

Application of PowerPoint Presentation in Managing Writing Skills in Large English Language Teaching Classes

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Abstract

The study examined the need for inculcating the application of Power Point Presentation in managing writing skills in large classes at College of Education, Ikere-Ekiti. The Schools of Education and Languages were used for this study. The sampled population included one hundred students in each of the Schools. A total of two hundred students were randomly selected as samples. Simple random sampling technique was used to distribute one hundred students into the Control Group and one hundred students into the Experimental Group. A total number of two hundred copies of Achievement Multi-Choice Tests were administered on the students as pre-test before the commencement of the study and as post-test after six weeks of intensive teaching of the experimental and control groups by the researchers. Data were collected using as standard and reliable marking guide. The data collected using Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). The null hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study revealed that students perform better when taught with power point presentation. It was equally discovered through the study that gender plays little of no role in the achievement of students in power point presentation.

Keywords: ICT, Writing Skills, Large Classes, ELT.

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Introduction

The dynamic nature of human beings and life generally explains the dynamism in human language and human activities in the world. The world keeps changing almost on daily basis. The changes touch every human endeavour, teaching and learning inclusive. There are moderations and innovations in the way things are done year-in-year out. Life is not static. New ideas and new ways of doing things keep manifesting to respond to new situations as they unfold.

The situation in the teaching and learning environments today, are very different from what they used to be. The experiences differed from the time of old. This is very noticeable in the area of students' population. The increase in the number of students gaining admissions into Nigeria higher institutions of learning has changed the system from old fashion. The effects of this tremendous increase are much felt in environments where the staff (teachers) strength is considerably low compared to the number of students. This brings about the idea of 'large classes' which is the focus of this paper.

The status of English in Nigeria has made it a compulsory subject for every student in the country particularly in primary and secondary schools. It is compulsory for every admit-table candidate into Nigeria higher institutions to have a credit pass in English as a prerequisite to study any course of his or her choice. When the admission is finally secured, Use of English or Communication skills are also introduced as a compulsory course to be taken irrespective of the department the students belong. In this situation, the teachers of English face the challenges of large classes more often than their colleagues in other departments. At this juncture, one of the questions that come to mind, which this paper is trying to resolve, it: how does the English teacher in particular manage the large classes to ensure effective both in reaching and learning. Discussions are provided in this regard with a focus on aspect of English (writing skills) and particular reference to the situations in the College of Education, Ikere-Ekiti.

There is no doubt about the fact that this present age is an age of technological explosion. The present work tries to examine how technology can help in managing teaching English in large classes. The area of interest in this dimension is ICT (Information Communication Technology) with a particular interest in the use of power-point presentation. This is a new development in the teaching and learning process. The choice of this method is in line with the submission of Theall (2003) that as "new situation" arises, "new methods and instrument must be devised that take the changes into account".

What is a large class?

The NCCE minimum standard, revised edition (2012) recommends the Teacher-Student-Ratio (TSR) as 1:25. This means a teacher to twenty-five students. The implication of this recommendation is that a normal class should be a total number of twenty-five students and anything more than this is regarded as a large class. The TSR as

recommended by NCCE for Colleges of Education in Nigeria agrees with the submission of Hunter and Linder (2003) that “a small class consists of eighteen to twenty-five (18-25) students per session”. The situation in most tertiary institutions in Nigeria contradicts the description of what constitutes a normal class as discussed above. It is observed that, the management teams of these institutions cannot help the situation. For obvious reasons, they need students in their numbers to be able to cope with the financial implications of maintaining the system.

As a result of this, population of students admitted into these institutions increase every year. This has a lot of implications in the classroom interactions. The teachers, particularly the teachers of English face classes, which on most occasions are ‘intimidating’. This, of course, signifies that the old methods of teaching have to change to be able to ensure effectiveness.

Large Class Management

Theall (2003) identifies two factors that usually bring about changed in teaching. They are: the change in students’ population and the tremendous growth of distance and technology-based teaching and learning. These two factors are very crucial to the present discussions. The researchers try to look at how power-point presentation can be used to manage the teaching of writing skills in large classes. The large classes is informed by the increase in ‘students’ population” and the power point presentation is made available through “the growth” in technology.

Mishral (2005) considers “learners to teacher ratio 43:1” as “relatively high”. In order to combat this and ensure effective learning “ICT is inevitable”. The use of ICT in teaching is considered to be effective in managing large classes. The teachers of English cannot avoid the use of ICT if they must face the realities on ground particularly, the issue of large classes. In this vein, Fawehinmi (2007) submits that “the teaching and acquisition of foreign language would rather be facilitated through the use of this present day technology”. Longely and Shain (1985) considers ICT to be the acquisition, storage and dissemination of vocal, pictorial, textual and numerical information by micro-electronics which combines both computing and telecommunication. The power-point presentation falls into this description. It falls into the category of “new ICT” as opined by Mishral (2005). This will help to maintain effectiveness teaching and learning. The English teacher through the use of ICT manages a large class with little energy and perspiration.

Problems of teaching in Large Classes:

The teacher (teacher of English) faces some problems in teaching a large class. A teacher in front of about two hundred and five students or more considers the situation before him or her not as a ‘class’ but a ‘crowd’. At times the English classes in some higher institutions in Nigeria are more than one thousand students when it comes to the general use of English or communication skills’ classes. The likely problems in such atmosphere include:

- i. Disorderliness
- ii. Noise
- iii. lack of concentration
- iv. inaudibility
- v. inability to see the board properly (white or black chalk)
- vi. time and energy consumption
- vii. low attentiveness
- viii. discomfort (as a result of inadequate facilities such as Classroom seats).

The problems encountered in teaching a large class are not the same all over. The reasons for this variation reside in the socio-cultural, values of the particular society, the students and the school environment. Hayes (1997) considers a class with more than 30 students a large one. He identifies and classifies the problems associated with such atmosphere into five categories:

- i. discomfort cause by physical constraints
- ii. control problems
- iii. lack of individual attentions
- iv. difficulty on evaluation and
- v. Problems of changing learning effectiveness.

For Harmer (2000) large classes posse difficulties to both the students and the teachers as it is always very difficult to have direct contact with those sitting at the back. The students in turn lack individual attention. This is very true of the situations in most English classes in Nigeria particularly the GST, GSE or Use of English.

The ideas of teaching English in large classes have attracted the interests of schools, teachers and researchers over the years. Researchers were expressing their concern about this outbreak of English large classes and the associated problems. For instance, Zhang (2002) identifies problems of teaching English in large classes based on his observations in two colleges as follow:

- i. discipline problems
- ii. effective learning
- iii. weariness

In the same vein, Yu (2004) identifies problems of large classes as follow:

- i. students' individual differences are ignored
- ii. worrying class-room environment
- iii. low improvement in students' spoken English due to limited chances for students to practice English.

Teaching Writing: Utilizing Power Point Presentation

Writing can be considered as an art. It is a language skill that is not inborn. Seweje (2006) describes writing as “a way of putting ones thought on paper in a well organized manner which is not natural like speaking”. A child is introduced to writing first in the early primary school by learning how to write either numerals or alphabets. This is developed gradually as the child progresses in his involvement in the kind of writing as described by Bankole (2006) which “involves combination of words, phrases and clauses to form good and correct sentences in building some long messages of discourse”. Writing is a means of expression. It is a mark of literacy. Olusa (1993) submits that “of all the language skills writing is the major determinant of literacy”. Series of information are provided through writing. Writing can be a form of letter, speech, report, essay of different types and summary, Seweje and Fatodu (2002). Writing is an indispensable art in the life of every literate particularly students. They engaged in writing in classrooms, to do assignment, during personal reading or studies and much more compulsory during examinations. The significance of writing to students particularly to student of English make it a compulsory course for them to pass through in their studies as designed in the curriculum. Students in other departments study writing skills as part of the topics to be taught in the general use of English or communication skills.

The dynamic nature of the world also affects the education system. There are changes day-in-day-out. One of the notable areas of these changes is in the area of students' population. This brings in the ideas/issue of large classes. Instructional materials such as chalkboard (white or black), use of pictures and flannel cards are very effective in small classes. Large classes require more modern technology (ICT) such that every member of the class is adequately taken care of at the same time. This makes the use of power point very relevant. In the light of this, Akinyele and Alonge (2007) consider ICT as both “good instructional materials and learning stimulus which can be used by a classroom teacher to present a complete body of information in the teaching and learning process”.

Apart from good use of tenses, there are two important aspects of eriting that can either make or mar writing. These are: punctuations and selling. Punctuation is to writing what stress and intonation are to speech. “There is confusion and breakdown of information when a writing is badly punctuated” Dada and Ofodu (2006). For a piece of writing to be meaningful or at least represent the very intention of the writer, the words must be spelt correctly.

The job of a teacher is to ensure learning. Students are expected to understand what they are taught. They should equally participate in the classroom activities. The use of ICT will help to ensure this and help students solve the problems of wrong use of punctuations and spelling mistakes or errors. The power point presentation helps to manage the teaching of English in large classes in the various ways with particular focus in the teaching of writing. One of these ways is that every member of the class is taken care of the same way and at the same time. They can all see and hear at the same time.

It is pertinent to note that the facilities that are available in higher institutions in Nigeria are not enough to take care of the huge number of students admitted, especially in the area of classroom. Even the ‘big halls’ meant for general courses could not contain them. Some students sit very close to the teacher in front while some sit very far at the back. Those at the back cannot see what the teacher is writing on the board. The power point solves this problem. The major points are captured and transmitted on the screen before the class. It can be zoomed so that the last person at the back can see very clearly. Noise is minimized or completely removed through the use of power point when teaching in a large class. The usual experience is that, the students who are sitting very far from the teacher feel unconcerned and engage in series of discussion while the teaching goes on. The unserious ones disturb others trying to engage them in one discussion or the other. The teacher spends on most occasions' reasonable percentage of the available time shouting ‘keep quiet’, ‘stop talking’ etc. The class at a point becomes very rowdy.

The introduction of power point presentation makes the class to develop interest in the teaching. The attention of everybody is caught and sustained from the beginning of the teaching to the end. There is serenity to a certain extent which is required in the teaching and learning process to ensure effectiveness. Individual differences are equally addressed through the use of power point. The poor ones who are not good in taking notes or writes wrong spellings can see the points or the summary of the teaching right before them very boldly. The slow writers can equally feel comfortable in the class. This is made possible because a common background is provided through the power point presentation. They feel relaxed and develop interest in the teaching. When the interest of the learners are sustained, the job of the teacher is made simple. So much is attained with little effort. It is in this dimension that Iluromi (2004) submits that electronic instructional materials help to present facts and information which can arouse the interest of the learners.

The power point presentation equally reduces stress, boredom and time. The English teacher in Nigeria is teaching a language that foreign to both the students and the teacher himself. This is even a problem on its own.

The “intimidating’ number of students before him adds another problem to the ones on ground. The class is stuffy and rowdy. To teach effectively in the old manner in such as atmosphere requires a lot of stress, perspiration and time. The use of power point as a new method in teaching reduces these. The teacher teaches with ease. The students, however, may listen with rapt attention. Boredom is removed as the use of power point brings life into the class. The students are more active in the interactions. In this kind of atmosphere, students learn faster thereby reducing the time which ordinarily should have been wasted in trying to maintain orderliness in the class because of the large size. The use of power point in teaching, particularly a large class, provides automatically the needed tranquility during classroom activities.

The number of students or pupils that constitute a large class “variances” depends on “people’s perception”. For example, “in some private language schools a class with 20 students may be perceived large” (Hayes, 1997). The average number for example that constitute a large class in “Lancaster University project class in around 50” (Coleman, 1989). In China, a large class ranges between 50 to 100 students or pupils as the case may be. In whatever context, culture or perception, a large class remains a large class. This lives much to be desired in language classes particularly in a country like Nigeria where English taught and learnt as a second language.

Benefits of Teaching in Large Classes

It is believed that, there is no situation that is absolutely good or totally bad. As numerous as the problems of teaching in large class are, one still discovers that there are benefits in teaching large classes. for example, Ur (2000) and Hess (2001) argue that large classes. for example, human resources and greater opportunities for creativity than smaller classes. ‘Two heads they say, are better than one’. The more the number, the more the ideas and opinions. Various views are selected from divers experiences. This is more visible and realizable in large classes than smaller ones.

In the light of this, Yu (2001) observed that more students mean more ideas and therefore provide more opinions and possibilities. Qi and Warg (2009) submit that teaching in large classes provides the following advantages:

- i. there is more opportunities for co-students’ interaction
- ii. large classes foster an atmosphere for cooperation and
- iii. encourage creativity and innovation.

The submissions about what constitute the problems and benefits of teaching large classes may not be total true of all situations. As said earlier in the paper, socio-cultural values, social aspirations differ and vary depending on the community, nation or society at large. Certainly, most of these observations (problems and benefits) are very correct of large classes in Nigeria. Students from poor and illiterate background suffer most. The amenities are poor while the facilities available and grossly inadequate. These make the Nigeria situation more unique and calls for attentions of teachers (teachers of English) in the country particularly those in tertiary institutions. This paper is an attempt to joint others in deciding the way forward.

Purpose of the Study

The study intends to achieve the following:

1. To determine the effect of the use of power point presentation to ensure effective teaching and learning in large classes.
2. To find out the effect of power point presentation on the performance of students particularly in a large class.

Research Questions

The following two research questions were raise for the purpose of this study.

1. Is there any difference between the performance of students taught with PowerPoint presentation and those taught without?
2. Does gender have effect on students’ achievement in PowerPoint presentation?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated for the study.

1. There is no significant difference between in the performance of students taught with power point presentation and those taught without power point presentation.
2. There is no significant main effect of students’ gender on students’ achievements in power point presentation.

Methodology

The study used the quasi-experimental research method, which has to do with the parallel Equivalent-Group design. The experimental group was exposed to teaching with the use of power point presentation while the control group was taught without the use of power point presentation. The population of the study comprises all Part II students of School of Education and School of Languages, College of Education, Ikere-Ekiti. A total number of two hundred

students was selected from Part II students of both schools. One hundred (100) students from School of Languages and one hundred (100) students from School of Education using simple random sampling technique. The researchers administered a pre-test on the two hundred students before the commencement of the study. The experimental Group was taught with the use of power-point presentation while the Control Group was not exposed to the use of power point presentation. A post test was later conducted after six weeks of intensive teaching of the experimental and Control Groups by the researchers. The results of the two tests were collated for analysis. The scores were subjected to descriptive and inferential statistics. The hypotheses were tested at P = 0.05 level of significant. The results of the findings were analysed and discussed based on statistical data collected through the use of analysis of variance.

Test of Hypotheses

Table 1: Summary of the Analysis of variance (ANOVA) of pre post-test of students' achievement in power point presentation by treatment and gender.

Source	Type III sum of Square	Df	Mean Square	F	sig	Parhaletth squared
Corrected model	13887.870 ^a	8	1735.984	68.403	.000	.825
Intercept	2539.164	1	2539.164	100.051	.000	.463
Pre Achievement	10001.727	1	1001.727	39.431	.000	.254
Treatment	10022.954	1	10022.954	394.864	.000	.773
Student gender	21.925	1	21.925	.679	.355	.007
Treatment student gender	313.662	1	17.243	1.239	.411	.006
Error	2943.938	195	25.379			
Total	99676.00	200				
Corrected Total	16821.808	199				

^aR Squared = .825 (Adjusted R Squared = .813)
 Significant at P < 0.05

Table 2: Estimate marginal means and standard error: Treatment group. 95% confidence Interval

Treatment	Mean	Standard Error	Lower Band	Upper Band
Treatment	36.214 ^a	.681	34.982	37.509
Control	17.238 ^a	.657	15.918	18.568

Table 3: Mean of students gender on achievement in power point presentation.

Treatment	Mean	Standard Error	Lower Band	Upper Band
Male	26.332 ^a	.658	25.201	27.662
Female	27.210 ^a	.674	25.686	28.568

Discussion of Findings

Table 1 shows there is a significant difference between the main effect of treatment on the students' performance in power point presentation [F (1,195) = 394.864, P < .05]. The hypothesis which stated that there is no significant difference between students taught with power point presentation and those taught without power point presentation (pre-test and post-test scores) was rejected. The partial squared estimate was 0.77. This implies that 77% of the variance observed in the students achievement post test score was due to the treatment.

Table 2 shows the mean score for treatment group which is higher than that of control group at (\bar{x} = 36.214) compare with (\bar{x} = 17.238) of control group
 Hypothesis 2

There is no significant main effect of students' gender on students' achievements in power point presentation. Table 1 shows that the main effect of students gender is not significant on students achievement in power point presentation (F (1,195) = 0.679, P<.05]. the hypothesis 2 which stated that there is no significant main effect of students' gender on students achievement (pre-test and post-test scores) in power point presentation was not rejected. The partial eta square estimate was 0.007. This implies that students' gender account for only 0.7% of the variance observed in post-test scores of students achievement. Table 3 shows the mean score of female is better at (\bar{x} = 27.210) than male at (\bar{x} = 26.332) in students achievement in power point presentation.

Conclusion

The study reveals unequivocally that ICT helps to ensure effective teaching and learning in general and English teaching in particular. As regard teaching English in large classes, the paper presents an experimental group taught with power point presentation and a Control Group thought without the use of power point. The statistical analysis

of the results of the two groups shows that there is a significant different between the performance of the two groups. The experimental group performs better than the Control group.

It is also discovered in the study that both large and small classes have their disadvantages and advantages respectively. Problems associated with large classes are still found in small classes though not very pronounced. The major issue is not the class size but the method adopted in teaching. As found in this study, the power point presentation helps to ensure effective teaching and learning. The performances of students are enhanced if appropriate method is used in appropriate classes, topics and situations. ICT answers the question in the current age. The problems of large classes are brought under control or minimized through the use of Power Point Presentation.

Moreover, gender was discovered not to play any significant role in academic achievement of students. Every student performs based on his or her intelligence a inherited from both parents which can either be improved or deteriorated depending on certain external factors, irrespective of the sex; male or female.

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