

Adoption of Student Centred Learning in Somalia: A Case for Teacher's Capacity and Beliefs*

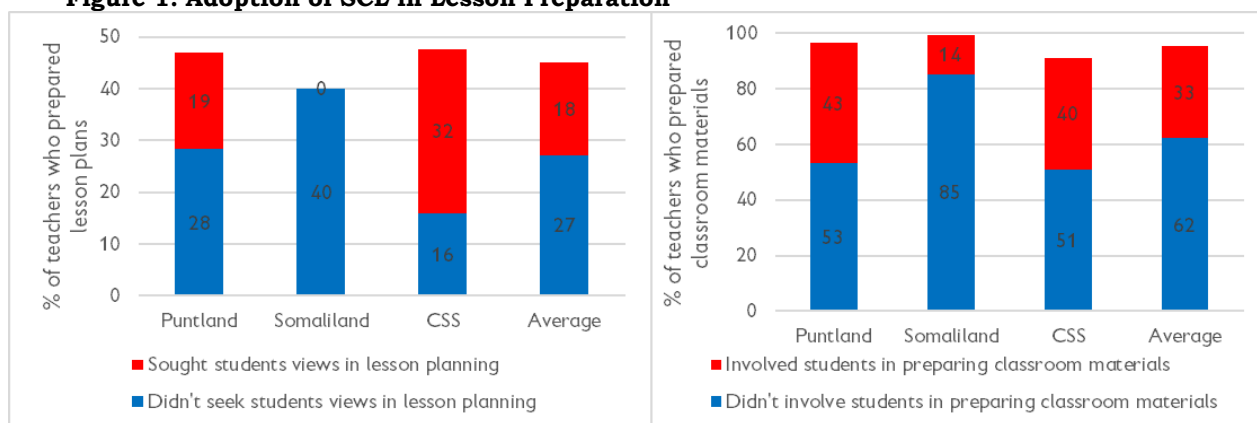
Background

Decades of protracted conflicts and natural disasters fractured education system in Somalia. Despite this, education access among children has steadily grown. Quality of education in the country has not progressed in tandem with access indicators. Literacy assessments shows 15% to 20% of fourth grade learners in the country are unable to recognise or read single words. One of the priority objectives of the government as espoused in the Education Sector Strategic Plan is to improving learning outcomes for children. Teachers and methods they apply play a critical role in achieving this objective. As a means to improve learning outcomes, teachers are encouraged to apply Student Centred Learning (SCL), a teaching and learning method that encourage learners to be inquisitive and participative in their own learning. Other than learning outcomes, SCL helps students to negotiate, collaborate, accept diversity and develop peer positive relationship beyond their classroom. This study sought to establish level of adoption of SCL approach among 95 randomly sampled schools distributed across three SCI operational areas, that is, Somaliland, Puntland and South Central Somalia (CSS). The survey included 95 head teachers and 373 teachers from the 95 sampled schools. The survey instrument presented vignettes that described fictional teaching scenarios to determine the way teachers make decisions on how to teach.

Adoption of SCL

The central tenant of SCL is involvement of students in their own learning, right from the planning stages. If students are involved in planning, they are able to know what they are learning and why. This drives student's ownership of the learning agenda and intrinsic motivation to learn. Involving students in lesson planning implies teachers have to relinquish some of their control over the classroom to their students. In this study, we find only 45% of teachers prepared lesson plans, but mostly not involving students in preparing these lesson plans. While most teachers reported to prepare materials used in class, only a third of teachers sought student's views.

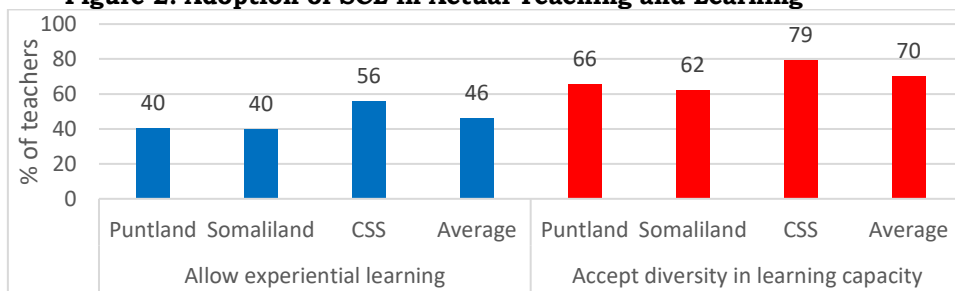
Figure 1: Adoption of SCL in Lesson Preparation



In SCL, the teacher should encourage students by allowing them to not only have an opinion in how learning takes place but also meaningfully contribute to the design of their own course of study. However, from this study, results show nearly two in every ten teachers would not allow group work even upon request by his/her students. Additionally, only 46% of teachers would allow students to actively participate in their own learning (experiential learning), for instance telling students to observe the sky in a lesson about solar system. However, most teachers in this study attend to diversity in learning capacities, for instance, 70% of teachers spent more time with learning difficulties and encourage their students to accept diversity in their classroom.

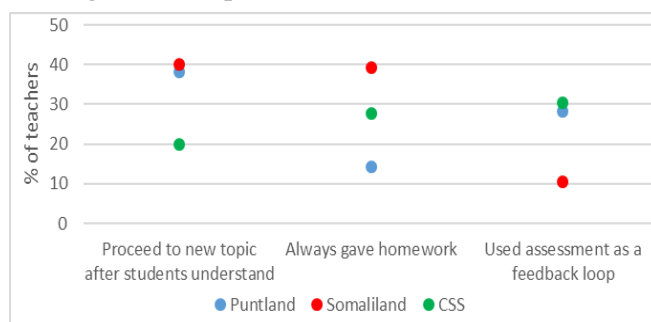
* This Fact Sheet prepared by Elijah Kipchumba is based on a descriptive study. The full report is available [here](#)

Figure 2: Adoption of SCL in Actual Teaching and Learning



Learner assessment serve to identify what areas needed to improve both from the teacher’s and student’s point of view. SCL assessments enable students to know gaps in their learning and enable teachers know their student weakpoints as well as weakpoints in teacher’s pedagogical approach. Thus a feedback loop for the teacher and the student. Results show only one in every four teachers surveyed used assessment as a feedback loop, the rest used it as a means to grade students only. This included reluctance of teachers to give out homeworks and proceeding to a new topic even when the students have not grasped the one at hand.

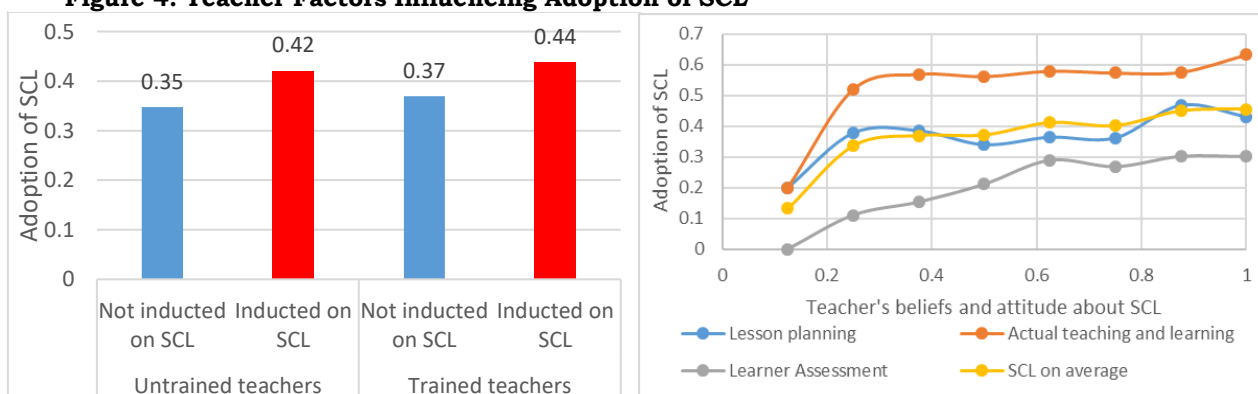
Figure 3: Adoption of SCL in Learner Assessment



Factors Influencing Adoption of SCL

Application of SCL was only upto a third in the three SCI oprational areas. Teachers performed poorly in learner centred assessment. While school resourcing (teacher-student ratio, class sizes, inputs for practical learning among others) was a necessary condition for application of SCL, there was no evidence to show well-resourced schools promoted students’ active participation in their own learning. Teacher attending teacher training college played very minimal role in SCL adoption, except when the training included elements of SCL. On the other hand, this SCL training does not necessarily translate to more SCL adoption unless it is able to challenge teacher’s beliefs about SCL. In general, teachers who had positive attitude towards SCL were more likely to embrace SCL.

Figure 4: Teacher Factors Influencing Adoption of SCL



There was minimal active participation of students in their own learning, only up to a third of the possible score, especially in learner assessment mostly meant to rank students and not offer a feedback on what students had learnt. Teacher’s training and induction only influences adoption of SCL to a minimal extent, what matters most is teachers’ attitudes and beliefs about SCL. Without complementary efforts to change teacher’s pedagogical beliefs, teacher training alone will not solve the problem.