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## An Educational Workshop Held at the Polytechnic Institute of Bahir Dar

Adinew Husien<sup>1</sup>

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A two-week workshop was conducted in Bahir Dar Polytechnic Institute from July 26 to August 6, 1993. Two British professors, Bill Squire and David Swindels, from the School of education, University of Huddersfield, conducted the workshop. The workshop was organized through the coordination of the University of Huddersfield and the Polytechnic Institute and was sponsored by the Ministry of Education the British Council and another international agency.

The participants of the workshop were 55 staff members of the Institute. The regular

teaching - learning process continued while the workshop was in progress. This was possible as the staff were divided into two groups, one group attending the morning session and the other the afternoon.

The workshop was opened after Dr Šilešhí Zeleke made a welcoming speech.

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<sup>1</sup>The present reporter is a graduate in Educational Psychology from the Addis Ababa University. Since September 1990, he has been working in Bahir Dar Polytechnic Institute.



A scene from the opening session of the workshop in the afternoon shift. (David Swindells introducing himself to the participants)

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"General Teaching Methodology" was the major theme of the workshop. The subthemes presented by the two professors included the following:

- ☛ Aim of Education;
- ☛ Learning Domains (cognitive, affective & psychomotor)
- ☛ Principles of learning (Reinforcement & Gestalt theories)
- ☛ Learning Objectives (General and specific)
- ☛ Teaching Methods (Discussion, Question & Answer, Demonstration, etc.)
- ☛ Visual Aids (overhead projector, Magnetic board & so on)
- ☛ Lesson planning;
- ☛ Work plan (Master & weekly work plan)
- ☛ Assessment (How to construct reliable & valid tests)
- ☛ Marking Scheme.

In communicating the contents of these issues, the presenters used lecturing questioning & answering, discussions, group work, class activity demonstration, project works and other related techniques. The visual aids used by the professors included: chalkboard, overhead projector and magnetic board.

### Observations about the workshop

The following methodologically significant points were underscored during the workshop.

#### 1. The use of structuring a lesson.

- (a) A well structured lesson should have the preambles of its introduction, development and conclusion.
- (b) When an introduction is good, it is capable of:
  - inducing interest,
  - saying the relevant,
  - stressing the need for it,
  - having a link (recap) with previous learning.
- (c) The teacher should be able to
  - begin first with specific learning objectives,
  - consolidate learning at appropriate points (i.e. medial consolidation),
  - involve students in activity,
  - vary methods,
  - use multi-sensory appeal and
  - budget the time.
- (d) The conclusion of a well structured lesson, apart from serving as a final consolidation, should also include:

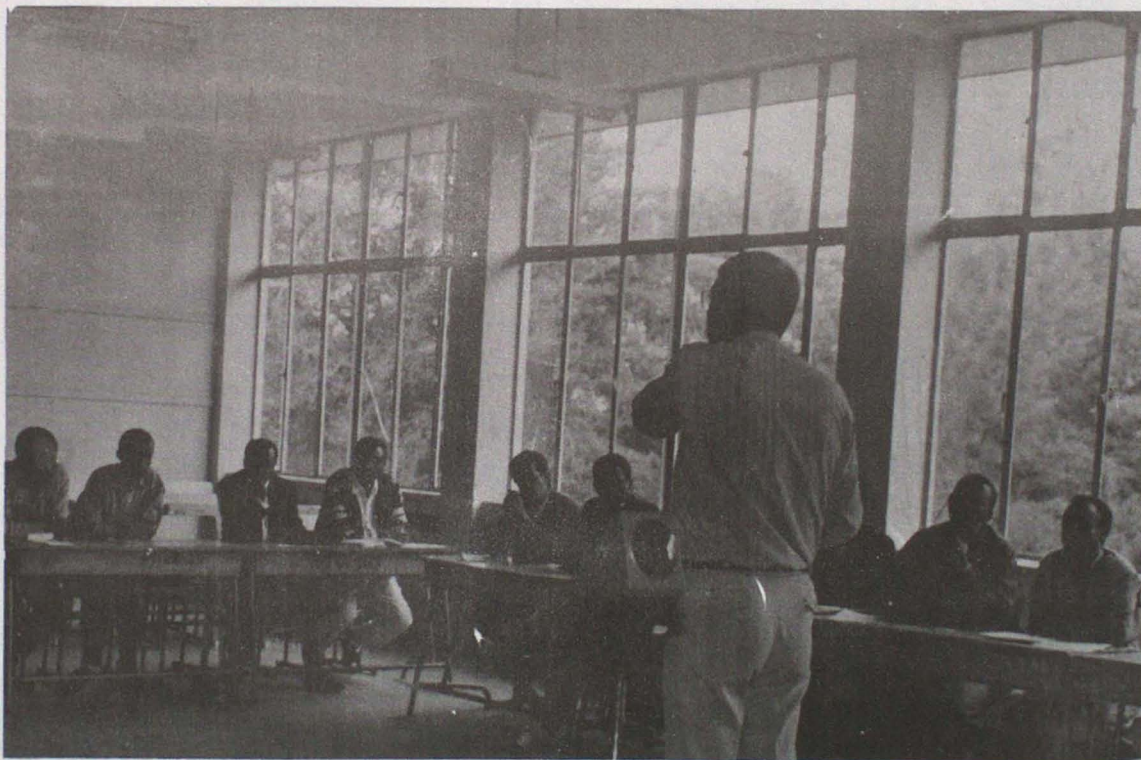
- question and answer techniques,
- frequency (or overlearning)
- recency, and
- summary.

2. The importance of multi-sensory appeal in the mastery of a learning task.

3. The advantage of learning aids such as:

- involving larger groups
- reducing demonstration & content of the lesson
- facilitating transfer of training and
- making immediate reply.

4. The significance of writing specific learning objectives in observing and evaluating students' progress.



The proceeding of the workshop in the befornoon shift (Bill Squire presenting).

5. The merits of question and answer techniques, in teaching.

As was observed in the workshop, question and answer techniques highly enhance understanding, when the teacher:

- (a) uses open ended questions instead of closed ended ones;
- (b) makes use of wrong answers so that they are corrected by other students in the class, thereby, in increasing students activity;
- (c) distinguishes between lower order questions, which require simple recall and facts and higher order questions which need understanding;
- (d) follows the three p's principle, that is,
  - pose a question
  - pause for a few seconds, and
  - then pounce (pick or select) a student.

6. The benefit of immediate feedback

7. The implications of the S-R-R theory and the gestalt theory, the former emphasizing reinforcement in order for learning to occur and the latter having great implication to incite learning.

8. The motivation effect of varying teaching methods.

9. The necessity of knowing the hierarchy of categories in the cognitive domain.

10. The merits of preparing tables of specification and marking scheme versus the teaching emphasis and students response in increasing the reliability and validity of a test.

Towards the end of the workshop, the professors surveyed the staff's appraisal using a likert-scale item questionnaire. The result of the survey revealed that most of the staff listed the following as the first highly relevant topics:

- (a) how to write general and specific objectives,
- (b) how to identify and use appropriate teaching methods, and
- (c) how to prepare a lesson plan.

Apart from this, at the closing ceremony of the workshop, the participants were awarded certificates for attending and successfully completing the in-service training course.

In general the workshop can be said to have developed the staffs' motivation of effective teaching, and curiosity to new innovations in teaching-learning processes. What can be concluded further is that it bears a foundation for bilateral relationship between the University of Huddersfield in England and the Polytechnic Institute of Bahir Dar. My final comment is that, such in-service training courses should be encouraged at institutional and national levels, as they are very useful.