



## An Evaluation of the Lesson Plan Manual for Language Arts in Junior Secondary Schools in Southern Sierra Leone

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### **Abstract**

Questions continue to be raised about the effectiveness of the Lesson Plan Manual (LPM) because pupils' performance in Language Arts remained low. Thus, it became necessary to evaluate the LPM to determine whether it is aligned with lesson planning best practices around the world. The research questions raised in the study are: Are the language contents of the LPM clear in terms of examples given, guided and independent practice activities? Does the LPM respond to diversity issues in the Language Arts classroom? Does the LPM have in-built classroom management strategies? Is the LPM flexible enough to deal with changing situations in the classroom? The convergent mixed-method design was used. Out of a population of 458 Language Arts teachers, 210 were used as the sample for quantitative data collection, and Language Arts teachers with at least three years of teaching experience were selected for qualitative data collection. Quantitative data were collected using a self-developed questionnaire. For the collection of qualitative data, a focused group discussion question guide was used. Findings revealed that teachers viewed the LPM as a very useful tool in lesson delivery; the content of the LPM addressed diverse issues in the classroom; the LPM allows teachers to be flexible in adjusting their lessons to the classroom environment and to change their teaching strategies to meet the needs of learners. It is recommended that the Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education conduct symposia for Language Arts teachers to share experiences with the LPM and conduct refresher training regularly on its effective use.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Sierra Leonean teachers have been used to the didactic method of lesson planning where the teacher provided the learners with all the information, thus making the learners passive recipients of knowledge. This is the traditional teacher-centred approach to teaching. However, this traditional lesson plan practice later gave way to the Child-Centered Teaching Technique (CCTT) (Libbie, Challay, Mbavai & Senessie, 2025). The CCTT was implemented mainly at the primary school level, with support from United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). UNICEF trained primary school teachers throughout the country on this new lesson plan practice. In spite of this, the traditional lesson plan practice remained in force at the secondary school level. The academic performance of pupils continued to be low, especially in Language Arts at the Junior Secondary School level (BECE-2020\_Report\_final.pdf). This was the situation up to 2014 when Sierra Leone experienced the outbreak of the Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) epidemic. During this period, the Ministry put together the Accelerated Teaching Curriculum, which was intended to be a stop-gap measure to make up for time lost during the Ebola outbreak. A national Radio Teaching programme was launched by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology to cater for pupils who at that time stayed at home due to EVD (Boisvert, 2017). Due to the outbreak of the Ebola scourge, the Government of Sierra Leone, through the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, launched a new lesson plan model for the teaching of Language Arts and Mathematics in 2017; this became known as the Lesson Plan Manual (LPM). The LPM was developed and implemented in Sierra Leone as part of the president's recovery priorities which came in the wake of the Ebola Epidemic in Sierra Leone (Education Sector Plan [ESP], 2017).

Education in Sierra Leone has seen challenges over the years, such as the lack of learning resources (Allen & McDermott, 2018). Against the backdrop of those challenges, the 'New Direction' government in Sierra Leone introduced the Free Quality School Education (FQSE) programme to improve access and the quality of education nationwide (Taylor-Pearce et al., 2021).

With the introduction of the Lesson Plan Manual and its effective use by the Language Arts teachers, it was expected that the performance of pupils in Language Arts would improve, but on the contrary, pupils' academic performance remained low. This brings into question the effectiveness of the LPM.

### **1.1. Statement of the Problem**

According to the ESP (2017), quality education in Sierra Leone is an education system that delivers high-quality teaching and learning at all levels of education. Sierra Leone had experienced a civil war between 1991 and 2001, and an Ebola epidemic in 2014 and 2015 (Taylor-Pearce et al., 2021). These two events had a devastating impact on the education system, which led to a decline in quality. Quality education means quality teaching resources to enhance quality teaching. Thus, the LPM was developed and implemented in the Junior Secondary School in Sierra Leone. According to Libbie et al. (2025), the LPM has no statistically significant impact on pupils' academic performance in Junior Secondary schools in southern Sierra Leone. However, the LPM has not been seen to be effective in improving the academic performance of pupils. This calls for an evaluation of the LPM used in Junior Secondary Schools to see whether it is fit for use in the Language Arts classroom. It is against this background that this research was conducted to evaluate the LPM for Language Arts in Junior Secondary Schools in Sierra Leone to determine whether it is in alignment with lesson planning best practices around the world.

## **1.2. Research Questions**

The study addressed the following research questions:

Is the language content of the LPM clear in terms of examples given, guided and independent practice activities?

Does the LPM respond to diversity issues in the Language Arts classroom?

Does the LPM have in-built classroom management strategies?

Is the LPM flexible enough to deal with changing situations in the classroom?

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1. Essential Elements of a Good Lesson Plan**

A good lesson plan is said to have the following qualities. According to Womack et al. (2015), the learning objectives of the lesson plan should be clear and should determine the nature of the assessment that should come after the new content has been explained. Khan (2011) also added that a lesson plan must ensure a clear understanding of the learning outcome to be achieved; the explanation of the lesson plan has to be clear; the explanation of the content should be clear; the lesson plan should be clear about the examples given; it also has to guide the teacher about pupils' guided practice; and lastly it should be clear about assessment for student learning, and the lesson plan should include remote learning strategies to successfully check for pupils' understanding. Khan (2011) also observed that the essential element of a good lesson plan is that it should show a clear understanding of the learning outcomes to be achieved, and it should relate to the previous coursework. According to him, a good lesson plan should therefore include: being based on learning outcomes; relating to previous knowledge; organizing the subject matter, teaching resources and teaching and learning activities; focusing on pupils' learning strategies; including a suitable assessment approach; and being considered for future applicability.

Kasim (2020) also outlines the basic principles of a good lesson plan when he says a good lesson plan should have concern for learners' differences or diversity. Diversity in terms of gender, prior ability, intellectual level, interest, motivation for learning, aptitude, potential, social ability, emotion, learning styles, special needs, learning speed, cultural background, norms, values and learners' environment; (Kasim, 2020, p. 69). He furthered that a good lesson plan should encourage pupils' active participation in class, i.e., the lesson plan should place the pupils at the centre of the teaching and learning process by motivating them, arousing their interests, making them creative, inspiring them and allowing autonomy in the classroom. Also, Ali (2021) conducted a study on lesson planning and proactive classroom management strategies for teaching English at the tertiary level in Pakistan. Making use of the qualitative method, the researcher obtained data from 10 participants. The research results indicated that including classroom activities in a lesson plan enables pupils' participation in the lesson (Ali, 2021).

World Learning (2017) describes six elements of a good lesson plan, including sequencing, timing, adaptability, variety, coherence, and pupil engagement. Sequencing describes what will happen during the lesson, the order in which it will happen, and how transitions are managed. It is also the view of World Learning (2017) that timing is an important element of a good lesson plan, as it is important to anticipate how long each part of a lesson will last. A lesson plan must be made adaptable to suit the changing demands of lessons. According to Celce-Murcia (2007, p. 407), a good lesson plan is not meant to bind teachers to a preordained plan; A study in Ukraine done by Kutsenok et al. (2023) looked at the

effectiveness of lesson planning and its role in classroom management, and the development of pupils' language skills. Using the mixed-method research design, the researchers collected data from 48 teachers of English at the Technical University of Ukraine. From the research findings, they concluded that the teachers accepted the flexibility of lesson plans in choosing activities to teach new concepts and lead meaningful discussion in the classroom (Kutsenok et al., 2023). A lesson plan should also exhibit variety of activities, strategies, and methodologies (Celce-Murcia, 2007). Furthermore, it should exhibit coherence, i.e., every activity in the lesson must connect to the next logically at the micro level, and one lesson must connect to the next at the macro level (Celce-Murcia, 2007).

A good lesson plan should have built-in classroom management mechanisms. A study done in Tanzania using the mixed-methods approach revealed that a well-planned lesson helps teachers to be more courageous and confident in managing their classrooms (Nkwabi, 2020). According to Vang (2010), effective classroom management is not about being able to control the class at all times; it is about being able to teach effectively and allow pupils to be engaged in academic tasks adequately. Thus, when pupils are engaged, negative classroom behaviours become minimized. Also, in a doctoral dissertation, Troum (2016) found that 90% of his sample said that pupils' concentration is always assured when a lesson is planned well. In addition, Sabitra, Ambiyar and Aziz (2021) believed that an effective lesson plan should be able to catch the learners' attention and get them wholly engaged with the learning process. Nagro, Fraser, and Hooks (2018), using the research-based approach, concluded that teachers should plan their lessons with whole-group response systems to negotiate for pupils' attention.

### **3. METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1. Research Design**

The convergent triangulation mixed-methods design was used in the study. It is a single-phase research design that facilitates the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data. The convergent mixed-methods research design allows the researcher to examine the research problem entirely, looking at different dimensions. While the qualitative approach is used to measure the subjective aspect of the problem, the quantitative approach is used to understand the objective aspect (Almeida, 2018). Choosing this research design was based on the assumption that both quantitative data and qualitative data provide different types of information (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). With the convergent mixed method design, both quantitative and qualitative data were collected and merged, and the results were then compared. This approach was adopted because it took care of the limitations that both quantitative and qualitative methods pose if either method were to be solely used. The convergent mixed method also has the advantage of creating a stronger research result than where either approach is used individually (Maline, Norreklit & Selto, 2010). It was also adopted because data from one method could be used to check the validity of the other.

#### **3.2. Study Population**

The population of the study comprised all Language Arts teachers in Government and Government-Assisted Junior Secondary schools in the Southern Region of Sierra Leone. According to a census carried out by the researcher from April to June 2023, there were 458 Language Arts teachers teaching in Junior Secondary schools in the southern region of Sierra Leone. The Language Arts teacher population was targeted because they are the ones using the LPM and they have interacted with it adequately.

#### **3.3. Sampling Procedure**

A combination of the stratified proportional and purposive sampling technique was used in this research. At the proportional sampling scheme level, a simple random sampling using the fish bowl method for selecting the Language Arts teachers was used. The proportional sampling scheme was used because it has the advantage of the samples being representative of the population, and the result can be highly generalizable. For the focus group discussion, the purposive sampling scheme was used. At this level, the Language Arts teachers with at least three years' experience with the use of the LPM were purposively selected from the population of Language Arts teachers. The purposive sampling scheme was used because the researchers considered the Language Arts teachers with at least three years' experience as the most relevant and a rich source of data on the use of the LPM.

### 3.4. Sample Size

Table 1. Population and Sample Sizes Selected for the Study

Districts in the Southern Region	Population of Language Arts Teachers	Sample Size of Language Arts Teachers
Bo	248	113
Moyamba	95	42
Pujehun	62	29
Bonthe	53	25
<b>Total Population and Sample Size</b>	<b>458</b>	<b>210</b>

Source: Field Data, 2023

According to Morgan and Krejcie (1970), out of a population of 458 Language Arts teachers, 210 were selected as the sample. These samples were distributed among the districts proportionately to the district population of Language Arts teachers, as shown in Table 1 above.

### 3.5. Data Collection Instruments

**Quantitative Data Collection:** For the collection of quantitative data, a questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale was developed and administered to the Language Arts teachers. There was a total of 17 items on the questionnaire, which addressed issues of the Lesson Plan Manual and best practices in lesson planning.

**Qualitative Data Collection:** In order to collect qualitative data, Focus Group Discussion (FGD) question guides were developed for the Language Arts teachers and administered. Four focused group discussions were held in Bo, Moyamba, Pujehun and Bonthe Districts.

### 3.6. Validation and Reliability of Instruments

Both the qualitative and the quantitative data instruments were subjected to review by an expert in instrumentation and in the area of educational research to determine their face, content, and construct validity. The expert reviewed the items and provided feedback on the clarity, relevance, and comprehensiveness of the items. Adjustments were made accordingly. The instrument was pre-tested in Kenema District to determine its reliability. The items were pre-tested on 36 participants. Using SPSS to calculate the reliability of the items, the Cronbach's alpha value was estimated at .781, confirming that the instruments were highly reliable.

### 3.7. Method of Data Analysis

In order to analyse the data, the quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS. The researchers used descriptive statistics in analyzing the data using frequencies and percentages. The results were also represented using tables and charts. The audio recordings from the focus group

discussions (qualitative data) were transcribed using the Transcriber Software. The resulting transcriptions were analyzed using MAXQDA 2020, using a thematic analysis approach organized around themes of clarity of the LPM, how the LPM deals with diversity and inclusivity, and how it deals with classroom management issues.

#### 4. RESULTS

##### 4.1. Research Question 1: Is the Language Content of the LPM Clear?

Clarity is one of those qualities of a good lesson plan. This sub-section shows whether the Lesson Plan Manual exhibits that clarity.

Table 2. Language Arts Teachers’ Responses to Issues of Clarity of the Lesson Plan Manual

Statements of Clarity	SA		A		N		D		SD	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
The language content explanations in the LPM are clear for the teacher	67	39.4	101	59.4	1	0.6	1	0.6	00	00
The language content explanations in the LPM are clear for the student	32	18.8	115	67.6	18	10.6	5	2.9	00	00
The pupils can easily understand the examples given in the LPM	52	30.6	102	60.0	10	5.9	6	3.5	00	00
Teachers can easily understand the examples given in the LPM	74	43.5	95	55.9	1	0.6	00	00	00	00
The activities in guided practices in the LPM are easy to understand for the student	53	31.2	95	55.9	13	7.6	9	5.3	00	00
The activities in guided practices in the LPM are easy to understand for the teacher	78	45.9	88	51.8	1	0.6	3	1.8	00	00
The activities in independent practices in the LPM are easy to understand for the student	43	25.3	91	53.5	26	15.3	10	5.9	00	00
The activities in independent practices in the LPM are easy to understand for the teacher	72	42.4	97	57.1	1	0.6	00	00	00	00

Source: Field Data, 2023. (SA = Strongly Agree; A = Agree; N = Neutral; D = Disagree; SD = Strongly Disagree; F = Frequency; % = Percentage)

Table 2 presents data on the clarity of the Lesson Plan Manual in key areas, as perceived by Language Arts teachers. Out of 210 teachers, 170 responded to the questionnaire. Key findings include: 168 (98.8%) of teachers agreed that the content explanations are clear for teachers, while 147 (86.4%) said the explanations are also clear for pupils. Regarding examples given in the LPM, 169 (99.4%) agreed that examples are clear for teachers, and 154 (90.6%) agreed that pupils can easily understand them. For guided practice activities, 166 (97.7%) found the activities to be clear for teachers and 148 (87.1%) said they are clear for pupils. For independent practice activities, 169 (99.4%) agreed they are clear for teachers, and 134 (78.8%) agreed they are clear for pupils, with 26 (15.3%) remaining neutral. Overall, the majority of Language Arts teachers found the LPM to be clear and understandable in terms of language content explanation, examples given, guided practice, and independent practice activities.

##### 4.2. Qualitative Data Analysis: Clarity of the Lesson Plan Manual

Clarity was being emphasized by one participant:

*“Saint Michael; the Lesson Plan Manual has been very much helpful for our teaching programme and all, it has been very much helpful like I said and of course it is very clear and simple, made the teaching work that easy for us as*

*teachers. (Source: FGD, 2023)*

While this teacher talked about the clarity of the LPM, he did not hesitate to mention the scanty nature of the language content:

*Um, YMCA, in terms of clarity Uhm, it is clear but although the content is very scanty, limited for a teacher to rely on, but the clarity is good because everything is prepared there for the teacher unless the added additions you made to it, so, but it's clear. (Source: FGD, 2023)*

Another teacher mentioned that what makes the LPM clearer is its step-by-step nature:

*Taiama Secondary school, when you look at the Lesson Plan Manual, what makes it clearer is the idea of the structure of this whole thing, the step-by-step nature, the way it was being organized or arranged. It makes more understanding to you, so therefore when you look at the clarity of this whole thing, I think it is clearer. (Source: FGD, 2023)*

Teachers generally find the LPM to be clear in its explanations, examples, and practice activities. However, some express concerns about the content being too limited or scanty, necessitating additional materials for comprehensive and effective teaching.

### 4.3. Research Question 2: Does the LPM Respond to Diversity Issues?

**Table 3. Language Arts Teachers' Responses to the Lesson Plan Manual Dealing with Diversity in Lessons**

Statements of Diversity	SA		A		N		D		SD	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
The LPM caters for the different genders in the Language Arts lessons	61	35.9	101	59.4	6	3.5	2	1.2	00	00
The LPM caters for the different intellectual abilities of pupils	37	21.8	119	70.0	7	4.1	7	4.1	00	00
The LPM caters for the different learning speeds of pupils (e.g., fast and slow learners)	50	29.4	105	61.8	6	3.5	9	5.3	00	00
The LPM caters for the different learning styles of pupils (e.g., visual, auditory, kinaesthetic)	68	40.0	91	53.5	5	2.9	6	3.5	00	00

*Source: Field Data, 2023. (SA = Strongly Agree; A = Agree; N = Neutral; D = Disagree; SD = Strongly Disagree; F = Frequency; % = Percentage)*

Table 3 presents Language Arts teachers' perceptions of how well the Lesson Plan Manual addresses diversity in the classroom. Of the 210 teachers surveyed, 170 responded to the questionnaire. Regarding gender inclusivity, 162 (95.3%) of teachers agreed that the LPM effectively addresses gender issues. For intellectual abilities, 156 (91.8%) agreed that the LPM caters to pupils with different intellectual abilities. Regarding learning speed, 155 (91.2%) agreed that the LPM considers varying learning speeds among pupils. As for learning styles, 159 (93.5%) agreed that the LPM accommodates different learning styles. The quantitative data indicates that the LPM is widely viewed by teachers as addressing key aspects of diversity in the classroom.

### 4.4. Qualitative Data Analysis: The LPM Dealing with Diversity and Inclusivity

The Lesson Plan Manual responds to the issues of diversity in the classroom as one teacher emphasized its in-built capacity:

*Well, in terms of diversity, in connections of Lesson Plan Manual, it caters for all types of pupils in the classroom because there are some examples in the lesson plan manual or there are some instructions that tells you to at least read this example three times or twice, that means there are different sets of learners in*

*the classroom, so it caters for them all.* (Source: FGD, 2023)

This teacher had a contrary view:

*The LPM only caters for the fast learners; it doesn't cater for the slow learners. This is because the time given is not adequate to cover these slow learners.* (Source: FGD, 2023)

Another teacher confirmed the view that the LPM caters for both slow and fast learners:

*I guess for my own perspective, the LPM caters both for the fast learners and the slow learners. Because when you are teaching, as we go along, we are made to understand that most of the topics are being repeated, you will see noun, noun, after which you see verbs, more than five or six times, so if you fail to understand the first aspect of it, when you go to the other side, you understand better.* (Source: FGD, 2023)

The views of participants were mixed on the LPM's effectiveness in addressing diverse learning needs, suggesting both strengths and areas for improvement in the LPM's approach to inclusivity.

#### 4.5. Research Question 3: Does the LPM Have In-Built Classroom Management Strategies?

**Table 4. Language Arts Teachers' Responses to the LPM Dealing with Classroom Management Issues**

Statements of classroom management issues being dealt with by the LPM in Language Arts lessons	SA		A		N		D		SD	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Language content materials in the LPM help to sustain the attention of learners in the Language Arts lessons	61	35.9	103	60.5	4	2.4	2	1.2	00	00
Language content materials in the LPM help to deal with noisiness in the Language Arts lessons	27	15.9	97	57.1	21	12.4	23	13.5	2	1.2
Language content materials in the LPM help to address pupils sleeping in class in Language Arts lessons	40	23.5	92	54.1	13	7.6	23	13.5	2	1.2
Language content materials in the LPM help to avoid playfulness on the part of pupils in Language Arts lessons	41	24.1	101	59.4	15	8.8	13	7.6	00	00
The LPM allows pupils' active participation in the practice activities in Language Arts lessons	52	30.6	109	64.1	4	2.4	3	1.8	2	1.2

Source: Field Data, 2023. (SA = Strongly Agree; A = Agree; N = Neutral; D = Disagree; SD = Strongly Disagree; F = Frequency; % = Percentage)

Table 4 presents Language Arts teachers' views on how effectively the Lesson Plan Manual addresses classroom management issues. Out of 210 teachers, 170 responded. Regarding sustaining pupils' attention in class, 164 (96.5%) of teachers agreed that the LPM helps sustain learners' attention. For managing noisiness in class, 124 (73.0%) agreed that the LPM helps reduce classroom noisiness, while 25 (14.7%) disagreed and 21 (12.4%) were neutral. Regarding pupils sleeping in class, 132 (77.6%) agreed that the LPM content helps address this issue. For pupils' playfulness, 142 (83.5%) agreed the LPM helps avoid playfulness. Regarding pupils' active participation, 161 (94.7%) agreed that the LPM allows pupils to actively participate in practice activities.

#### 4.6. Qualitative Data Analysis: The LPM Dealing with Classroom Management Issues

One participant pointed out that the distribution of the LPM pupils' handbook helps to keep the classroom quiet:

*OK! In terms of classroom management, the lesson plan manuals are dished out to the children or to the pupils in the classroom, where they have to*

*follow whatever thing is being taught by the teacher in the classroom. The teacher manages the classroom; there's very little movement in the classroom but comparatively to other manuals before this time, the teacher can move about and see what the children are doing in the classroom, checking out their work, one after the other, by doing that one, he or she is able to manage the classroom or the lesson very well.* (Source: FGD, 2023)

Another participant highlighted that the LPM pupils' handbook is instrumental in ensuring that the classroom is managed well:

*The LPM has a follow-up book, which we call Pupil's handbook. That book is aligned with the LPM itself. For whatever activity the teacher has in his or her LPM, the pupils have it in their handbooks. So, the time that the teacher takes to write all exercises on the board for the learners to copy and then begin to do work is no longer there. Rather, the teacher will just request them to turn to the page where they could locate the exercises.* (Source: FGD, 2023)

One participant holds the view that the management of the classroom largely depends on the teacher:

*For me, for classroom management, the teacher has to focus on the topic and actually pay attention to the children and make the lesson participatory; you ask questions, you understand. And you also check to see for children to actually pay attention because some of them normally have side attractions, but it depends on you the teacher, how interesting actually you try to explain to them what the topic is all about.* (Source: FGD, 2023)

The LPM's role in classroom management was debated with mixed views. Some participants feel it helps in engaging pupils and managing the class effectively, while others believe its effectiveness largely depends on the teacher's own strategies and additional materials being used.

#### **4.7. Research Question 4: Is the LPM Flexible Enough to Deal with Changing Situations?**

A good lesson plan also has a characteristic of being flexible. It must be susceptible to the changing needs of the learners and the classroom environment. Of the 170 teachers surveyed, 94.8% of the Language Arts teachers agreed that the LPM allows them to adjust their Language Arts lessons to the classroom environment at the time of a particular lesson. Similarly, 90.0% of the Language Arts teachers agreed that they change the teaching strategies in the LPM to suit the changing needs of the Language Arts lessons. The quantitative data analysis shows that the LPM is flexible enough to meet the changing needs of the Language Arts classroom.

### **5. DISCUSSION**

The Lesson Plan Manual itself is a good document that teachers should work with to maximize its effect. For example, it is good in terms of the clarity of language content material, the straightforward nature of the LPM, and the way it can relate well with the pupils' natural environment. It is also good in terms of addressing the issues of diversity in the classroom. The literature supports the view that a quality lesson plan should be able to deal with the issues of diversity in the classroom (World Learning, 2017; Kasim, 2020). Repetition of topics and grouping of pupils for some practice activities are evidence of how the LPM

addresses the issues of diversity. The LPM is also good in terms of language content materials, addressing the issues of classroom management as supported by the research results. The literature supported the idea that the language contents in the LPM ensure pupils' concentration in class. Vang (2010), Nagro et al. (2018), and Sabitra et al. (2021) all support the view that a quality lesson plan has to be engaging for the pupils. Lastly, the teachers believed that the LPM is flexible enough to cater for the changing needs of the classroom environment. This view is supported by Celce-Murcia (2007) and Kutsenok et al. (2023), who opined that a good lesson plan should be flexible.

Despite the attributes of the Lesson Plan Manual, teachers have not been using it appropriately. The LPM was only to be used as a guide by teachers because of the inadequacy of the language content materials and examples in it. An overwhelming majority of teachers are of the view that the Lesson Plan Manual is good in terms of language content explanations and examples for both the teachers and pupils, and in terms of the guided and independent practice activities for both teachers and pupils. This means that the Lesson Plan Manual in its entirety is clear, which is one quality of a good lesson plan. Focus Group Discussions highlighted the LPM's clear structure, accessible language, and practical examples as key strengths. However, some educators noted that the content could be more comprehensive, suggesting the need for additional materials to fully support effective teaching.

World Learning (2017) and Kasim (2020) stated that being able to address the issues of diversity in a lesson is an essential element of a quality lesson plan. Results obtained so far indicate that the majority of the language teachers agreed that the issues of diversity are dealt with in the Lesson Plan Manual: diversity in terms of gender, intellectual abilities, learning speed of the pupils, and their learning styles. From the qualitative data from the Focus Group Discussions, the LPM's approach to catering for diverse student needs and backgrounds was generally viewed positively. Participants highlighted that the LPM caters for both fast and slow learners by repeating topics multiple times. Some participants felt that the LPM was more oriented towards active learners. These insights reflect a mix of opinions on the effectiveness of the LPM in addressing diversity and inclusivity in the classroom.

Vang (2010) and Sabitra et al. (2021) emphasized the effectiveness of the lesson plan in being able to engage the pupils in a lesson. The majority of the Language Arts teachers agreed that the language content materials in the Lesson Plan Manual help to engage the pupils in the lesson. When pupils are engaged in a lesson, other classroom management issues are taken care of. Also, planning lessons with whole-group response systems, as Nagro et al. (2018) put it, is another way of ensuring concentration of pupils on the lesson. From the qualitative data, discussions on classroom management revealed that the LPM influences teaching dynamics, potentially reducing the need for traditional, teacher-centred approaches. A good lesson plan is not meant to bind teachers to a preordained plan, but allows for flexibility according to Celce-Murcia (2007). Results from this research show that the majority of the Language Arts teachers believed that the Lesson Plan Manual allows teachers to be flexible in terms of adjusting their Language Arts lessons to the classroom environment and changing their teaching strategies to meet the changing needs of their learners.

## **6. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS**

The study shows that the LPM is a viable document that supports language pedagogy at the junior secondary school level, which teachers should use to enhance effective teaching and learning. This implies that teacher training institutions need to emphasize how Language Arts

teachers should use the LPM in delivering Language Arts lessons in the classroom. There is a need for collaboration among Language Arts teachers, so that they can discuss and share their experiences with one another and learn the best way to utilize the LPM. It also implies that teachers who use the LPM on a consistent basis are more likely to perform better in their classroom teaching. At the educational policy level, it implies that education authorities should ensure that sufficient supply of Lesson Plan Manuals are made available in all schools, and that teachers should ensure their proper use. This means that school heads should monitor their teachers' use of the Lesson Plan Manual to improve quality instruction. There is need for in-service training on the effective use of the LPM so that teachers can deliver their lessons more effectively. Also, newly recruited Language Arts teachers require induction training on the use of the LPM.

This conclusion also has implications for further research, in that it provides a window for further studies on how the teachers and pupils have access to the LPM teachers' guide and pupils' handbook respectively, and the frequency with which teachers use the Lesson Plan Manual. The implications of the challenges teachers face while using the LPM, as well as the impact of the use of the Lesson Plan Manual on the pupils' performance, need to be further explored. In the area of curriculum design, the LPM should be reviewed to make provision for new topics once the curriculum is reviewed, to ensure that the LPM aligns with new curriculum content.

## **7. RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education should conduct refresher training for teachers regularly on the use of the Lesson Plan Manual, so that teachers can always be abreast with knowledge of how to use the Lesson Plan Manual effectively. Also, as a policy intervention, government should ensure that teachers and pupils must always have access to the LPM teachers' guide and the Pupils' Handbook respectively.

The Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education should organize symposia for Language Arts teachers where they can share their experiences with the use of the LPM with one another, and learn about the best practices for the use of the LPM.

There is a tendency for teachers to rely entirely on the LPM, which poses a challenge to creativity or originality. Teacher Education Institutions should include in their curricula the best way of utilizing the LPM as a guide rather than a sole source of teaching and learning.

It is also recommended that research be conducted into the accessibility and usability of the LPM teachers' guide and the LPM Pupils' Handbook. Research can also be conducted to assess the challenges teachers face in the use of the LPM.

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