

Lesson Presentation: The Perception of Junior Secondary School Students and Their Achievement in Social Studies

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Abstract

The paper examined students' perception of lesson presentation by teachers of social studies. Questionnaire and social studies achievement test scores provided data for this study. To ensure effective coverage random sampling technique was employed in selecting the three hundred and thirty respondents. The finding revealed that constructive lesson presentation was significantly related to students' achievement. Suggestions for instructional improvement were offered.

Keywords: key words, workforce sizing, job-shop production, holonic model

1. Introduction

Lesson presentation in this paper is defined as mode of instruction of being either teacher-centred (instructivist) or student teacher collaborative (constructivist). Students expect teachers to teach. They value lucid exposition, the clear statement of problems and guidance in their solution. Personal qualities of kindness, sympathy and patience are secondary, appreciated by students if they make the teachers more effective in carrying out their primary intellectual task (Musgrove & Taylor, 2003). This appears to be broadly true for all stages of education from the infants' school to the University. Enquires carried out in England and America over half a century have pointed out to this conclusion. At the end of the nineteenth century, Kratz (2006) reported an investigation which showed that school children demanded first and foremost of their teachers "help to study" (p.27). These findings are in line with the research carried out by Allen in English secondary modern schools. Both boys and girls were found to value most highly the teacher's competence as an instructor, his pedagogical skills. They also wanted this teachers to make lesson interesting, to take a joke and to be friendly and approachable (Allen, 1999).

The dominant view of the effective teacher is the teacher who possesses a broad repertoire of technique and is able to skillfully use these techniques to meet the changing demands of the classroom. Another view of the effective teacher is one who possesses and skillfully uses a set of techniques that are ideologically compatible. This stable, theory – guided style of teaching is supported by Brown (2002). Cuban (2000) opines that teaching is mostly a teacher-centred activity. Cuban found that some teachers were student-centred in their teaching, but this ground is comparatively small.

Toof, Mezieobi and Amadi (2004) suggest that teaching process in social studies should be predominantly student-oriented interactive process in which the learner actively participates and acquires significant learning experience under the teacher who serves as a guide and a facilitator. These authors hold that in social studies, the activities must elicit the active participation of the learner in the pre-active (that is, before the teaching-learning process and interactive learning activities; and that the interactive teaching-learning situation should enable the learners perceive themselves as dominant persons involved in instructional process.

Flanders (2004), for example, refers to an effective teacher as one who asks questions, accepts students' feelings, acknowledges students' ideas and gives praise and encouragement. But practically, it has been observed that in most classrooms the reverse situation applies where the teacher dominates the teaching – learning processes to the detriment of students.

Udoukpong (1989) investigated the effectiveness of the case-study teaching technique versus lecturing in advancing junior secondary students' achievement in social studies. The result of the study was that the performance of the students exposed to the case-study instructional technique was significantly better than that of the lecture instructional strategy. The findings explained to the fact that in contrast to the traditional lectures, the case-study strategy offers students the opportunity to acquire knowledge by a process of inquiry rather than being transmitted to by the teacher.

Okon (1999) investigated among other variables, the influence of teacher's lesson presentation pattern on students' performance in social studies. The study revealed that students who rated their teachers on this criterion as being "effective" performed significantly higher in the social studies achievement test than those who perceived same as "ineffective". Okon argued that the activities the student engages in

when confronted with instructional tasks are of crucial importance in determining what the student will learn. Okon, therefore, concluded that there is the need for a change in the conception of learners from passive recipient of sensory experience to learners actively making use of cognitive strategies input.

This paper therefore focuses on the influence of students' perception of teachers' lesson presentation on their achievement in junior secondary two end of the year school course.

2. Purpose and Significance of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of students' perception of teachers' lesson presentation on their achievement in social studies in junior secondary two examinations. Specifically, the study aimed at examining instructivist and constructivist social studies classroom based on students' achievement. In effective teachers' lesson presentation was related to students' rating of teachers in term of their achievement in junior secondary two end of year examination. This study will therefore contribute to the existent research examining teachers' lesson presentation as related to students' achievement in social studies.

The study focus is: Has the students' perception of teachers' lesson presentation an influence on their achievement in junior secondary two end-of-year examination in social studies? The way and manner the teacher presents the lessons determined the level of understanding of such lessons by the learner. Students appreciate teachers who are friendly, approachable, ask questions, accept students questions, give praise and encouragement (Flanders 2004). It is hoped that this study would yield valuable benefits for teachers who may wish to improve upon their lesson presentation. It is also believed that the way the teacher presents the lesson will set the climate of self-direction, reflective thinking, exploring free-exchange of views and motivates students to participate meaningfully in classroom teaching-learning processes (Okon, 2005).

3. Hypothesis

A null hypothesis was postulated for the study thus: There is no significant difference in achievement in junior secondary two examinations in social studies between students who rate their teachers as instructivist and those who rate them as constructivist.

4. Method

The participants for this study consisted of 330 junior secondary two students (JS2) – 165 boys and 165 girls. These participants were randomly selected from the fourteen governments owned secondary schools in Uyo Local Government Area. All the subjects took a 25 – item Likert-type rating scale questionnaire designed by the researcher to investigate students' perception of teachers' lesson presentation. The results of the subjects' perception were used to classify the subjects into two groups.

The mean score was 55.98 and a standard deviation was 6.97. Participants' mean scores were 55.98 and above were considered as rating the teacher "constructivist" while participants who scored below the mean were considered as rating the same teacher "Instructivist". All the subjects who took part in the study offered social studies as one of the core subjects taught in the junior secondary curriculum. Twelve years was the average age of the participants.

The instruments for the research were: Students Rating Scale of Teachers' Lesson Presentation (SROSTLP) and social Studies Achievement Scores (SSAS).

Students' Rating Scale of Teacher Lesson Presentation (SRSTLP).

This research instrument was developed by the researchers. It contained 28 test items in all and was divided into two sections. Section one had three test items which dealt with students' personal information. Section two consisted of 25 Likert-type items. It assessed students rating of teachers' lesson presentation: that is how students feel about lesson presentation and positively or negatively their feeling concerning various aspects of lesson presentation principles such as active involvement in teaching-learning process, engagement in asking and answering questions, inquiry learning contribution of meaningful ideas and teacher-student relationship. Each test item on the questionnaire asks students to indicate their feelings about a particular statement. Five options were available for the rating; - from strongly agree to strongly disagree. For example, a positive item like, "our social studies teacher always give us time to ask question", while a negative question would read "our social studies teacher deems it needless to teach with instructional aid/materials. The weights that are assigned response options for positive test items were reversed tallying responses to negative items. Scores on this scale were the average rating across test items. Pilot testing of the scale showed it to be fairly reliable with a Cronbach alpha coefficient equal to 0.78.

5. Social Studies Achievement Scores (SSAS)

The junior secondary two end-of-year examination result of 2008/2009 which was set and marked by the various schools that took part in this research study provided the achievement data.

The independent variable research instrument (SRSTLP) was administered on the participants at an arranged date and time with the assistance of the class teachers in the schools involved in the study. The subjects were given 40 minutes to complete the questionnaire. The responses given by the subjects on the test items in the questionnaire together with the achievement scores in end-of-school year examination results provided the data for the analysis.

6. Result

Table 1 shows that there is a significant difference in the social studies achievement mean scores between respondents who rated their teachers' lesson presentation as "constructivism" and those who rated the teachers' lesson presentation as "instructivism". This result is evident in the calculated t-value of 2.37 which is greater than the critical t-value of 1.968 at .05 alpha levels with 328 degree of freedom.

The result indicated that students who rated their teachers lesson presentation as constructivist performed better in social studies test (mean = 78.38) than those who rated the same teachers as instructivist (mean = 26.41). Hence, the null hypothesis that was rejected.

7. Discussion of Findings

The analysis of students' achievement in social studies in junior secondary two examinations by teachers' lesson presentation criterion showed that the students who rated their teachers on this criterion as being "constructivist" performed better in their examination than those who rated the same teachers as "instructivist". The result is supported by Joof et al (2004) who opined that teaching should be predominantly student-centred where a teacher serves as a guide and a facilitator. As might have been expected, lesson presentation by the teacher should afford students the opportunity to ask questions, and to be actively and meaningfully engaged in the teaching/learning process. This has influenced the positive rating of teachers' lesson presentation, hence their better performance in social studies examination. In addition, this finding can be explained in terms of democratic student-centred classroom climate as one of the four broad types classroom behaviour between teachers and their students.

Each form of these teachers behaviour in the classroom (autocratic or democratic, dominative or interactive, teacher-centred or learner centred, teacher's direct or indirect influence) produces a distinctive type of situation within the classroom characterized by more or less predictable results and carrying with it definite implications concerning the teacher's commitment to teach in regard to how students learn (Emah, 1999) p. 38).

The rating of teachers' lesson presentation as being constructivist hence its reflection on the participants' superior performance in social studies achievement test falls in line with the research carried out by Diem (2000). Diem's finding indicated that collaborative work among teacher and students and active construction of knowledge and applying it to others; all important social studies skills made the lesson objectives achievement. Thus, the positive result.

One way to transform social studies curriculum requires that teachers move away from a traditional mode of teaching and towards a partnership with their students in which they converse with each other as they create knowledge together (Bishop and Glynin 1999). The best way to meet the needs of learners is to involve them in the co-creation of important questions, knowledge and shared pedagogical stories as democratic citizens.

8. Implications for Instructional Improvement

The research finding indicates that there is a significant influence of students' achievement in social studies and the measure of their rating of teachers' lesson presentation. Considering the active-participatory instructional strategies advocated for teaching/learning of social studies, lesson presentation have implications for the meaningful and effective teaching as well as successful learning and development of essential study skills which are the main focus of social studies curriculum. The finding of this study not only supports the relevance of teachers' lesson presentation, but it also shed light on the fact that students can think out things for themselves. Zahorik, (1999) believes that the students need guidelines and help, but that they are capable of learning many things on their own. Students were seen as having the ability to act independently and responsibly. Significantly, knowledge for this teacher consists of basic skills, human relations skills and creative thinking skills.

9. Conclusions

The following conclusions are made based on the findings of this study:

1. Students who rated their teachers' lesson presentation as "constructivist" performed better in social studies achievement test than their counterparts who rated the same teachers as "instructivist".
2. Students are capable of thinking for themselves and coming out with meaningful ideas and opinions hence their superior performance than their colleagues who cannot do so.
3. Constructivism is a better instructional technique for teaching social studies than "instructivism".
4. Students are less dependent on their teachers; teachers only act as guide and facilitator.

10. Recommendations

The following recommendations based on the study findings:

- (1) It is crucial to update teachers' knowledge of new approaches to the teaching of social studies and provision of new instructional materials in schools as guides to teachers.
- (2) Social Studies Association of Nigeria and other interested academic organizations should own official journal that would provide a forum for communication between researchers and practitioners (teachers).
- (3) Teachers should create opportunity for students to contribute positively to their own learning. To make learning of social studies meaningful, students should be actively engaged and involved in teaching/learning process.

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Table 1: t-test comparison of Social Studies Achievement Mean Scores by Students Rating of Teachers' Lesson Presentation (N=330)

Lesson Presentation	N	Mean	SD	T-value
Constructivist	255	78.38	16.28	
Instructivist	75	36.41	14.49	2.37*

* $P < 0.05$; df 328; critical $t = 1.968$.

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