

Traditional versus modern methods of effective teaching



Education is vital to the pace of the social, political and economic development of any nation, so effective teaching is very essential. Effective teaching is important because teaching is based on helping children progress from one level to another in a more sociable interactive environment and to get the approach right to get students to be independent learners (Muijus and Reynolds, 2005). Effectiveness does not mean being perfect or giving a wonderful performance, but bringing out the best in students.

My experience comes from a Nigerian background, where traditional teaching method is more widespread than the modern method of teaching. It is in this line that I decided to investigate empirically which of the two methods is more effective in Nigerian primary schools.

Primary education in Nigeria refers to the education children receive from the ages 6 years to 11 years plus. A lot of the teaching in primary schools is done with the traditional method especially in the government schools where the teacher is in charge of the classroom. The formal education system is 6-3-3-4, 6 stands for primary school. The primary education in Nigeria is controlled by the state and local government.

Traditional method relies mainly on textbooks while the modern method relies on hands-on materials approach. In traditional method, presentation of materials starts with the parts, then moves on to the whole while in the modern approach, presentation of materials starts with the whole, then moves to the parts. Traditional method emphasizes on basic skills while modern method emphasizes on big ideas. With traditional method of teaching, assessment is seen as a separate activity and occurs through

testing while with modern method of teaching, assessment is seen as an activity integrated with teaching and learning, and occurs through portfolios and observation (Brooks and Brooks, 1999).

Teaching methods are best articulated by answering the questions “ What is the purpose of education?” and “ What are the best ways of achieving these purposes?” for much of pre-history, education methods were largely informal, and consisted of children imitating or modeling the behaviour of that of their elders, learning through observation and play. In this sense, the children are the students, and the elder is the teacher’, a teacher creates the course materials to be taught and then enforces it. Pedagogy is a different way by which a teacher can teach. It is the art or science of being a teacher, generally referring to strategies of instruction or style of instruction.

Resources that help teachers teach better are typically, a lesson plan, or practical skill involving learning and thinking skills. A curriculum is often set by the Government with precise standards. These standards can change frequently, depending on what the government states.

DIVERSITY IN TEACHING IN THE CLASSROOM

For effective teaching to take place, a good method must be adopted by a teacher. A teacher has many options when choosing a style by which to teach. The teacher may write lesson plans from other teachers, or search online or within books for lesson plans. When deciding what teaching method to use, a teacher needs to consider students’ background, knowledge, environment, and learning goals. Teachers are aware that students learn in different ways, but almost all children will respond well to praise. Students learn in different ways, of absorbing information and of demonstrating their

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knowledge. Teachers often use techniques which cater to multiple learning styles to help students retain information and strengthen understanding. A variety of strategies and methods are used to ensure that all students have equal opportunities to learn. A lesson plan may be carried out in several ways: questioning, explaining, modeling, collaborating, and demonstrating.

QUESTIONING

A teaching method includes questioning is similar to testing. A teacher may ask a series of questions to collect information of what students have learned and what needs to be taught. Testing is another method of questioning. A teacher tests the student on what was previously taught in order to identify if a student has learned the material. Standardized testing is in about every Middle School (i. e. Ohio Graduation Test (OGT) Proficiency Test, College Entrance Tests (Act and SAT). before that we have to teach how to make questioner. If the question is perfect then this method will be effective.

EXPLAINING

Another teaching method is explanation. This form is similar to lecturing. Lecturing is teaching, giving a speech, giving a discourse on a specific subject that is opened to the public. It is usually given in the classroom. This can also be associated with demonstrating and modeling. A teacher may use experimentation to demonstrate in a science class. A demonstration is the circumstance of proving conclusively, as by reasoning or showing evidence. Modeling is used as a visual aid to learning. Students can visualize an object or problem, then use reasoning and hypothesizing to determine an answer.

DEMONSTRATING

Demonstrations are done to provide an opportunity in learning new exploration and visual learning tasks from a different perspective.

Demonstrations can be exercised in several ways. Here, teacher will also be a participant. He will do the work with his/her students for their help.

COLLABORATING

Students working in groups are another way a teacher can enforce a lesson plan. Collaborating allows students to talk among each other and listen to all view points of discussion or assignment. It helps students think in an unbiased way. When this lesson plan is carried out, the teacher may be trying to assess the lesson of working as a team, leadership skills or presenting with roles.

TRADITIONAL VERSUS MODERN METHOD OF TEACHING

Traditional method of teaching is when a teacher directs students to learn through memorization and recitation techniques thereby not developing their critical thinking problem solving and decision making skills (Sunal et al 1994) while modern or constructivist approach to teaching involves a more interacting, student-based of teaching. Here, the students learn through group participation.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Nigerian primary education is deteriorating at a very fast rate and this has been a great concern to the ministry of education, parents, teachers and others concerned. It was in this light that the researcher deemed it fit to

investigate the varying influences of the traditional and modern methods of teaching on students' academic performance.

PURPOSE OF STUDY

Because education is a vital aspect of society, the purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of teaching methods (Traditional Versus Modern) on students' academic performance. The purpose of this study was also to investigate and determine which of the two major teaching methods was more effective.

RELEVANCE OF STUDY

The findings of this study would be found relevant to teachers, parents, students and the society at large. The findings of this study would be of great importance to Ministry of Education in drafting the curriculum for primary schools.

The parents and the students also stand to benefit greatly if the effective teaching method was used to teach the students. Effective teaching method would improve the performance and learning of the students.

And, lastly, the society at large would benefit because the children (students) are the leaders of tomorrow.

SCOPE OF STUDY

The study is particularly;

- i. Concerned with the determinants of teaching method effectiveness.

ii. Concerned with examining influences of teaching method (Traditional and Modern) and determining which of the teaching methods is more effective than the other.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

(1) To what extent if there is a shift in pedagogical practice from traditional methods to modern methods in Nigerian primary school in the classroom?

(2) Which approach is more effective in terms of student outcomes and more successful between the traditional methods and modern methods of teaching?

RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

(1) Modern Method of teaching is more effective than the traditional method of teaching

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

LEARNING THEORIES OF COGNITION

Learning theories were used in this study as the theoretical framework to explaining how children learn.

Classical conditioning

The typical paradigm for classical conditioning involves repeatedly pairing an unconditioned stimulus (which unfailingly evokes a particular response) with another previously neutral stimulus (which does not normally evoke the response). Following conditioning, the response occurs both to the unconditioned stimulus and to the other, unrelated stimulus (now referred to

as the “conditioned stimulus”). The response to the conditioned stimulus is termed a conditioned response.

Operant conditioning

Operant conditioning is the use of consequences to modify the occurrence and form of behavior. Operant conditioning is distinguished from Pavlov conditioning in that operant conditioning deals with the modification of voluntary behavior. Discrimination learning is a major form of operant conditioning. One form of it is called Errorless learning.

Observational learning

The learning process most characteristic of humans is imitation; one’s personal repetition of an observed behaviour, such as a dance. Humans can copy three types of information simultaneously: the demonstrator’s goals, actions and environmental outcomes. Through copying these types of information, (most) infants will tune into their surrounding culture.

Play

Play generally describes behavior which has no particular end in itself, but improves performance in similar situations in the future. This is seen in a wide variety of vertebrates besides humans, but is mostly limited to mammals and birds. Cats are known to play with a ball of string when young, which gives them experience with catching prey. Besides inanimate objects, animals may play with other members of their own species or other animals, such as orcas playing with seals they have caught. Play involves a significant cost to animals, such as increased vulnerability to predators and the risk of injury and possibly infection. It also consumes energy, so there must be

significant benefits associated with play for it to have evolved. Play is generally seen in younger animals, suggesting a link with learning. However, it may also have other benefits not associated directly with learning, for example improving physical fitness.

Habituation

In psychology, habituation is an example of non-associative learning in which there is a progressive diminution of behavioral response probability with repetition of a stimulus. It is another form of integration. An animal first responds to a stimulus, but if it is neither rewarding nor harmful the animal reduces subsequent responses. Humans have been able to handle certain cognitive tasks due to habituation. One example of this can be seen in small song birds - if a stuffed owl (or similar predator) is put into the cage, the birds initially react to it as though it were a real predator. Soon the birds react less, showing habituation. If another stuffed owl is introduced (or the same one removed and re-introduced), the birds react to it again as though it were a predator, demonstrating that it is only a very specific stimulus that is habituated to (namely, one particular unmoving owl in one place).

Sensitization

Sensitization is an example of non-associative learning in which the progressive amplification of a response follows repeated administrations of a stimulus (Bell et al., 1995). An everyday example of this mechanism is the repeated tonic stimulation of peripheral nerves that will occur if a person rubs his arm continuously. After a while, this stimulation will create a warm sensation that will eventually turn painful. The pain is the result of the

progressively amplified synaptic response of the peripheral nerves warning
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the person that the stimulation is harmful. Sensitization is thought to underlie both adaptive as well as maladaptive learning processes in the organism.

Imprinting

Imprinting is the term used in psychology and ethnology to describe any kind of phase-sensitive learning (learning occurring at a particular age or a particular life stage) that is rapid and apparently independent of the consequences of behavior. It was first used to describe situations in which an animal or person learns the characteristics of some stimulus, which is therefore said to be “imprinted” onto the subject.

Enculturation

Enculturation is the process by which a person learns the requirements of the culture by which he or she is surrounded, and acquires values and behaviours that are appropriate or necessary in that culture. The influences which as part of this process limit, direct or shape the individual, whether deliberately or not, include parents, other adults, and peers. If successful, enculturation results in competence in the language, values and rituals of the culture.

Rote learning

Rote learning is a technique which avoids understanding the inner complexities and inferences of the subject that is being learned and instead focuses on memorizing the material so that it can be recalled by the learner exactly the way it was read or heard. The major practice involved in rote learning techniques is learning by repetition, based on the idea that one will

be able to quickly recall the meaning of the material the more it is repeated. Rote learning is used in diverse areas, from mathematics to music to religion. Although it has been criticized by some schools of thought, rote learning is a necessity in many situations.

Informal learning

Informal learning occurs through the experience of day-to-day situations (for example, one would learn to look ahead while walking because of the danger inherent in not paying attention to where one is going). It is learning from life, during a meal at table with parents, Play, exploring.

Formal learning

Formal learning is learning that takes place within a teacher-student relationship, such as in a school system.

Non-formal learning

Non-formal learning is organized learning outside the formal learning system. For example: learning by coming together with people with similar interests and exchanging viewpoints, in clubs or in (international) youth organizations, workshops.

Non-formal learning and combined approaches

The educational system may use a combination of formal, informal, and non-formal learning methods. The UN and EU recognize these different forms of learning. In some schools students can get points that count in the formal-learning systems if they get work done in informal-learning circuits. They may be given time to assist international youth workshops and training

courses, on the condition they prepare, contribute, share and can proof this offered valuable new insights, helped to acquire new skills, a place to get experience in organizing, teaching, etc.

In order to learn a skill, such as solving a Rubik's cube quickly, several factors come into play at once:

Directions help one learn the patterns of solving a Rubik's cube

Practicing the moves repeatedly and for extended time helps with “ muscle memory” and therefore speed

Thinking critically about moves helps find shortcuts, which in turn help to speed up future attempts.

The Rubik's cube's six colors help anchor solving it within the head.

Occasionally revisiting the cube helps prevent negative learning or loss of skill.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Interview data from marks, Schrader, and Levine (1999) revealed that paraeducators perceived that their job responsibilities included:

- 1) Keeping students with disabilities from “ bothering” general education classroom teachers.
- 2) Creating all modifications and adaptations for the child, and
- 3) Maintaining responsibility for all aspects of the child's education.

These findings indicate that paraeducators perceived their duties to be actions that are not considered ethical (Heller, 1997): National joint committee on Learning Disabilities (NJCLD), 1999). Marks et al, reported corroboration of these perceived job duties by another group of paraeducators, but no observation were conducted and no comparison made to job description.

French and Chopra (1999) conducted interviews with parents who reported that they believe inclusion without paraeducators is impossible. The parents cited reasons of health and safety, social and academic engagement in support of their assertion. Actually, these parents believe that paraeducators are more important than teachers to their child's inclusion. But parents also emphasized that paraeducators should "stand back a little, too" and to "become invisible in a very calculated way" (French and Chopra, 1999 p. 264).

In Scotland, more than 4, 400 classrooms were appointed between 2000 and 2001 in an effort to improve adult-to-student ratios. The program was federally funded and evaluated in three phases. All data sources verified that the amount of time students were engaged in active versus passive tasks increased as a result of the presence of the assistants, and that the presence of the assistants permitted teachers to improve the quality of their teaching time and to engage in more small group and individual work with students.

Scottish teachers also reported that their expectation of students has increased because of the added support available to them. Students liked working with classroom assistants and appreciated the extra support.

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Student clearly distinguished between classroom assistants, whom they saw as “ helpers” and teachers. This evaluation study did not disaggregate findings for special education students (Wilson et al 2002).

Storey et al 1993, conducted a study using a “ multiple-probe across settings” design to examine the effectiveness of a peer-mediated intervention conducted by classroom assistants on the social behaviour of socially withdrawn and socially skilled preschoolers in public school classrooms. Two socially skilled students were matched with one socially withdrawn student, and the group of three became the unit of study. The results demonstrated that all of the withdrawn preschoolers increased their social interactions with peers during the instructional triads studied. Social validation findings also indicated improvement in the students’ behaviour.

Hall, McClannahan, and Krantz (1995) observed that paraeducators were reluctant to “ Step away” from students in classroom interactions. Although they did not inquire as to the paraeducators’ beliefs about their roles, the researchers assumed that the paraeducators believed their primary role to be that of providing support and assistance just as Marks, Schrader, and Levine later reported Hall et al, however, provided training for paraeducators on how to reduce the number of verbal and gestural prompts given to students and to use physical prompts were absolutely necessary.

Observations subsequent to training revealed a significant reduction in the number of verbal and gestural prompts, indicating that the concepts the paraeducators had learned during training were being applied on the job.

They then observed the amount of engagement and initiative on the part of students and found that both increased significantly.

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Young et al (1996) examined in elementary education classroom, each of whom as assigned a full-time paraeducators. Researchers assessed the on-task, in-seat, self-stimulatory and vocalization behaviours of the students as a function of paraeducators proximity, recording activities, and behaviours at 20-second intervals. They considered three conditions:

Close proximity? Less than 2 feet away;

More than 2 feet away; and

Out of room.

Teachers initiated contact with the target students occurred most often when the paraeducators was more than 2 feet away from students or when out of the room, but the teacher initiated contact with student less than 1% of the time when the paraeducators was closer than 2 feet away.

This finding suggests that paraeducators proximity effectively reduced student opportunities to engage with the classroom teacher and could be used to support the argument that the presence of a paraeducators allows the argument that the presence of a paraeducators allows the classroom teacher to be relieved of responsibility for the child.

At the same time, observations showed that the issue of gestures or cueing occurred less than 1% of the time a problem because all students had difficulty with verbal direction and needed cues and prompts. Nevertheless, students were on task, appropriate amount of time most often when working with a peer. Similar to the earlier conclusions of Storey, Smith and Strain

(1993) regarding preschoolers, those authors concluded that the most <https://assignbuster.com/traditional-versus-modern-methods-of-effective-teaching/>

appropriate role of the paraeducators working with elementary-aged children with autism is to facilitate peer interaction, and they did not recommend discontinuing the use of paraeducators.

Giangreco (1997) observed classrooms where students with significant needs were included and reported that dedicated paraeducators serving children one-to-one “hovered” over their charges, which limited opportunities for the students to benefit from the teacher’s instruction and interfered with social interactions among students. These findings were published in a widely read article that served as the wake-up-call for those who had rushed to provide every child with an individual dedicated paraeducator.

At variance with these findings, Hill (2003) observed paraeducators working in classrooms where students with disabilities were included. Their observations focused on:

- 1) The activities in which the instructional assistant was involved;
- 2) Participants in the interactions; and
- 3) Whether the interaction occurred in or out of the classroom.

Hill concluded that assistants facilitated inclusive practices by interacting more frequently with both exceptional and typical students together, rather than with the exceptional student alone, and that they spent significant time assisting in activities that did not include exceptional students. Hill also concluded that paraeducators promoted independence by limiting the

amount of direct instruction they provided to exceptional students, so that students would attend to the classroom teacher for their instruction.

Other reported benefits of employing paraeducators included improved student behaviour (Kotkin, 1998). In a series of well designed, quasi-experimental studies, Kotkin reported consistent improvements in the behaviour of boys with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (1998). In one study, Kotkin (1998) tested the effects of social skills training versus the effects of combined social skills training and continued support a trained classroom aide. This study showed that the majority of students receiving the combined set of practices (Social skills training plus classroom aide) improved over the course of the year, whereas less than half of the students in the control group or the social-skills-only group improved (in terms of disruptive behaviour in class).

Kotkin also examined the effects of social skills training and school-based token reinforcement components on response to provocation and frustration in aggressive boys. Repeated measures included direct observation of the boys' participants' role-plays of target skills, and teacher ratings. The data showed that boys receiving social skills training alone were able to perform in role-play but showed little improvement in natural settings. Token reinforcement improved the behaviour in boys prior to social skills training, but adding a trained classroom aide resulted in greater improvement. Moreover, the improved behaviour was maintained at follow-up (Kotkin, 1998).

Werts et al (2001) considered the academic engagement of students with disabilities in general education classrooms. This quasi-experimental study examined those effects of paraeducators proximity to students. The findings showed that close proximity yielded higher levels of academic engagement, while greater paraeducators distance promoted social interaction.

Others have noted positive student attitudes toward learning and school. For example, McIntyre (1999) found that 9th and 10th grade students had improved attitudes and self-concept regarding math because of readily available assistance from a teaching assistant. The inference that may be drawn from these studies is that improved student achievements is related to the presence of paraeducators because improved student behaviour, positive attitudes toward subjects, and better self-concept are all known to be highly correlated with student achievement. Although none of the research on the impact of paraeducators on attitudinal factors, or on social or academic engagement factors compared the data to student-achievement data, one might extrapolate that increased student engagement and independence, as well as a higher adult-to-student ratio would be associated with increased academic achievement, given the well-established findings about the positive effects of student engagement (Marzano, 2003) and small class size (Glass and Smith 1979): Shavelson and Towne, 2002). Yet, such extrapolation remains unconfirmed by empirical information.

Harrington and Mitchelson (1986, 1987) interviewed teachers who worked with paraeducators. The teachers reported improved morale, reduce stress, and improved school-home-community relations. French and Chopra (1999), from interviews with parents similarly reported improved school home
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relations. The parents reported that paraeducators served as connectors between the schools and themselves and that the most frequent contact with the school came through the paraeducators. Parents spoke of many ways in which paraeducators connect their children and created connections between their children and teachers.

Other reports describe paraeducators as a vital link to parents and the community, noting that they often live in low-income neighborhoods near their schools and are more familiar with their schools' diverse enrollments (Chopra, 2002 and Jennings, 2000). Various anecdotal reports tell of paraeducators who assisted families in numerous ways. For example, in one case a family ran out of food stamps and had not eaten and the paraeducators helped the family access a local food bank (Sack, 1999).

At the conclusion of a study of school district policies regarding the employment of paraeducators, Policy Studies Associates (1997) reported to the U. S. Department of Education with recommendations that districts should tend to programmatic aspects of their school before deciding to invest in hiring or training paraprofessionals. Although this report did not recommend against employing paraeducators, the authors' intent clearly was to focus on instruction that engages students in hard work and challenging curriculum. This perspective puts the role of paraeducators in a defined subordinate role to the program and asserts that measuring the effectiveness of paraeducators is of merit only if the program in which they work is sound.

To date, only one of the reported attempts at measuring the effect of paraeducators on student achievement has considered the curricular and instructional program. Sam Stringfield led a team of researchers in a complex study of paraeducators effectiveness funded by the American Federation of Teachers. Schools were selected for participation only if they demonstrated high student achievement by students living in poverty and employed paraeducators in instructional roles. Therefore, the correlation between student achievement and paraeducators employment was the antecedent of the study. The research team found that effective programs generally included whole-school reforms and professional development involving the entire staff. The paraeducators held clear task assignments, both academic and managerial, and provided intensive instruction to children under the close direction of classroom teachers (AFT, 1999).

In Scotland, a nationwide evaluation of a major initiative to put classroom assistants in every elementary classroom in the country showed that, at the end of two academic years, achievement exceeded or met targeted levels. Researchers at the Scottish Council for Research in Education noted that job descriptions varied by district, and that supervision and training also varied considerably. They concluded that classroom assistants had an indirect impact on student achievement although they were unable to define the precise contribution the classroom assistants made to improving student achievement because multiple curricular initiatives had been implemented simultaneously (Wilson et al, 2002).

Like the Scottish study and in contrast to the AFT study, the Tennessee STAR study attempted to answer the question of paraeducators effectiveness <https://assignbuster.com/traditional-versus-modern-methods-of-effective-teaching/>

relative to student achievement but ignored the curricular and instructional program factors (Boyd-Zaharias and Pate-Bain, 1998). Moreover, Boyd-Zaharias and Pate-Bain (1998) reported that teachers provided no direction, that untrained paraeducators did whatever they wanted to do or only routine paperwork, and, significantly, that many teachers resented the paraeducator's presence because the paraeducators employed during the study were political hires in an economy where jobs were precious.

Those authors also noted that the teacher-with-aide and teacher-alone group were confounded by students moving between those classes during the experiment. In spite of flaws in the Tennessee study, groups with aides consistently performed slightly better than groups with teachers alone, but the differences were too small to show statistical significance (Institute for Educational Inquiry, 2000). Further analysis of the Tennessee data showed a small improvement in reading scores for students who attended a class with a teacher aide for 2 or 3 years (Gerber et al 2001, pp. 123). Gerber et al admitted that other benefits that might be associated with employing paraeducators were not considered in the study.

RESEARCH METHODS

Research Setting

The study was carried out in two primary schools in Lagos, Nigeria.

Participants

The sample was drawn randomly among the primary school students in Nigeria. Due to the limitation of time, only 20 participants were used for this study. 10 participants were selected from the public schools and 10

participants were also selected from the private schools. The rationale for this was to have 10 students that had been used to the modern teaching method and 10 students that were used to the traditional teaching method. The 10 students selected from the public schools were assumed to have been taught with traditional method of teaching while the 10 students chosen from private schools were assumed to have been taught with modern method of teaching.

Research Instruments

The researcher used 2 classrooms for this study. The first class used for the study was a classroom in a private primary school, where the classroom setting wore the look of modern classroom. And, the other classroom used was a classroom in a public primary school, where the classroom setting wore the look of the traditional classroom, where learning is individualistic