Case analysis of "which is higher”

Business

In the northeastern part of the United States, the Queen's Island School District caters senior high school education to a large urban area wherein about one third of the students' population is of cultural minority. The school district has six senior high schools, from grades ten to twelve, wherein one representative was selected to comprise the committee on revising the curriculum for secondary history. Meanwhile, Dr. Tom Blakely, the head for social studies curriculum was appointed to spearhead the committee on revision. The chosen members of the committee were Luis Garcia of Garfield High, Eric Tannenbaum of Central High, Lois Blakely of Van Buren High; Lee Cheng of Kennedy High, Delicia Jackson of South Point High, and Michelle McMurray of Westside High.

These members are all history teachers in their respective schools. They were tasked to scrutinize the existing curriculum in social studies for their school district. Thus, the committee is expected in the end to come up with the most plausible instructional objectives, teaching methods, evaluation tools, and set of references for the revised social studies curriculum. Two Main PositionsEric Tannenbaum favored the time-tested lecture-discussion as his primary method in teaching history. Sometimes he also uses group work and current event discussion in his class. He believed that lecture-discussion method is the most appropriate in presenting lessons with wide coverage.

By using it, he can tackle lessons within the allotted time. In terms of evaluation, he used to administer teacher-made tests which for the most part have objective type items. In addition, essay questions are also provided in his tests. Tannenbaum thought that the first two levels of the Bloom's taxonomy of learning objectives should be first attained by students

in order to prepare them for higher-order learning. Michelle McMurray advocated the problem-solving approach in teaching history.

She believed that a facts-oriented subject would just give burdens on the part of the students. She added that for the students to appreciate history, the method should be focused on principles through meaningful learning experiences rather than memorization of dates, places, and people. To be able to do this, learning objectives that utilize problem-solving and creativity should be formulated. In her class, she employs methods to connect historical facts to the present knowledge of the students and its relevance to the contemporary time. For every unit, she encourages students individually or by group to identify problems of their interest to work on.

Given the appropriate time to prepare, the students will present their reports. With these, learning experiences become meaningful to the students leading to a long time memory of learned facts. Based on the presented output, she formulates essay-type questions that correspond to the high-order level of Bloom's taxonomy. She also allows students to write questions that can possibly be used as test questions. The two members of the committee supported the notion of Tannenbaum concerning curriculum design for social studies.

Luis Garcia and Cheng Lee both agreed with Tannenbaum propositions for those are conveniently used by most history teachers. On the other hand, Lois Blakely and Delicia Jackson supported the ideas of McMurray. For them, learning can only be meaningful when students' interest and active participation are harnessed for every learning activity. AnalysisBloom's

TaxonomyBloom's taxonomy of educational objectives is a hierarchy of learning objectives from simple to a more complex (Huitt, 2004). Most of the time, it is described as a ladder where students need to climb from the low to higher level.

Knowledge, comprehension, and application belong to the low-level cognitive domain while analysis, synthesis and evaluation are high-order thinking level (Huitt, 2004). Based on McMurray's analysis, Tannenbaum's objectives were merely just at the low level of the Bloom's taxonomy. Even though he has essay questions in the evaluation, those questions also require simple recall of data or information. Conversely, McMurray favored essay-type questions that require students to analyze, evaluate, and synthesize information. She allows students to identify interesting topic for research in every unit of the subject then give them freedom to rigorously research on their chosen topics and present their outputs on the class.

Additionally, the other groups are also encouraged to raise their questions concerning the presented report. Based on their presentation of outputs, she patterns questions for assessment. With these, McMurray were able to give independence to her students by working and discovering new things on their own, thus, leading the students to higher-order of thinking. Ausubel's Meaningful Reception LearningThe meaningful learning of Ausubel denotes the absorption of new information and acquisition of new meanings (Elliot, Kratochwill, Cook, and Travers, 2000). As a student internalizes new information, he patterns and fits this to his existing cognitive structure. By anchoring this new information to his existing schemata, renewal or adjustment of the schema results leading to the acquisition of new meaning,

hence, the term meaningful learning (Elliot, Kratochwill, Cook, and Travers, 2000).

Looking back at the case analysis, since Tannenbaum used to employ lecture-discussion on his class, students will just tend to memorize and depend on the details of his lecture. Although absorption of new information occurs but the internalization and transformation of the information into new memory unit is deterred. As such, the learned facts only remain in students’ mind in a short period of time. On the contrary, through the methods of McMurray students may have the chance to work independently and present their output based on their own plan. By anchoring the subject matter into the present thinking level of the students, the teacher motivates them and incites them for further learning. Discovery LearningJerome Bruner postulated that the active engagement of learners in every learning activity would result to a long mind-retention of learned facts or principles (Dandapani, 2004).

Environmental stimuli arouse learners’ interests that trigger them to find solution for a perplexing situation. In finding the most plausible explanation for the perceived difficulty, one may exhaust all possible resources in his environments. In this process, learners internalize information, fit this to their existing cognitive structure, and create or adjust schemata (Dandapani, 2004). Since, problem-solving approach is under discovery learning, McMurray utilizes the process of discovery in her teaching approach. Information Processing TheoryInformation Processing Theory emphasized the roles of attention, perception, thinking, memory, and problem-solving processes in learning (Lachman, Lachman, and Butterfield, 1979). Every

individual observes a lot of environmental stimuli but the brain mechanisms selectively limit the absorption of information in such way that the new information would systematically organized with the existing cognitive structure (Lachman, Lachman, and Butterfield, 1979).

By giving attention on a particular stimulus, one may be able to perceive what has been observed. Then, the role of memory takes place by organizing this new information with the existing schemata. In this assimilation process, once the newly absorbed information is unable to be fitted into the existing schema, either this will be lost in the memory or adjustment in the existing cognitive structures results (Lachman, Lachman, and Butterfield, 1979). This means that the mind does not only fit the newly absorbed information into existing schemata but also adjust to accommodate it. In the case analysis, Tannenbaum often used lecture-discussion method for he can cover a lot of topics within the allotted time. However, as firmly stated by McMurray, lecture-discussion would only provide numerous facts that most of the time give burden to the students because of their difficulty in memorization and their inability to organize, relate and integrate different information, and unable to see its connections and relevance to everyday living.

McMurray proposed that by formulating learning objectives which will utilize problem-solving skills and develop creativity, learning will be meaningful for every student and a longer retention of learning is foreseen. My OpinionTannenbaum is not entirely wrong with his method of choice. He just failed to address individual differences by integrating several methods of instruction to cater the lesson to the different needs, interest, and abilities of the learners. His method is inclined solely to rigorous memorization of facts

giving way to rote learning. Even though he has a genuine purpose of accomplishing the time-bound topics prescribed for the course, he is actually delimiting the subject into low-level of thinking resulting to failure in developing multiple intelligences.

McMurray’s approach in teaching is anchored on Ausubel’s reception learning, Bruner’s discovery learning, and information processing theory. As such, we may infer then that her approach in teaching is more democratic and student-centered. She encouraged active participation among her students and allowed them to work on the topic of their choice. By means of this, she actually harnessed the interest of students towards problem-solving and incited them to find ways to accomplish their tasks. Moreover, she patterned her evaluation based on students’ outputs and even encouraged students to formulate test questions.

With these, learning becomes meaningful for every student that may propel them for further learning. evertheless, with regards to the possible content gaps or topics that are not able to tackle up due to time constraints in employing problem-solving approach, as what McMurray did, teacher may supplement the report of the students by bringing up the topics that students’ failed to choose. We also need to admit the inevitable truth that our minds tend to forget and only limited facts stay in our long-term memory. Therefore, it is much better to incur content gaps in a subject if the tackled topics retain longer in our memory rather than to cover all prescribed topics in the absence of authentic learning.