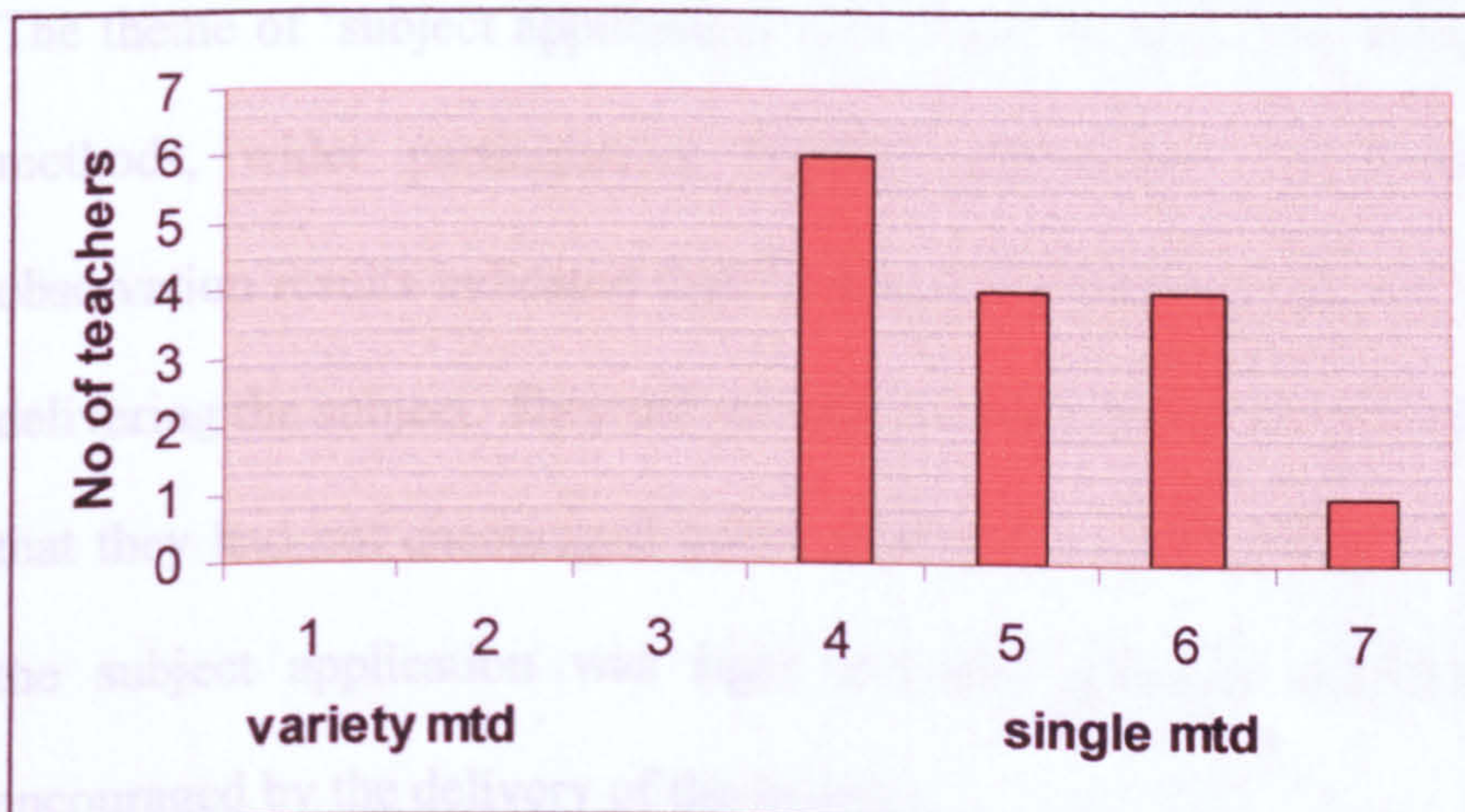
Summary of the theme

The theme of 'subject knowledge' was observed under the themes such as adequate knowledge, order of the theme, relevancy and student satisfaction. The overall observation indicated that the majority of teachers did not possess adequate knowledge in their subjects. Similarly it was observed that the most of the teachers had not adhered to the proper order of the continuity of the theme. It was also observed that some of the subject matter was irrelevant.

(C) Subject application (teaching/delivering)

The theme of 'subject application' was analysed under the sub themes such as variety of methods, wider participation, flexible approaches, friendliness and interests. In the observation process, the same scale of points was given to the degree of choices as the previous one.

Figure 4.3.2.4 illustrating variety of methods.



The observation on the methods indicated that 60 percent of teachers had used the 'lecture' method. And also they followed the same method throughout the lesson. Another 30 percent of teachers used a single method (lecturing). Similarly the observation results revealed that the teachers had not encouraged wider participation in assessing at all. According to the observation it could be mentioned that many teachers had adopted rigid methods in assessing their students. For example although there were many ways to assess students' achievements the teachers had used only a single essay question.

The sub theme of 'friendliness' was observed from the entire class activities. Only 12 percent of teachers promoted a friendly atmosphere and the rest of the teachers did not promote it. The qualitative observation findings also mentioned the above. Some teachers continued their teaching without considering the learners. The overall subject application led the class towards a control system. It neglected to encourage the students to participate and interact. And also it could be revealed that the subject application was not an interesting one. Finally, the observation indicated that the subject application had not encouraged the learner centred approach within the classroom.

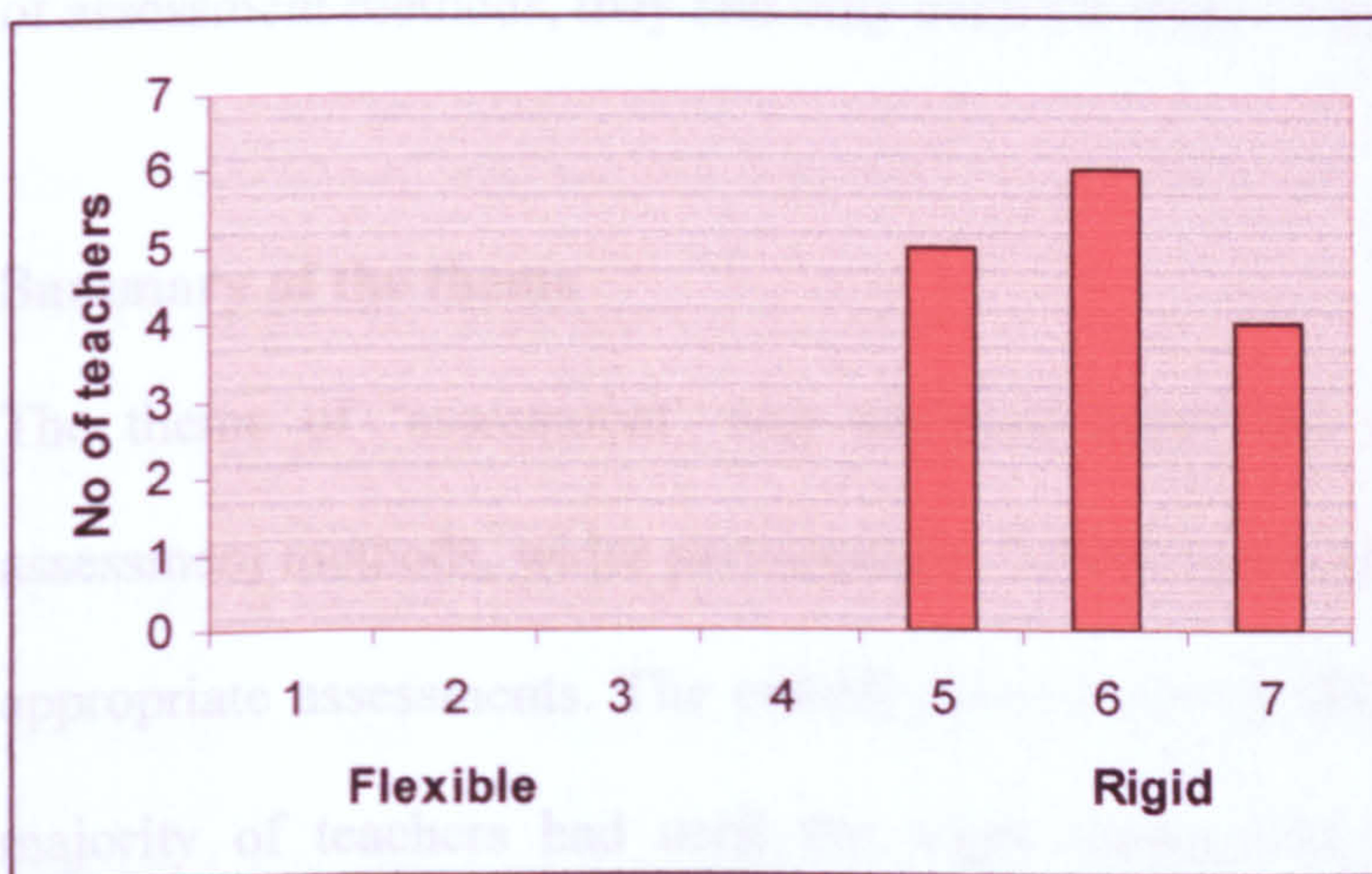
Summary of the theme

The theme of 'subject application' was observed under the sub theme such as variety of methods, wider participation, flexible approaches, friendliness and interests. The observation results indicated that 60 percent of teachers had used the 'lecture' method in delivering the subject. They did not use variety of methods. And also the results suggested that they had not encouraged wider participation. The overall observation indicated that the subject application was rigid and also perhaps unfriendly. Students were not encouraged by the delivery of the lesson.

(D) Assessment

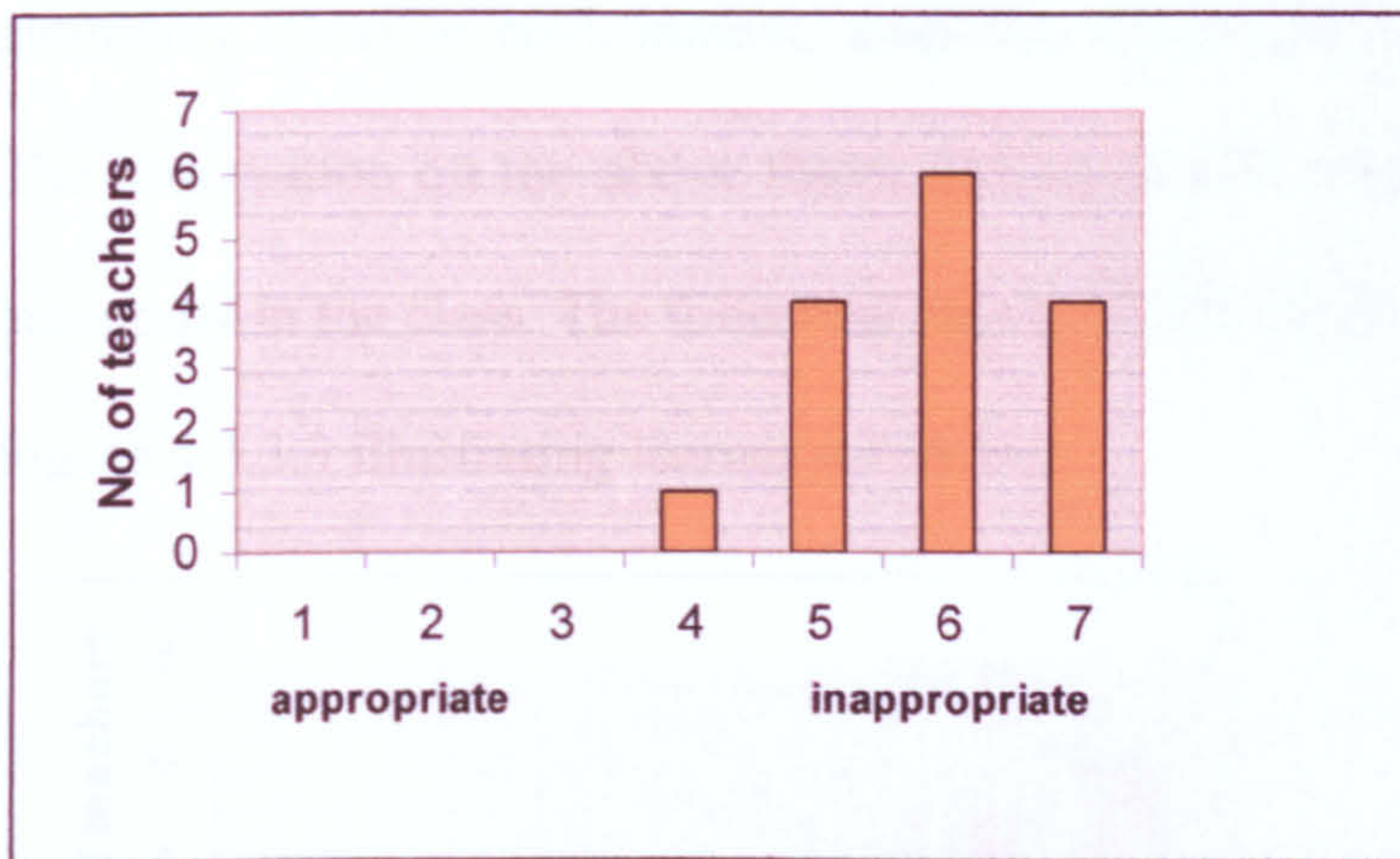
The theme of 'assessment' was analysed under the sub themes such as variety of assessment methods, wider participation, flexible assessment approaches, friendliness and appropriate assessments. The observation on the above theme indicated that 36 percent of teachers had used a single assessment method. Mostly they asked a single question. Some teachers never assessed the subject they taught. And also similarly as before, the teachers had not paid attention to encourage wider participation in assessing. Mostly the teachers used a single essay type question at the end.

The overall observation on the flexible approaches to the assessment indicated that the teachers had not adopted any flexibility. The following figure illustrates the above:



The above figure illustrated that the teachers had adopted a rigid approach in assessing students. While assessing the students it was observed that the 30 percent of teachers had maintained a friendly atmosphere. But the majority of teachers (70%) showed inapproachability in assessing their students.

Finally, the observation results indicated that the assessments given to the students were inappropriate. The following figure illustrates the above:



According to the above figure it could be revealed that the teachers had used inappropriate assessments in their class. Although they had an opportunity to use a variety of assessment methods, they had only used the single essay type question.

Summary of the theme

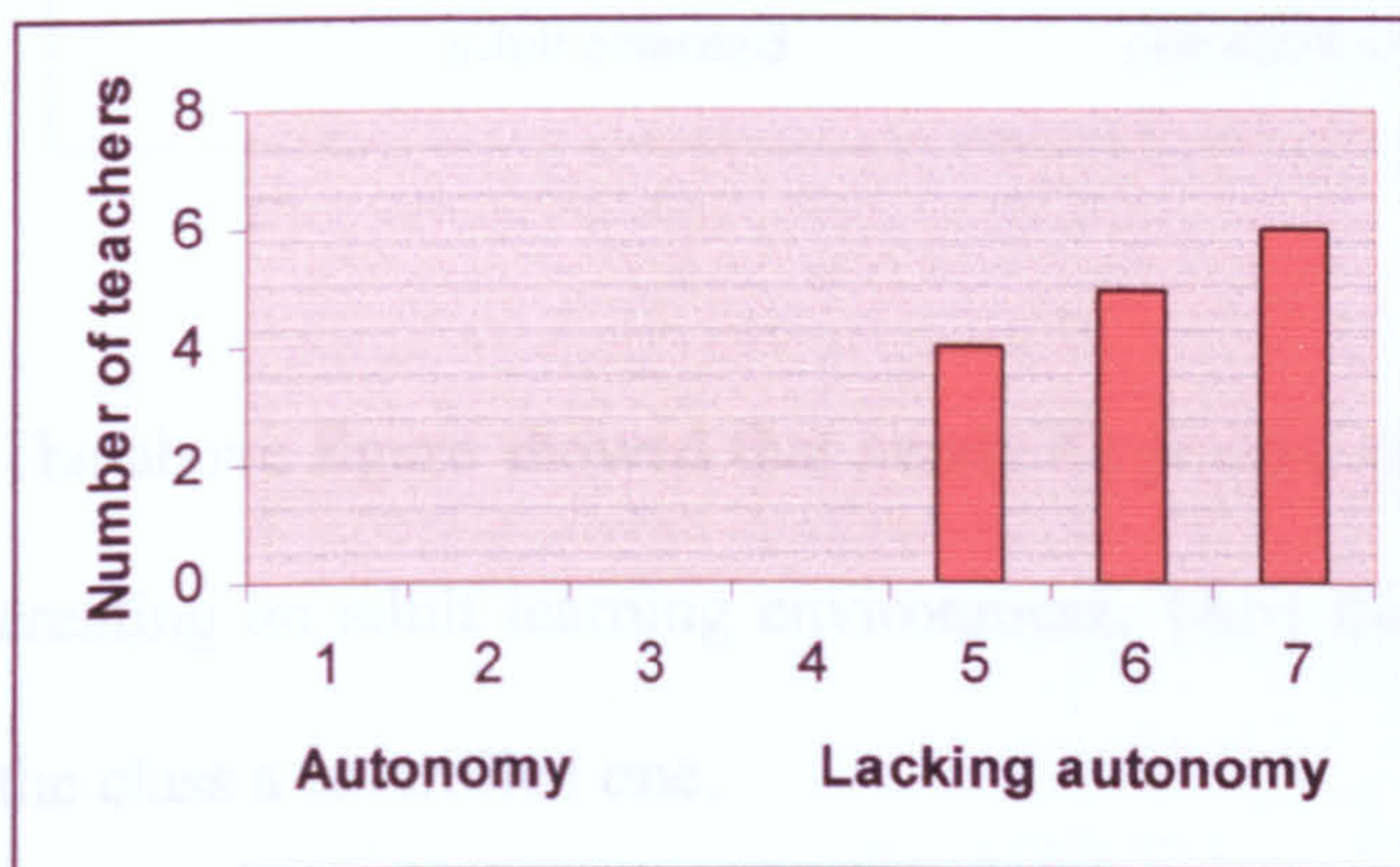
The theme of 'assessment' was analysed under the sub themes such as variety of assessment methods, wider participation, flexible assessment approaches, friendliness and appropriate assessments. The overall observation on the above theme indicated that the majority of teachers had used the single assessment method and also they had not encouraged wider participation in assessing them. Further the observation results revealed that many teachers had used rigid assessment approaches. And also a majority of teachers maintained unfriendliness in assessing their students. Finally the observation indicated that the great majority of teachers had used inappropriate assessments in assessing their students.

(E) Learning environment

The theme of 'learning environment' was analysed under the sub themes learner autonomy, flexible environment, students, confidence and adult learning environment.

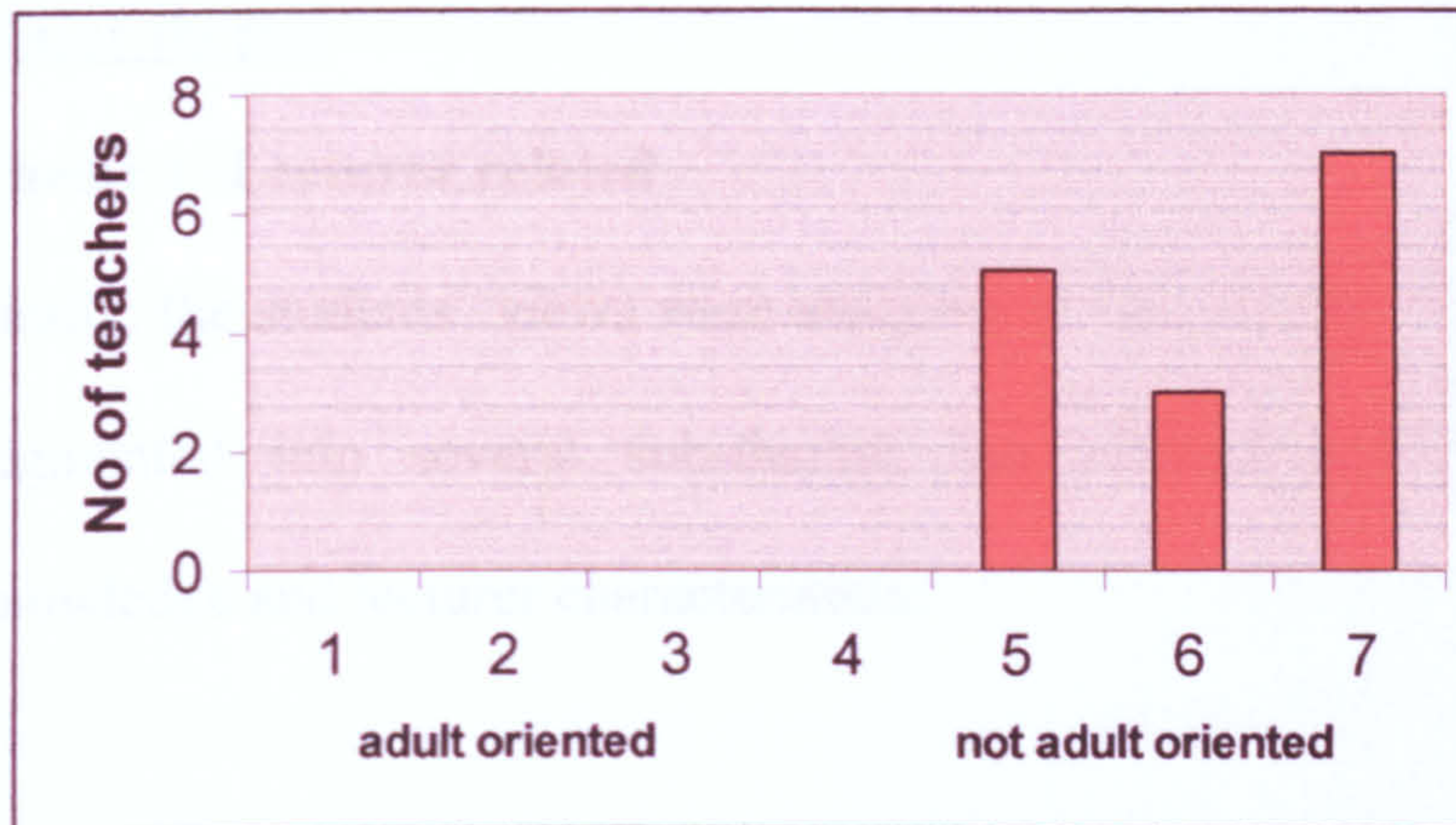
The observation on the above theme indicated that teachers had not encouraged learner autonomy in the class. The following figure illustrates the above:

Figure 4.3.3.3 illustrating learner autonomy



Summary of the theme

The above figure highlighted that the great majority of teachers had not encouraged or motivated learner autonomy although learner autonomy is essential in a learner centred classroom. Students were isolated and restricted to listening. As adult learners they must be given a chance to take responsibilities for their own learning. Similarly a flexible environment had not been maintained by the teachers. And also the observation results indicated that teachers had not even tried to enhance students' confidence. Finally the observation revealed that the teachers had not paid attention to encouraging an adult learning environment. As adult learners they should be treated in a different manner. They must be motivated and take charge of their own learning. But the observations proved that the teachers had not encouraged or motivated an adult learning environment. The following figure illustrates this as:

Figure 4.3.3.4 Adult orientation

The above figure showed that nearly 42 percent of teachers had not behaved positively in creating an adult learning environment. Their behaviour and the teaching process made the class a controlled one.

Summary of the theme

The theme of 'learning environment' was analysed under the sub themes such as learner autonomy, flexible environment, students, confidence and adult learning environment.

The observations revealed that the teachers had not encouraged learner autonomy at all.

Similarly they had not maintained a flexible environment. In such an atmosphere it was observed the students' confidence had not been encouraged or enhanced by the teachers.

The overall observation indicated that the classroom system completely denied adult learning environment. It was observed that the students were treated in a controlled manner.

4.3.3 Interviews: Students

Major themes

Theme 1 -Lecturer related

Firstly, the students' views were analysed in this section. The lecturer related theme was segmented into several sub-themes like lecturer performance, feed back, subject knowledge and lecturer characteristics.

(a) Lecturer performance: this appeared to be accepted by all students as an important measure of the success of a programme, and is typified as *'it's absolutely critical; very important; crucial... and of absolute paramount importance.* The focus of the perception of lecturer performance appeared to be based solely on the lecturing/delivery aspect of the course. Here one student indicated this aspect...*I think it's fundamental...*

(b) Feedback: students accepted the theme as an important one, but they appeared reluctant to interfere with the feedback. One student typified the type of response from students, *if you get lots of positive feed back and you get a lively session and you go away and think that's good, but asking a lecturer who did not deliver well... as far as I am aware that did not take place. Some students were particularly concerned over poor learning, but did not complain except on formal evaluation forms.*

(c) Subject knowledge: this appeared to be an important aspect of the perception of quality of delivery. Student responses were typically, *I think this is very important; highly important; this is everything; I think lecturer performance and confidence come through the subject knowledge, so it's really important; nothing without subject knowledge; I think the quality of delivery is completely dependent on the subject knowledge.* Students' responses indicated that most of the lecturers are lacking in subject knowledge. For

example one student indicated, *...some lecturers are completely out of subject knowledge. They failed to motivate us due to the lack of subject knowledge.*

(d) Feedback: students accepted that the lecturers should get feedback about their performance. And they all indicated that the reality is nil. One student said that *...nobody asked about his or her performance from us. We are there to accept everything. No value for our opinion at all.* One student mentioned that *...lecturers would change their attitude if there is a proper feedback. But nothing...* typically the student response was, *we don't have the power to change them... and we accept what they offer...* Many students appeared not to want to make any comments about lecturers. It was a common culture in classes in Sri Lanka.

(e) Lecturer characteristics: Many students expressed their views about the characteristics (personality) of good teachers that they thought were useful and valuable. However, there was a minority who did not have an opinion even when urged. Of the student opinions that were noted, this is explained by one student who stated *I think clarity of presentation. Somebody who has a clear idea, a break... where we have opportunities to discuss and then a little exercise and then a round table discussion and then back for a little more...* For these students it was clear from the evidence that they wanted a more relaxed style of delivery with more interaction rather than a lecture type process. Another student further suggested that *I think, a sense of humour is important, it helps to keep you interested, point of questioning... certain lecturers challenge you, and others perhaps back off more....* One student submitted that it is important for me *that they've got some sort of charisma which has got nothing to do with worth and thoroughness and preparation. I suspect (laughter). Personally, I think they should say*

things that are challenging. They have got to have some substance as well. They can't just challenge without any content.

Another student advised that... *I think good teaching is about tempo, pace, variety, progression, setting objectives and meeting them, and using students to learn from each other.* Many students made comments on what they saw as a representative of poor lecturing. One student illustrated this view a lecturer *who used outdated information... . There were expectations for getting us, involved in, what were rather silly, sort of game-type activities, that I think is a bit demeaning for a group of adults who are seriously giving up their time to go on a kind of course like that.* This affected students' perception as another student indicated it made me take it less seriously. One student comment characterised poor lecturing as using a voice *dreadful, boring monotone, ineffective methods and telling us, rather than explaining. Unfortunately some of the lecturers here behave this way.*

Summary

Many students revealed what characteristics good lecturers should possess and what they considered was useful and valuable which included clear presentation, a variety of teaching styles, charisma, challenging students and using student experience. Many students indicated what they saw as a representative of poor lecturing. This included using outdated information, playing silly games, using ineffective methods, lacking explaining.

Summary of the theme

The key theme of 'lecturer related' was analysed under the sub-themes such as lecturer performance, feedback, subject knowledge and characteristics. The analysis indicated that lecturer performance and subject knowledge are vitally important factors in delivering a

learner centred programme. The sub-theme of feedback about the lecturer's performance indicated that the number of students were not satisfied with the feed back process in the programme. And opinion on the lecturer characteristics also revealed their lack of satisfaction.

Theme 2- Teaching process

(a) Teaching method/practice: Students reported that the teaching method was an important element of teaching quality. Most of the students accepted that the teaching methods used within the delivery of the programme had failed to satisfy them. A student noted, *everyday we expect different styles and methods of teaching, but we get nothing. Most of them used the same traditional method. It's lecturing the entire class in a formal traditional classroom setting. ... I am totally fed up with this setting.* Students accepted bad practice without developing any strategies for resolving it. One of the students reported that *we are not asked about the teaching methods. We must accept what they are giving. ... As a routine they come and deliver lectures on a theme. Personally I know... we all know about the irrelevant teaching practice. We have to accept it.* Teaching practice and methods does not therefore appear, from the evidence, to match students' needs. It was illustrated by a student who says, *I further believe that I do not think that it is planned and thought through... it's not structured.*

(b) Interaction/ Responsiveness: Students reported that interaction was an important aspect of their learning environment but there, *very few opportunities were given for all of us to interact in a relaxed atmosphere.* This was taken up by another student who talked about a guest lecturer, *I was very impressed by her. ...She makes us talk. It's a 'lively class'. ...We all act as a part of the episode. It was marvellous. ... We learn through interaction. We need interaction for better learning. My personal belief is, as ^{an} adult*

learner, interaction makes us happy and gives satisfaction. Another response was, ...we need to interact with the presenter. Most of the time we are denied interaction. They use 'shut and listen' method. We hate it. Mostly, students reported that there was a need for improved teaching practice in order to be able to, question and interact with the people giving the presentation.

(C) Learning Objectives: each subject has learning objectives. In responding to the above the students mentioned that those are remained in theory . Further comments from them such as, *it's in the handbook; or I think the work is there that defines the aims and objectives for each of the modules. Sometimes the lecturer gives it verbally. One student reported that they ...sometimes have to dig out what it is that they're supposed to be learning. A sort of guessing game. Some students reported that, I'd look for clear indications at the beginning of the session of what I was going to learn. ... Some sort of objectives. ..., So clear signposts of where we were going...but very few do this.*

Summary of the theme

The key theme of 'teaching process' was analysed under the sub-themes such as teaching methods (styles), interaction, and learning objectives. Teaching methods appeared to be seen as the main element in delivering a learner centred programme. The number of students indicated that teaching methods used in delivering the present course were not satisfying them. In answering about 'interaction', number of students accepted that teaching-learning interaction is a key function in delivering a programme in an effective way and also they indicated that the present programme had failed to encourage interaction. In response to the question on students' expectation, they indicated that they expect lesson objectives at the beginning of the lesson.

Theme 3- Course related

(a) Course evaluation: from the evidence, students appeared to be exposed to only one formal process of course evaluation. One student, who summarised the response from many students, indicated that, *there are only formal evaluation sheets at the end of each module. - This was the formal end of module evaluation.* The evidence suggested that informal evaluations also took place between students. This is typified by one student who stated, *there was a lot of informal assessment between us on the table.*

In response to how course evaluations could be improved, most students replied that they would like to see a more in-depth analysis of course assessments because, as one student responded, *the official reporting procedures could have been possibly a little more searching or structured than they were.* From the evidence students intimated they would like to have a greater influence on those assessments rather than through, what one student termed as, *they are a trite means of significant evaluation. They are not a positive form of significant evaluation.*

(b) Assignments/ feedback: on the subject of assignments, many students appeared to indicate that they're not given sufficient assignments for many subjects. As evidence, one student stated, *no assignments for some subjects, we expect assignments for every subject. But we are given assignments for some. But it's not a relevant one. In some... no proper feedback.* Another student stated, *...some lecturers return our assignments without any feedback. They take such a long time to return them.*

(c) Course relevance: on the subject of course relevance, many students appeared to indicate that the course provided a high degree of correlation between what was required in the school and what was indicated in the programme. For example, one student stated, *it was structured and planned in an organised manner. According to the manual indication, it was a complete course for novice teachers. But we face a problem*

in implementation. It was not properly implemented. Another student suggested, we need genuine officers for implementing. According to the documents, it was a great course, but reality is different.

Summary of the theme

The key theme of 'course related' was analysed under the sub-themes like course evaluation, assignments and feedback, and course relevance. The responses revealed that the students appeared to be exposed to only one formal process of course evaluation. Further, the responses indicated that they were not given sufficient assignments. The students expected a variety of evaluation techniques with regard to their course. In contrast to the teachers' opinion most of the students agreed with the course relevance and they disagreed with the teaching approaches.

Theme 4- Tutorial related

The responses indicated that the Colleges do not conduct separate individual tutorials for the students. But students indicated that there are some group discussions on some assignments. However, all students had such a negative view of their tutorial experience. One student specified that, *I was going to say that I had a varied experience. My initial experience was that it was of a very low quality.* Another student suggested, *...I think we get only one group discussion on each term. It was not a proper tutorial. I think the tutorial is a great opportunity to help us develop through interaction.*

Theme 5- Student related

(a) Expectation: students appeared to make adjustments in their expectations of assignments, tutorials and teaching approaches. For example, one student suggested that, *...we joined here with a great deal of expectations. But slowly we make ourselves*

adjust to the course offered. Another student indicated that, *I think I lost my expectations. Now I'm going with the course and I'm satisfied with the course.* The overall responses revealed that the course has failed to fulfil the students' expectations.

(b) Motivation: most of the students appeared to indicate that the course was not motivating the students. For example. One student stated that, *...we motivate ourselves. We're not given any kind of motivation from the College. It's like a job responsibility. It's hard to see any motivational factors involving in this couation.* Another student suggested that. *We need motivation. We expect external motivation. But rarely get it.*

Summary of the theme

The key theme of 'student related' was analysed under the sub-themes such as expectations and motivation. The overall responses indicated that the course had failed to motivate students. Therefore the course delivery process appeared to be seen as an ineffective process in terms of students' expectation and motivation.

Interviews- Key staff

Secondly, the staff and college's views were analysed in this section. The views and opinions were segmented into several key themes such as lecturer related, teaching process and course related. The interview paid attention to the learner centeredness while processing the each sub theme.

Key Theme 1- Lecturer related

(a) Evaluation/Performance: student evaluations appeared not to be accepted as a means of assessing teaching performance. The great majority of staff stated that they had not used the students' evaluation for their performance. They strongly agreed that they had used the superiors' report for their improvement. For example one respondent mentioned that, *we never used students' opinions... it is a waste of time. They are not*

capable of expressing quality views about us...supporting the above view another respondent replied that why do we need their opinion. They must learn from us. We are well trained teachers. It cannot be done at all... But in contrast one respondent suggested that, I think that students probably value that because they'll be eager to put forward negative or positive aspects. I think they do value that as a service to people that come after them as well. As a commitment to continuing improvement in quality.... I would think it's not considered extraordinary in any way.... Another respondent indicated that, it's absolutely fundamental because of the whole credibility of the programme. All respondents clearly relied on the notion of the use of evaluation, as one means of generating effective feedback that gave useful data about a fluid teaching process. But they disagreed about the value of the students' evaluation.

One respondent indicated that, we have no time to do evaluations sometimes. We're given lots of recording work. Also we do extra curricular activities. In my view, we need to allocate extra time for evaluating performance. Another response indicated that, teaching performance is evaluated consistently in the College, and here...we have a monitoring form at the end of each year and we are asked on that form about the usefulness and relevance of the content of each module and also on the presentation. The comments on the usefulness are usually high, in terms of satisfaction. Comments on presentation are much more varied overall. I have to be honest about them, because we know that we've got problems.

The College appeared to envisage using course evaluations as a yardstick that monitors the effectiveness of its teaching process. In this respect, one respondent suggested, *...we will be expecting to see better progression rates. I would expect to see less re-sits. I*

*implement certain control mechanisms. I don't like to rely on students' autonomy. In supporting the above another replied that our students don't expect any freedom. I think our students prefer present class system. While answering about the students' satisfaction most of them replied positively. For example one replied that oh yes. They are satisfied with our teaching. We feel that. In answer to how do you know about their satisfaction one answered that *we know that through their achievements. No other methods.**

Summary of the theme

The key theme of 'lecturer related' was analysed under the sub-themes such as performance evaluation subject knowledge and characteristics. The staff did not accept the students' evaluation as an effective strategy in terms of delivering a quality programme. But their responses revealed the number of practical implementation difficulties in the delivery of the course due to the lack of resources. Further, staff accepted that the subject knowledge is a key factor, which influences the course in delivering a programme with a view to satisfying the adult students. Finally their responses revealed that they encouraged a controlled classroom and also they had not accepted learner autonomy and freedom that improves.

Key theme 2- Teaching process

(a) Teaching method/process: teaching methods appeared to differ between lecturers, but there does appear to be significant similarities of teaching characteristics. These were exposed as; *...I think all my colleagues are very good at the presentation of appropriate and relevant information. Sometimes they do it in a fairly pedantic way. Sometimes they do it in a superficial way and that's ...the problem.*

However, a number of respondents have gone beyond this. In this respect...teaching is *finding ways of meaningfully sharing the importance of ideas...I think that if we're teaching merely to transmit something, that's not enough. It's teaching to make that live connection of the subject matter.* Further, the College viewed the teaching process as a means to discriminate between a facilitating role and the lecturing role. In this respect' *...I have what I like to call interactive lectures, so I like to present ideas and give some people time to think about them, ...as a residential programme, where the students have a lot of time for interacting outside the classroom, ...I want them to go beyond that and think and talk about that from a theoretical framework. So, I think the idea in teaching is to present some ideas with enthusiasm and then give people a chance to reflect and think about them.* While answering the question on the variety of methods the majority replied that they use the 'lecture' method as a major means of delivering. In answering the question on what are the methods you used they replied *lecture method, problem solving and projects.* One replied that *I use group discussion. It motivates the students.* In contrast many staff relied on the lecture method for delivering the programme.

The question on 'interaction' was put to all the respondents. The great majority of respondents mentioned that interaction could improve learning, but not all the time. For example one respondent replied that *I don't motivate them to interact in the class. It causes many problems. Sometimes I ignore them.* In supporting the above another respondent indicated that *interaction leads to problems. We need silence and a controlled class environment.*

(b) Learning objectives: learning objectives appeared to be an integral part of the programme, as *...there is no doubt because of the nature of the course that we do actually look at the key learning objective which is applicability in the sense that the theory is to be applied. Therefore, I would say that learning objective is at the core of every session.* Another respondent indicated that *... it's a part of the teaching process. Teaching and learning is driven through the learning objectives. It's like a mission. Every lesson has its learning objectives. Or we do give objectives to the class.*

(c) Training: There appeared that the available training programme was not sufficient for teachers. For example, one respondent indicated that, *...we are expected to improve ourselves on our own. We are not provided with proper guidance. We follow outdated procedures. Several times we requested the College to conduct a training programme to update our competencies. But we were not offered anything.* In response to the above issue, the College response indicated that, *...lack of resources was the main problem. Under funding also the main issue. The Ministry of Education trained all the staff at the beginning. But we could not expect further continuous training programmes from them. The NIE (National Institute of Education) also offered some sort of training on an ad-hoc basis.* In response to the above issue, one head replied that, *... as mature lecturers they should be responsible for their own development. They could not expect everything from the College. As a result, we are not in a position to offer a training programme.*

Summary of the theme

The key theme of 'teaching process' was analysed under the sub-themes such as teaching method and learning objectives and training. Staffs' responses indicated that they used a variety of methods in teaching to meet students' needs. Further, staff explained that the learning objectives were given at the beginning of the lesson.

Besides, the staff responses indicated that the training programme was not sufficient for them and they were expected to be responsible for their own development.

Key theme 3- course related

(a) Course Evaluation: Commonly the course evaluation was undertaken by the teachers. One respondent indicated that, *...we do regular evaluation. We used to send the feedback to the NIE(National Institute of Education). But nothing happened. We suggested many changes in our course. It's remained as suggestions. Sometimes we use student evaluation as a mode.* Another respondent suggested that, *... we follow a given course. It was planned by the NIE. Changes also must come from that body. But for many years no changes were made.* In Sri Lanka the National Institute of Education is responsible solely for the curriculum and curriculum development of the colleges of education (see page 49).

(b) Course related improvements: the Ministry of Education do course monitoring on an ad-hoc basis. It was very hard to find any evidence for a proper monitoring system. College responses indicated that, *...the NIE and the Ministry rarely visit the College. The support offered by the external bodies was very limited. We are expected to implement our own improvement. We have to find extra resources within the strict procedures. In my opinion, it is impossible to expect any improvement without flexible procedures.*

(c) Funding: the Government funds Colleges. The Ministry of Education is the sole authority for funding. The College responses revealed that they felt that the funding allocation for them were insufficient for the College to function effectively. Further the responses indicated that, the quality of the delivery of the programme was directly

affected by the under funding. Also the responses suggested that they need more funding for a career development programme for their teachers. Presently it is being done in an unplanned and ad hoc manner.

Summary of the theme

The key theme of 'course related' was analysed under the sub-themes such as course evaluation and course related improvements and funding. Staffs' responses indicated that the NIE implemented the formal summative course evaluation in teacher education and also their responses revealed that they would welcome changes in evaluating procedures. Further, their responses indicated their dissatisfaction in course related improvement activities. Also, the college responses revealed that the funding allocation for them was insufficient to lead the college in an effective manner.

Interview (Heads)

The Head of the college and the deputy head were interviewed in order to ascertain their views on learner centred improvements within the classroom. They were questioned on:

- Management support
- Staff and staff development
- Evaluation and monitoring
- Learner centredness and
- Issues.

While responding to the question on 'management support' the head mentioned that *we provide all the support for the betterment of the students. And also we provide support for the improvement of the learning environment. We adopt a flexible approach in managing the staff.* In response to the question about the staff the head mentioned that *we are facing staff shortages but we have qualified staff. They have master degrees and*

... well trained. In supporting the above the deputy head stated that ... yes our staff are well qualified and trained... they give their fullest support in the teaching- learning process.

While answering the question about the staff development the head stated that *we don't have funding facilities for a career development programme. Once in a while the NIE had conducted some short training programmes for them. But it was not enough. Similarly the deputy head replied that yes... we need funding for staff development. Personally I feel that is the main problem in delivering a standard programme. In answering the question on how do you evaluate the teaching programme?, the head answered that ... we do a summative evaluation at the end of the year. And apart from that we do monitor their progress. In supporting the above response the deputy head replied yes. We monitor all the activities within the classrooms. And also we undertake a summative evaluation.*

The last question concerned the learner centred improvement within the college. It was answered by the head as; *yes ... particularly our staff are motivating the students. I think our college pays more attention to learner centredness than other colleges. The deputy head mentioned that saying we have never done anything separately for the improvement of learner centredness. But our staff are delivering the programme ... and they do extra curricular activities for the students... Yes. We provide a learner centred programme.*

In answering the question on 'issues' the head stated that *we need funding facilities for all the improvements. At the beginning we were given sufficient funding. But not now.*

They don't follow a proper procedure for the funding allocation. I am so fed up with that.... . similarly the deputy head replied that we get a response after requesting it several times. But the response was negative. We need infrastructure for better library and some classroom facilities. And also we need more funding for staff development. Without giving proper development training we can't expect more and quality work from them. Further he mentioned that we would like proper external monitoring and feedback to help towards implementing learner centredness.

Summary

The college responses revealed their managerial support towards the staff and their improvements. The college appeared to envisage using course evaluations as a yardstick that monitors the effectiveness of its teaching process. And also they accepted that they had done the summative evaluation rather than the formative. Although the staff were qualified and trained the college indicated and accepted that they had to be given continuous training for their development. Similarly the head of the college indicated that the staff had given the freedom to improve the teaching learning system within the classroom. Although the head's responses revealed a positive approach to learner centredness she failed to implement it properly. Finally the head of the college mentioned issues such as lack of funding, lack of infrastructure facilities, lack of external monitoring and lack of a staff development programme.

4.4 Documentary analysis

The analysis of documents was done in relation to teaching quality. The following documents were reviewed with a view to triangulate the data.

1. Teacher Education Policy Report (1996)

2. Evaluation Procedures (1999)
3. Programme Evaluation Report (2003)

4.4.1 Teacher education policy report (1996)

The Policy on Teacher Education presented in the above document (1996) is the final outcome of several studies that had been conducted and insightful reports that had been prepared on different aspects of Teacher Education in Sri Lanka. The following elements were indicated in the above Policy Report:

1. Key issues in Teacher Education
2. Principles underlying policy formulations
3. Policy objectives

The policy report (p.3) accepted the UNESCO report (1996) and says:

The commission believes that a rethinking of teacher education is necessary in order for it to bring out in future teachers precisely those human and intellectual qualities that will facilitate a fresh approach to teaching (p.6)

The report also indicated the basis of forming the policy. These included:

- Impact of new trends such as globalisation and IT on the education system and society and their implications for teacher education.
- Teachers as innovators in education
- Teachers as change agents for transformation of society
- Defining new policies and criteria for the selection of trainees and recruitment of teachers

- Redefining teachers' roles within the framework of reforms in the education system
- Developing a unified teacher education system that views initial and continuing education as a continuum-a lifelong process
- Renovating the teacher education curriculum
- Problems specific to developing countries such as relevance of the curriculum and methods of teaching the poor and disadvantaged children

The policy objectives were formed based on the above issues. The report pointed out the following objectives: teacher recruitment and placement; structure and governance of teacher education; teacher education programme; continuing education; staffing and staff development; and resource administration. Further, the report indicated:

'The quality and relevance of initial and continuing education programmes needs to be improved in order that the professional competence and confidence of teachers is related to the quality of teaching and learning in schools. The quality and awards have to be standardised for comparable programmes conducted by different institutions' (ibid).

The College responses suggested that the above written indications do not make any difference to teacher education programmes. In response to the above one respondent indicates that, ... *in Sri Lanka there is a big gap between the theory and practice. We are given proper and complete written documents regarding the teacher education. But practically, it's impossible to apply. We need procedures which can be implemented.*

4.4.2 Evaluation procedures (1999)

The evaluation process proposed by this 'Evaluation Procedures' is composed of two major components.

1. Evaluation of academic qualifications
2. Evaluation of teaching competency

An example of the evaluation criteria used by the College can be seen in appendix C. It was given by the NIE (Evaluation Procedures, 1999). The above document also indicates the importance of the continuous internal evaluation and suggests the criteria for written assignments. The above document pointed out that *'the evaluation procedure presented here suggests a systematic and an objective process for evaluation. For recognition of this course, all parties involved in this evaluation are expected to be accurate, responsible and accountable in their dealings, to ensure the reliability, validity and credibility of the evaluation. This also makes it important for College authorities to make all scholars aware of this evaluation procedure at the inception of the course itself'* (p.1). In response to the question relating to the above document, one respondent stated that, ... *we can rely on our internal evaluation. But, ... not in external. Sometimes they don't give any feedback. And sometimes, we received some unreliable feedback.* In adding to the above comments, another respondent indicates that, ...*it's hard to get school feedback in the internship period. We need to get their feedback every month but it will only reach us after three months following the reminding memorandum.*

According to the above responses it can be revealed that the evaluation system has a variety of issues such as lack of continuous evaluation, lack of proper feedback and lack of skilled evaluators to overcome.

4.4.3 Programme Evaluation Report (PER) (2003)

One of the main tasks of teacher education programmes is to produce teachers with the desired competencies and commitment to function efficiently and effectively as teachers. Questions have been raised about the quality and effectiveness of some of these courses, especially in relation to the real needs of the schools and community. After identifying a variety of issues pertaining to teacher education, the Education Secretary requested a reliable assessment report from the College of Education division. So, the above document was prepared and submitted in 2003. In response to many issues, the following findings were given in the above report (PER Report p.2):

'It was noted that a single teacher educator handling all the four sections of the academic area resulted in monotony and often demotivated the student teachers. Adequate numbers of teacher educators are needed to inspire the student teachers to a higher level of achievement. Classrooms are located in temporary cadjan sheds. All those physical resources are clustered and confined in a congested area around a single building. Further, physical education course student teachers are undergoing hardships without a playground, gymnasium or equipment'.

Further, the Report (2003) indicated the following as serious matter to be resolved immediately.

The science laboratory functions here in a converted building which is not suitable at all for practical work. The chemical provisions are inadequate for

their use. Action should be taken to provide the course guides in Tamil medium on time. The course guides provided by the NIE are not delivered in time. The student teachers sitting their final exam by the end of this year are not certain about whether they are going to sit for the old syllabus or new. Shortage of teacher educators and the low level of commitment of staff members are some of the serious matters to be resolved (p. 4).

The above findings supported the responses of students and also revealed that the Colleges are running out of resources.

Chapter conclusion

This chapter has discussed the information which was gathered through:

Focus group discussion

Questionnaire

Observation

Interviews and,

Document analysis. The data was discussed qualitatively and quantitatively. The next chapter consists of the conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the implications and conclusions of the research results. In an attempt to accomplish this, it is first necessary to return to the major research question.

This is:

Are teachers in ITE institutions using learner-centred techniques and if not, what are the best ways of implementing such changes?

and in particular the sub-questions that inform the above. These are the focus for the main discussion in which the themes and sub-themes are used in an attempt to provide some answers:

1. What is present practice in ITE in Sri Lanka?
2. To what extent are learner-centred (LCTs) technologies recognised by teachers in ITE?
3. To what extent do teachers believe that they use learner-centred technologies in ITE?
4. To what extent do students believe that teachers use learner-centred technologies in ITE?
5. What are the reasons teachers give for not using LCTs in ITE?
6. What changes are needed for LCTs to be used regularly?

This discussion attempts to establish relevant answers to these sub-questions, and in so doing seeks to achieve the objectives of the research study. Each of the sub-research questions is taken separately and the conclusions drawn from them discussed. It appears

from the evidence that each sub-question can be underpinned by one or more of the key themes. Where sub-themes can be seen to inform more than one sub-question, the sub theme has been used in relation to what appears to be the most relevant sub question.

Key Themes and managing Change in Initial Teacher Education

5.2 Thematic analysis and findings

(The link between the empirical evidence)

5.2.1 Course related

The course related theme was analysed under the following sub-themes:

Content and programme, course evaluation, feedback, and course relevance. The students' responses indicated that the relevance of course content and the different delivery approaches are vitally important factors in delivering a programme with the intention of enhancing learner centredness. The sub-theme of range of teaching methods indicated that the majority of students were not satisfied with the present approaches in the programme. Staff responses indicated that the NIE implemented the formal summative course evaluation in teacher education and also their responses revealed that they preferred changes in evaluating procedures. The college responses also revealed that the funding allocation for them was perceived as insufficient to make the necessary changes.

The staff questionnaire responses indicated that the majority had felt that the content and the programme were irrelevant to the trainee teachers. However a great majority of respondents felt that they had adopted a flexible approach in teaching. In response to the open question on the new themes, the respondents indicated that they needed IT, new themes, proper evaluation, a career development programme and changes in the

certificate. Moreover, lack of resources, funding unavailability, lack of research, and lack of proper course evaluation were indicated as issues by the respondents. The majority of the respondents did not believe that they had been given an opportunity to enhance the learner centred approach in terms of content and the programme.

From the evidence, students appeared to be exposed to only one formal course evaluation. Moreover, responses revealed that they had not been given sufficient assignments for many subjects. Most of the students agreed with the course relevance. In contrast staffs' responses disagreed with the student responses. Staff responses further indicated that the course needs changes in evaluation procedures. Further, college responses indicated that they felt that the funding for the course is insufficient for it to be conducted in an effective manner. The document suggested two major components of course evaluation; particularly the document assessment indicated that the external evaluation had not been done properly. Further, the college responses revealed that they need proper coordination with the Ministry of Education and NIE in order to streamline the course evaluation.

5.2.2 Teaching process

The teaching process theme was analysed under the following sub-themes: teaching methods, interaction, wider participation, and flexibility and learning objectives. Student responses revealed that the quality of teaching largely depended on the teaching methods. The responses revealed that the 'interaction' between lecturers and the students is an important factor in the course delivering process. They also suggested that the learning objectives should be given at the beginning of the lesson. Students further indicated that many lecturers still use largely traditional methods for delivering

lectures. According to interview responses teaching methods appeared to be seen as the main element in delivering a learner centred programme. The great majority of students indicated that teaching methods used in delivering the present course were not satisfying them. When answering questions about 'interaction', a great majority of students believed that teaching-learning interaction was a key function in delivering a programme in an effective way and that the present programme failed to initiate interaction. In contrast to the above opinion the staff responded claiming they use different methods for teaching. However, the observation results indicated that 60 percent of teachers had used only the 'lecture' method in delivering the subject and that they had not encouraged wider participation. The overall observation indicated that the teaching of the subject was rigid and also perhaps unfriendly.

The college responses indicated that the lecturers need continuous training on the teaching process and that was not given properly by the NIE. Whilst the staff responses suggested that the learning objectives are given at the beginning of the lesson, the student responses and the documentary evidence denied the above. The literature review revealed the importance of discovery and inquiry instructional methods. However, current teaching methods do not appear, from the evidence, to match students' needs.

5.2.3 The teachers' understandings of learner centredness and issues

Teachers' views and opinions were gathered through the focus group discussions, questionnaire, in-depth interviews and class room observation. They were further analysed under the key themes of lecturer related, teaching process, course related, learning environment, and finally, lecturer characteristics in terms of learner

centredness. Heads opinions were also analysed under the key themes such as management support, evaluation, staff and staff development and issues. Similarly observations were undertaken using key themes such as preparedness, subject knowledge, subject application, assessment and learning environment. The study mainly focussed its attention on the learner centred approach to the teaching delivery. In terms of overall conclusions, one can say that:

Subject knowledge: The students' responses suggested that the most of the lecturers are lacking in subject knowledge. Similarly it was also observed that most of the teachers were lacking in subject knowledge. Now effective teaching performance depends upon good subject knowledge and learner centred delivery can not be achieved without subject knowledge. The knowledge and understanding that teachers require to be successful in the classroom are not only subject knowledge, but also social knowledge about the dynamics of students and student groups in their social contexts, psychological knowledge about how students learn and organisational knowledge about how to lead and manage lessons in their particular college. However, the overall evidence suggests that the teachers are lacking in the above knowledge.

Explaining the subject matter: Moreover, it was observed that they failed to explain the subject matter properly and this led to students' dissatisfaction. As adult learners the students expect clear and evidence based explanations about the subject matter. Although it is varied, the teachers failed to explain the subject matter according to the students needs. The adult education literature generally supports the idea that teaching adults should be approached in a different way from teaching children and adolescents. The teachers of adults should use a style of teaching different from that used with pre-adults yet this did not occur.

Motivating Learning: In addition the teachers failed to motivate their students. Student motivation is an important and complex component of effective learning. Teachers need to explore how to help students to become more highly motivated and engaged in their work. Adults tend to be self-directing and have a rich reservoir of experience that can serve as a resource for learning. Since adults' readiness to learn is frequently affected by their need to know or do something, they tend to have a life, task, or problem-centred orientation to learning as contrasted to a subject-matter orientation. Adults are generally motivated to learn due to internal or intrinsic factors as opposed to external or extrinsic forces. A useful way of taking account of motivational issues is to gather evidence from students and use the findings in the teaching. However, the teachers failed to motivate the learners' intrinsically.

Flexibility of delivery: The evidence suggested the teaching was rigid and did not adopt a flexible approach in teaching, assessment and evaluation. As adult learners they expect a flexible approach in the above. Learners should be provided with an opportunity to choose a teaching method which they prefer more yet the evidence revealed that the teachers had used mostly the 'lecture' method. Moreover, learners must believe that they are capable of accomplishing the tasks and it is therefore very important to develop a sense of self-efficacy for learners. Teachers should help learners set realistic expectations for their academic accomplishments. Self-regulation techniques provide an effective method for improving student behaviour. As adults, ITE learners will be able to set realistic expectations for their academic accomplishments in a flexible classroom. Yet these objectives were not accomplished.

Encouraging participation: The evidence suggested that the teachers had not encouraged wider participation and interaction. The student needs to be an active participant in the learning process not a passive recipient. Learning is a creative process, in which the learner constructs his/her own understandings and meanings, making sense of new knowledge and experience by relating them to prior experience and context. But still the teachers think of the students as an empty vessel which the teacher, as 'expert', fills with appropriate knowledge. As various studies have shown, students can provide a valuable input to 'teaching delivery' about learning. There are important ethical as well as practical reasons for involving students in the 'planning' of their own learning. But the teachers ignored and denied wider student participation in delivering the programme.

Friendly environment: The above factors created an unfriendly and rigid environment. Support for adult learners is provided through a learning environment that meets both their physical and psychological needs. Such a learning environment is also an essential element in successful partnerships between learners and instructors. Developing an ethos in which adults feel both safe and challenged should be the goal. Any anxieties learners might have about appearing foolish or exposing themselves to failure should be eased. An ideal adult learning climate has a non-threatening, non-judgemental atmosphere in which adults have permission for and are expected to share in the responsibility for their learning. The friendly environment was neglected and so the students felt dissatisfaction and insecure. The powerlessness of the learners in discussions about learning and teaching led them think that they were being ignored by the system. The teachers understood and recognised learner centeredness in their own context. Almost all of them expected a certain degree of respect and control. The above

values are borne out of their own Sri Lankan culture. The Sri Lanka teacher education system is nurtured by Buddhist philosophy. Moreover, the entire education system expects 'respect' and 'guru' status. The teachers in the above context believe and expect a certain degree of a teacher centeredness over a learner centred approach. Even though they understood the theory of learner centeredness, they prefer to impart certain changes in implementing it in the Sri Lankan context. Teachers (in Sri Lanka) believe that if one born into an Asian Buddhist family, the first thing parents will teach about Buddhism is not a philosophical tenet but a gesture of respect: how to place hands in añjali, palm-to-palm over heart, when encounters a Buddha image, a monk, or a nun. Obviously, the gesture will be mechanical at first. Over time, though, one learns the attitude of respect that goes with it. If this is quickly picked up, parents will consider it a sign of intelligence, for respect is basic to any ability to learn.

Sri Lanka is a strong Buddhist country. The Sri Lanka education system is especially moulded by the Buddhist philosophy. According to the Buddhist philosophy, 'teachers' are the main players of the education. Mostly, the community gives teachers a 'Guru' status. Presently, the former status of 'guru' is at risk because teaching has become more complex and demanding. If teachers are not seen to be meeting these new challenges, then society will withhold the status that it has formerly bestowed. In contrast, learner centeredness expects learner autonomy and learners' freedom. Therefore in Sri Lankan context, perhaps there must be a certain compromise in both teacher respect and learner autonomy.

5.3 Managing change in initial teacher education

The research evidence of this study suggested that the teacher education colleges in Sri Lanka should pay greater consideration to the learner-centred approach to education. Twenty-first century classrooms challenge the traditional, teacher-centred curriculum to meet the increasingly diverse needs of students. Problems occur with teacher educators when teaching styles conflict with students' learning styles, often resulting in limited learning or no learning. Learner-centred classrooms place students at the centre of classroom organization and respect their learning needs, strategies and styles. The focus in a learner-centred approach is on individual learners' heredity, experiences, perspectives, backgrounds, talents, interests, capacities, and needs.

The overall findings concluded that the initial teacher education programme needs changes in all the key themes area discussed above. Psychologists say that a term that all teachers should know well is *efficacy* because highly successful teachers have a strong sense of efficacy towards their students and towards themselves; they believe that their students are capable of succeeding at a high level and that they are capable of ensuring that they do. According to perceptual psychologists, learner-centred education is essential for healthy development. Earl Kelly (1962, p.118) says,

The growing self must feel that it is involved, that it is really part of what is going on, that, in some degree, it is helping shape its own destiny, together with the destiny of all

These comments echo the very nature of learner-centred education, explaining the need to put the student at the centre of learning and in an active role, and, furthermore, as Kelly indicated, when students are engaged in activities that aid their development, they can even help shape the destiny of their classmates.

When managing change, it is important to consider learner autonomy. It was defined by Holec (1983) as the willingness and capacity to control his or her own learning. To all intents and purposes, the autonomous learner takes a pro-active role in the learning process, generating ideas and availing himself of learning opportunities, rather than simply reacting to various stimuli of the teacher. Here, learning is seen as the result of his own self-initiated interaction with the world. The Sri Lankan education system is especially moulded by the Buddhist philosophy. According to the above philosophy, the community gives the teacher a 'guru status'. In contrast the learner centredness expects learner autonomy and freedom. Therefore in Sri Lanka there must be a certain compromise between a teacher-lead approach and learner autonomy.

To bring about effective change, college leaders and teachers need to look at the college from the perspective of their students. Students in schools are often sharply and critically aware of the success of teachers' work as a result of their lived experiences as people in complex socio-political circumstances of family, college and community.

The changes can be either imposed by external authorities or events or generated by the internal actors in a situation. Leaders have an important mediational function for their college's members between the external contexts and the internal processes, helping staff and students to understand and cope with externally imposed changes. They need to perform this function effectively to avoid staff feeling powerless.

According to McCombs and Whistler (1997) administrators are responsible for developing, maintaining and enhancing an environment that enhances effective

learning. They are also responsible for ensuring that teachers are knowledgeable about their students and about how learning occurs best. Teachers are responsible for having classrooms that promote effective learning for all and for being familiar with the instructional techniques that promote effective learning for all. Teaching and learning are social processes carried out in socio-political contexts. In order to understand more clearly how teachers and their leaders at middle and senior level can bring about changes in teaching and learning, it is important to be aware of the influence which various socio-political contexts have on education, constraining certain strategies of action and promoting others.

What changes can be introduced to improve learning and how they are introduced are also influenced by an educational organisation's culture and sub-cultures within it of different formal and informal groups of staff and students.

In bringing about change, teachers and leaders need to work with people as individuals, as well as working with groups of people. Each has different personal perspectives, encompassing different values and beliefs, on how the organisation should be run and how successful teaching and learning should be undertaken. These conflicting perspectives need to be reconciled if members and leaders of a college are to work together successfully. To develop classroom processes, teachers and their leaders have to collaborate in analysing rigorously how learning and teaching is currently carried out and to what extent it meets the needs of students. Ofsted (1998) suggests guidance on how colleges can carry out self evaluation of their work. Action research encourages teachers to develop their own rigorous means of evaluating teaching, learning and management practices.

Experienced colleagues can also act as mentors in a number of different ways:

- Professional supporter
- Professional trainer
- Professional educator
- Professional assessor
- Professional sponsor
- Personal friend and counsellor

The college must create a negotiated and transparent framework within which people can work. Mortimore (1993) suggests that the types of knowledge and understanding that teachers require to be successful in the classroom are not only subject knowledge, but also social knowledge about the dynamics of students and students groups in their social contexts, psychological knowledge about how students learn and organisational knowledge about how to lead and manage lessons in their particular college.

If change is to be brought about successfully in colleges, it has to focus on the improvement of teaching and learning. The key people in such improvements are the teachers who lead and manage the student groups and the learning of students, individually and in groups. This views students as the creators and constructors of learning, rather than as just the imbibers or consumers of it, and of their college as an organisation, under the leadership of their teachers as well as formally promoted leaders within the organisational framework of a college.

However, what changes can be brought about in any college to improve learning will be strongly influenced by the socio-political contexts in which the institution is embedded.

Thus, improving teaching and learning is a complex process that occurs through the interplay of internal and external forces in a college. To be successful it requires the active engagement of staff and students in implementing preferred changes.

5.4 Research Outcomes

This section attempts to indicate some areas for further research that developed from analysing the data gathered. The major issues that arise are briefly discussed here and recommendations are made:

Recommendations for future changes:

1. Lecturing performance needs to be assessed further. Lecturer assessment using only course evaluation forms seems, from the evidence, to be an ineffective process. The development of a more focused and useful formative lecturer assessment process, which is targeted to the development of lecturer teaching skills and knowledge may help in this respect. Student Opinion Surveys (SOS) could perhaps be used for this purpose. SOS could be used in a formative manner. Particularly, performance evaluation findings could be used more effectively and immediately.
2. Training programmes especially, in teaching approaches should be considered as a development tool for lecturers. The NIE should pay greater attention to the training and development of staff. Perhaps teacher-training needs should be identified and updated continuously. This study strongly suggests that learner centeredness should be considered in developing training programmes for

teachers and also greater consideration should be paid to the national context especially Buddhist philosophy, as well as global trends and changes.

3. An induction training programme (specially planned) on learner-centredness should be given to the newly appointed lecturers in the college. The above programme must be planned properly according to the Sri Lankan needs identified, and it should be monitored systematically.
4. Tutors need to engage continuously in standardised training programmes. The Colleges should continue to pay attention to the development of training programme for their staff. A suggestion for a separate training programme could be developed for the tutors. The College should pay greater attention to the improvement of tutorial classes and its and also tutors need to develop 'interaction' with their students.
5. Course modules need perhaps to be changed in order to improve the teaching and learning. Students' opinions should be taken into consideration in the above changing process. Module changes should be monitored for relevance and improvements enacted continuously. Student opinions also could be considered for this purpose and modules should be prepared systematically.
6. Adequate resources should be allocated to the Colleges. The relevant authorities ought to consider the above. The MOE should develop a procedure in order to allow a continuous flow of the physical resources to the Colleges. Firstly, the basic physical resource needs should be addressed. The above college needs a

science laboratory and also some classroom facilities. Secondly, human resource needs should be considered. The lack of lecturers is the main issue here. It needs to be addressed immediately. The excessive work load makes lecturers feel insecure and unhappy. The above needs should be addressed in order to improve a learner-centred system effectively.

7. The monitoring process needs changes and development to improve or amend procedures. A formative monitoring system should be encouraged. The MOE together with the NIE should develop a monitoring procedure in order to improve the process. Formative monitoring implementation could be delegated to the Regional Education Offices and it could be amalgamated with the Provincial Office. Proper guidelines for the monitoring process should be developed and administered.
8. Colleges should be encouraged to maintain the student-oriented approach across the programme. The College should consider the above approach in its whole programme and it should consult widely.
9. This study shows that in the Sri Lankan context particular research is needed on learner centredness in terms of 'teacher respect' and 'learner autonomy'. Importantly, Buddhist philosophy and the impact of its values on 'teacher respect' must be considered for further research.

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Appendix-1

Focus Group Plan

Location: Training College, Sri Lanka

Date: October 25, 2004

Time: 9-11 a.m.

Facilitator: Hajar

Recorder 1: Naseema

Participants

Group of Student teachers

Purpose

The purpose of the focus group is to generate a variety of viewpoints for the enhancement of the learner centred approaches in initial teacher education.

Background Information

This study is being done in order to enhance the learner centred approaches in teacher education. Holding a focus group is part of this larger data gathering process. The researcher is using the focus group to gather more detailed information in the hope to better understand your viewpoints, beliefs, and knowledge regarding the delivery of the teacher education course. No names will be attached to any particular comment as part of the study. This information will also be blended into the rest of the data gathered by the documents and the interviews.

Participant Selection

Selection was done randomly. A group of final year student teachers was selected for the discussion.

Participants' Role

The discussion focuses on participants' views and feelings or beliefs regarding the delivery of the teaching course. Participants are encouraged to speak from their own

experience and knowledge, and are not expected to act like experts. Opinions are welcomed. There are no wrong answers.

Communication Guidelines

One person speaks at a time. Interactions are allowed.

Everyone participates.

Every opinion is valid and valued.

Listen to learn and understand, not oppose nor attack

Stay on task

If it is not your turn to speak, feel free to make notes about your thoughts.

Questions

1. Why do they select the course?
2. What do they expect from the course?
3. What do they feel about the delivery of the course?
4. How can they measure their achievement?
5. What is their opinion on the quality of the teaching approach?
6. The study identifies many different perspectives on teaching approaches. What do you see as the effective methods?

(Further questions and themes were formed during the discussion)

Conclusions, Expressions of Appreciation

Finally, the generated themes were expressed and appreciated.

Appendix-2

QUESTIONNAIRE: EVALUATION OF PROGRAMME

Dear Staff

In order to evaluate the training programme which you have undertaken, your co-operation is sought in answering the following question.

Please circle the response that most accurately expresses your opinion. Your contribution to this evaluation exercise is much appreciated and will be used in the development of future programmes. Thank you.

Research Associate
University of Hull

Section A: Content and Programme

- 1. Content and the programme is relevant 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Irrelevant
- 2. Covered all the area 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 did not cover all the area
- 3. Flexibility in teaching 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 no flexibility
- 4. Programme encouraged Teaching 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 did not encourage

5. Please indicate areas that were not included in the programme which would have been helpful.

.....

..... 6. Comment on the issues you think as important regarding the content and the programme.

.....

7. Comment on the opportunities given to you for enhancing the learner centred approach in terms of course and programme.

.....

Section B: Delivery/Strategies

- 8. Course delivery is student focused 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 not student focussed
- 9. Use variety of methods 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 did not use variety of methods

10. Use appropriate assessment system 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 did not use appropriate assessment system

11. We enhanced interaction 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 did not enhance interaction

12. Adopted flexible teaching methods 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 did not adopt flexible methods

13. Do you believe that you use the learner centred methods in the delivery of the programme? Explain the methods you used.

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14. Comment on the issues you believe as important in delivering the programme.

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C: Learning Environment

15 Encouraged friendly environment 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 did not encourage friendly environment

16. Enhanced learner autonomy 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 did not enhance learner autonomy

17. Motivated the student 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 did not motivate the student

18. Flexible classroom arrangements 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 fixed classroom arrangements

19. Do you believe that the adult learners should be taught differently and why?

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20 Comment on the issues you believe as important in enhancing the learning environment.

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Section D: Lecturer characteristics:

21. I do module evaluation 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 I never do module evaluation

22. I use sufficient visual
material 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 I don't use sufficient visual material

23. I do self evaluation
on performance 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 I never do self evaluation on my performance

24. Do you believe that the lecturer performance is an important factor in delivering the programme and Why?

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25. Comment on the issues you believe are important in enhancing the staff performance development within the organisation

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Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. The information you have volunteered has been invaluable in the evaluation of the programme.

Appendix-3

QUESTIONNAIRE: EVALUATION FOR PROGRAMME

Dear Students

In order to evaluate the training programme which you have undertaken, your co-operation is sought in answering the following question.

Please circle the response that most accurately expresses your experience. Your contribution to this evaluation exercise is much appreciated and will be used in the development of future programmes. Thank you.

Research Associate
University of Hull

Section A: Content and Delivery

1. The content of the programme was generally relevant to my professional needs.

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

2. The content of the programme covered areas which will be important to my future professional needs

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

3. The delivery of the programme was of a consistently high standard.

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

4. The delivery of the programme included a range of appropriate teaching methods

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

5. Please indicate, giving reasons, areas that were not included in the programme which would have been helpful.

.....

Section B: The Learning Experience

6. The programme has been valuable in improving my performance at work.

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

7. I now have a clearer understanding of teaching strategies in my teaching area.

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

8. As a result of undertaking the course I feel more confident in my abilities

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

9. I have a greater commitment to achieving the teaching objectives since undertaking the programme

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

10. List three aspects of learning experience which were particularly important to you.

.....

Section C: Expectations:

11. My personal expectations at the outset of the programme were generally met.

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

12. The expectations of my school with regard to my professional development were realised.

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

13. The programme has motivated me to undertake further challenges in the future.

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

14. The experience of the programme has increased my sense of achievement.

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

15. Give three examples of the way in which your professional development has been affected by the programme.

.....

Section D: Support (Learning environment)

16. My teachers have been very interested in my study.

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

17. My teachers have encouraged me throughout the programme.

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

18. I have benefited from being able to discuss during the programme with teachers and colleagues.

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

19. Teachers have created a friendly environment during the class hours.

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

20. Describe how teachers have helped or constrained your development during the programme.

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Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. The information you have volunteered has been invaluable in the evaluation of the programme.

Appendix-4**OBSERVATION CHECK LIST:**

Please **HIGHLIGHT** the number you feel most accurately reflects the lecture sessions you attended:

A. Preparedness:

Well planned	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Poorly planned
Well prepared	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Poorly prepared
Had sufficient visual materials	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Insufficient visual materials

B. Subject Knowledge:

Adequate knowledge	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Inadequate knowledge
Maintain order of the theme(continuity)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Not maintain order
Relevant	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Irrelevant
Satisfied the students	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Dissatisfied the students

C. Subject Application:

Used variety of methods	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Single approaches
Encouraged wider participation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Did not encourage wider participation
Adopted flexible approaches	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Adopted rigid approaches
Friendliness	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Unfriendliness
Interesting	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Boring

D. Assessment:

Used a variety of methods	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Single approaches
Encouraged wider participation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Did not encourage wider participation
Adopted flexible approaches	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Adopted rigid approaches
Friendliness	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Unfriendliness
Appropriate assessments	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Inappropriate assessments

E. Learning Environment:

Encouraged learner freedom/autonomy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Did not encourage learner freedom/autonomy
Encouraged flexible environment	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Did not encourage flexible environment
Enhanced student confidence	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Did not enhance student confidence
Encouraged a adult learning environment	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Did not encourage an adult learning environment

Appendix-5**Basic Interview Questions-Teachers**

1. How important is performance evaluation to you? And how is it evaluated?
2. How important is subject knowledge in delivering a programme?
3. What matters to you in delivering a subject?
4. How do you motivate interaction while delivering the subject?
5. What do you think about learner autonomy? And how can it be motivated?
6. Do you believe that the adult learners should be taught differently?
7. Do you believe that you are adopting learner centred techniques in delivering the programme?

Appendix-6**Basic Interview Questions-Students**

1. How important is lecturer performance to you?
2. How was the lecturer performance evaluated?
3. Do you have any comments about the quality of handouts you were given?
4. Do you have any comments about the level of support that you were given and how this was given?
5. How appropriate were the teaching methods used?
6. What is your experience regarding assessments of your work?
7. Were you given opportunities to interact with the presenter?
8. Are you satisfied with the present course delivering methods?

Appendix-7**Interview (Coding) Example**

Main Theme	Sub Theme	Interview Questions	Interview Content
Lecturer Related ↓	Introduction and Preamble ↓	Question Highlighted in bold ↓	<p>Just to start off, I would like to assure you that this interview is confidential and I will transcribe this interview and send you a copy of it, for you to amend or make deletions as you think as appropriate. The focus for the interview is your perception of the quality of delivery on the teacher-training programme. It is specifically targeting the classroom. So that is the context for the research arena that I'm interested in. if I can start off with, How important is lecturer performance to you?</p> <p>A-1 <i>it's incredibly important really.</i> And I think really if we follow on the ideas that we pick up on the course ideas about total quality I think that y'know if the package is total quality then the point of delivery which is the most important point ought to be as high quality as the rest. So, to me <i>it must be fundamental.</i></p> <p>Q- What characteristics of a good lecturer would you suggest typifies your views about effective lecturing performance?</p> <p>A-Yes...I'd use similar sort of criteria as that used that NIE have been using usually. I'd look for clear indications at the beginning of the session of what I was going to learn.</p> <p>Q-Was that for learning objectives?</p> <p>A-Yes. Some sort of objectives. I'd very much expected to find <i>that they've got a good knowledge of their subject.</i> We as a group tended to be quite questioning. So clear signposts of where we were going. And also <i>interaction is very important,</i> finally, style. Y'know, it's very important.</p> <p>Q-Was the lecturer performance only assessed by formal summative assessments?</p> <p>A-I only knew formal assessments.</p> <p>Q- Did anyone come in and carryout assessments during the class?</p>
	Lecturer performance ↓	Q-1	
	Learning objectives ↓	Q-2	
	Assessments ↓	Q-3	

↓ Teaching process	Modules ↓ Teaching Methods	<p>Q-4</p> <p>A- No, not that I am aware of.</p> <p>Q- Do you have any comments about the quality of modules you were given?</p> <p>A- Partly okay. But not very much. We need changes in modules.</p> <p>Q- Do you have any comments about the level of support that you were given and how this was given?</p> <p>A- I had a varied experience. My initial experience was that it was of a very low quality.</p> <p>Q- In what ways do teaching staff delivering programmes satisfy your needs?</p> <p>A- I think we get the content knowledge from them and <i>we forgot to think about the needs or satisfactions</i>. Y'know... that we knew that <i>we could not expect any advance delivering approach from them</i>.</p> <p>Q-5</p> <p>Q-Teaching methods. How appropriate were the teaching methods used?</p> <p>A- Some okay. Some are interesting. As a whole they use only <i>formal methods</i>. I mean ...<i>lecturing</i>.</p> <p>Q- You mean they just lectured.</p> <p>A-Yes..</p> <p>Q-6</p> <p>Q- What is your experience regarding assessment of your work?</p> <p>A-<i>Normaly summative</i>. The NIE do this as the final assessment.</p> <p>Q-Do you have any comments about the tutorial opportunity that you were given?</p> <p>A-We don't have any tutorial classes. We expect tutorial and we asked them. But no responses. <i>I think totally tutorials are ignored by them</i>.</p>
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Questions

Bold

Answers (Main)

Bold And Italic
