

Nature and quality of teacher – pupil interactions in primary science lessons: a constructivist perspective

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Abstract

Within the constructivist framework, a science teacher is expected to be an active facilitator who orchestrates and supports interaction with learners with the aim of stimulating learning. The quality of teacher – pupil interaction would, therefore, determine the effectiveness of the learning process. This study investigated the nature and quality of teacher – pupil interactions in primary science lessons. The sample included standard eight pupils in eight primary schools from four districts in Kenya. A total of 196 pupils and 8 science teachers participated in this study. Data was collected by use of a Science Teaching Observation Schedule (STOS). The findings indicate that teachers do not initiate meaningful interactions that would enable pupils to actively learn science as envisaged within the constructivist framework. Suggestions on how teachers can improve interaction with pupils for effective learning are discussed. It is also recommended that the constructivist approach to the teaching of science be emphasized in the primary science teacher education curriculum.