

TELEVISION AND THE TEACHING OF CIVIC EDUCATION IN NIGERIA: THE FRIEDEL KROPF'S EXPERIMENT.

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Abstract

Traditional/orthodox or teacher-centred teaching method is constantly failing to meet emerging problems in society as pupils are now confronted with complex problems that go beyond rote learning, hence creativity may be one of the only solution to these problems. The research is qualitative in nature and adopts the principles of the Participatory Action Research (PAR), a collaborative and participatory oriented approach that allow participant to fully understand not only the “how and why” of learning/participating but also allows the teacher the opportunity to use a variety of methods to achieve set goal. The technique encouraged class participation and makes the lesson more real and natural rather than abstract and intangible. The work therefore recommends that television which combines audio and visual projections be adopted as one of the teaching processes in schools because of their intrinsic and extrinsic values of motivating and sustaining the interest of the child, which invariably helps students to develop their imaginative, creative, cognitive, integrative, artistic and disciplinary skills.

Key Words: Television, Teaching, Collaborative, Participatory.

Television and the Teaching of Civic Education in Nigeria: The Friedel Kropf's Experiment.

Introduction

Teaching is communication. Basically teaching strives to send a message, to teach and to influence the behavioural pattern of the recipient through such message. Teachers also use the medium of communication for the transmission of their message or lesson to the students or learners. Arlyne Lazarson, in Iroh Emmanuel, distinguishes between performance and learning when he submitted that learning takes place when there are “changes in what one can do that result from experience with the environment” (1), while performance is “what a person actually does” (1). To effectively provide the student with the requisite experiences to enable learning effectively take place, the classroom teacher has an avalanche of teaching techniques. Teaching method according to Ekere E.U., “is the overall procedures used to teach a particular lesson” (22). Teaching is meant to be interactive but the method adopted by most teachers do not give the student the freedom to interact and participate in the learning process, thus making the atmosphere in the classroom boring and uninteresting.

Ehiamatalor in Iroh, classifies teaching techniques into two basic methods: “the traditional/formal and the informal/modern methods” (2). The Traditional is made up of the lecture and other teacher oriented methods, where the teacher is the center of attraction. The student is only exposed to the knowledge (experience), which the teacher feels is necessary for his development. Here the teacher does the talking while the student/learner listens and takes notes and assignments from the teacher after asking questions and merely receiving answers. Although the method permits the teacher

Emmanuel Iroh

smooth, easy, direct and systematic development of the subject matter, it does not allow the student the opportunity to express himself or participate in the learning process.

Thus, Ekere, observes that the teacher centered method “undermines the capacity and capability of the learner. It makes the learner a passive or inactive listener since it is considered that those learners have no knowledge or experience to offer for the progress of the lesson” (22-23). What the above means is that there is no room for student participation during the teaching and learning period as the students sits and assimilate what the teacher is teaching. This is what educationists call rote learning. On the other hand, the informal method is pragmatic, allows for the use of various teaching techniques to teach as well as places emphasis on participation. Ehiamatalor, in Iroh calls it the “student-oriented” or “student-centered approach” (2) because the teacher’s focus is on the student who is regarded as the ultimate benefactor of the knowledge.

Television, a very important medium of mass communication is of great value to civic education as it helps to conscientize the public. Its availability in almost every house hold in Nigeria makes it a willing tool for the education of the populace. Again, it has become a part of our everyday life. According to Antonoff Michael, television is a system of sending and receiving signals transmitted through the wires and optical fibres by electromagnetic radiation...though most people will never meet the leader of a country, travel to the moon or participate in a war, they can observe these experiences through the images of television...the most

Television and the Teaching of Civic Education in Nigeria: The Friedel Kropf's Experiment.

common use of television is as a source of information and entertainment. (Microsoft@Encarta®).

From the above, it is evident that television is a good medium for education, information and entertainment as well a course in government. Therefore, it can be used to mold, build, orient and reorient the child towards becoming a useful citizen, hence its usefulness as a teaching technique cannot be overemphasized. Nwana, 251, describes educational television as “an electronic medium which presents moving pictures with sound thereby stimulating both aural and visual senses simultaneously”. She observes that a major advantage of educational television is that discussions can be done in groups or individually, while viewing is going on. Concluding, she submits that television “stimulates and guides thinking, fosters imaginative and creative development of the learner” (252). Televisions serve dual purposes: as a medium of entertainment and as an instructional medium. In an educational setup, instructional television is adopted because it serves as a medium of instruction and learning. This is because programmes used during classroom teaching for the education of the child may be displayed on a television screen.

Instructional Television is pragmatic and supports technological development as it encourages the use of multimedia approach to teaching and learning. This is because it allows for the smooth infusion or integration of other media related modes. Again, It further allows for the recording of programmes, lessons and demonstrations in different formats for storage and easy retrieval for use at a future date. The visual codes of the television make for high visual contact which aids in comprehension of lessons when it combines with the audio code. Apart from motivating and

Emmanuel Iroh

stimulating the students' interest to learn, television lesson(s) can be projected simultaneously to many students at different location in the same surrounding thus making it convenient for them to learn with less stress. However, one major disadvantage is the high cost of procuring the equipment and its accessories.

From the above, there is no doubt that the principal quality of television which combines sound and images greatly help to convey meaning to viewers. Researchers (Wetzel et al 1994, Kozma, 1991, Garbner, 1993) have confirmed that television which combines multiple forms of motion sound and text is more beneficial to the learner than a single form which uses words or texts alone. What the above is saying is that television has the ability to portray a lesson in a variety of ways.

According to Marshall (2001) who cited the conclusion of Wiman and Mierhenry (1969) on their study on how to promote learning, found out that people remember:

- 10% of what they read,
- 20% of what they hear
- 30% of what they see
- 50% of what they see and hear

From the above axiom, it is believed that we remember very little of what we SEE; little of what we HEAR; more of what we SEE and HEAR and much more of the combinations of what we SEE, HEAR and DO hence "I hear, I forget, I see, I remember, I do I understand. Again, statistically, Lindstrom, 1994, in Oshinaike A.B. and Adekumisi S.R., cited in Iroh, 2017 observes "that people remember 20% of what they see, 40% of what they see and hear,

Television and the Teaching of Civic Education in Nigeria: The Friedel Kropf's Experiment.

but about 75% of what they see and hear and do simultaneously”(8).

Therefore television has the capacity to reach multiple intelligences of the learner through the effective combination of multiple symbols like spoken language, text and still images faster than a medium that relies only on any one of the above. This is clearly exemplified in Howard Gardner's multiple intelligence theory which recognizes that “an individual's capacity for learning is influenced by the manner in which the subject matter is presented” ([www.https:// howgardner.com](http://www.https://howgardner.com)).

Marshall further points out that textbook has a linguistic approach to learning while television's multiple modes portray content through a variety of ways such as linguistic, aesthetic, logical and narrational which also matches the viewer's various intelligence preferences and differences in a learning environment. Anderson, also agree that television and other learning technologies aid the students in learning. He observes that lessons (academic and social) learned in early childhood from television programmes such as Sesame Street can be very helpful and will lead to success that can be carried to adolescence and beyond. Furthermore, Bryant, Alexander and Brain in a comprehensive survey on the effect of pre and school educational television programmes submit that the views of the programmes demonstrate improved reading skills, mathematical skills and visual processing skill.

In a related vain, Owolabi O.T and Oogui O.I carried out a study on the effectiveness of cartoon style (animation and multimedia teaching on student's performance in science subject in Ekiti State. The study involves the use of interactive elements such as graphics,

Emmanuel Iroh

text video, sound and cartoon teaching of several pictures displayed in sequence and in a frame which is available for a period of time, usually recorded in a video tape or disc and played through a television. According to them, animated teaching is the rapid succession of pictures indicating a series of slides appearance and disappearance of iconic elements continually. They further submit that the method of presentation of the television lesson appeal to the sight and hearing senses of the learner (visual and auditory) and therefore promote retention and easy recalling ability of the learner.

The result of their investigation show that animated cartoon used in teaching produced greater academic performance in students than the chalk and board method. According to them, animation through the use of television in teaching help the students to visualize unseen phenomena, develop scientific language, improve understanding of scientific process and contribute to the development of scientific thinking.

Using television in education has also been advanced as a pillar to distance education because of its peculiar characteristics of wide coverage of audience. Despite the absence of physical face to face interaction with a class teacher, television offer mutual interaction and creates a feeling of state of belonging to the viewer/learner. Furthermore, television's prime position as an agent of mass mobilization and communication makes it a major tool in the execution of distance education including supporting and enhancing teaching, instructing, clarifying and explaining, reinforcement motivation and encouraging education.

Conceptual Framework

The experiment which is qualitative in nature adopted the principles of the Participant Action Research (PAR) that allow participant to fully understand not only the “how and why” of learning/participating but also what the results of the learning were and what was learnt from the process. This is because PAR is a collaborative and participatory oriented approach which affords the participants the opportunity to actively participate and control the process and allows the teacher the opportunity to use a variety of methods to achieve set goals. Par is iterative as it is imbued with a systematic and cyclical process of observing, reflecting, planning, acting and sharing. Consequently, the experiment combined the visual and auditory mode of television as well as the process centered approach of dramatic methods through the Participant Action Research to achieve set objectives.

The experiment and practical teaching was carried out with students in Junior Secondary School (JSS) One of Fridel Kropps Educational Centre, The researcher used convenient sampling techniques.

Synopsis of Television Documentary on Economic Sabotage

Chief Bonga, a wealthy criminal whose specialty is the breakage of oil pipelines, siphoning of petroleum products and blowing up of oil installations as well as kidnapping is waiting for his boys for an operation at a certain oil well head. Suddenly, he gets trapped by the change mantra message and decides to stop the illegal and unpatriotic business of oil bunkering.

Shortly, his boys arrive in their speed boat fully armed, chanting war songs in anticipation of the operation. To their amazement, the boss refused to acknowledge their greetings. The boys sense that

Emmanuel Iroh

there is problem. They greet him again the second time but rather than acknowledge their greetings, he drops his gun and sternly directs them to drop their guns. He informs them that he has repented and no longer interested in those action that has contributed to the economic down turn of the country. They all drop their guns and renounce their commitment to crime and pledge to support the fight against corrupt practices by the Federal Government.

Instructional Steps

The experiment conducted by the researcher was the reenactment of a change mantra video clip dubbed from the NTA on oil bunkering. After playing the video to the students using a video player and a television, the researcher added more scenes and rearranged the plot to embrace more societal ills like kidnapping, armed robbery and drug addiction.

The researcher now played the national anthem to the class to awaken their consciousness to national service. The enlarged story containing the four themes for exploration: oil bunkering, kidnapping, armed robbery and drug addiction was exposed to the class. Casting was done after volunteers have indicated interest. After choosing the characters (casting), the class was divided into three groups to explore each of the topics while the other members of the class formed the chorus, singing, clapping, and beating of improvised drums.

Television and the Teaching of Civic Education in Nigeria: The Friedel Kropf's Experiment.

PLATE 1



Learning Through Television: Students Watching a Documentary on Economic Sabotage

PLATE 2



Learning through Television: Students Watching a Documentary on Economic Sabotage

The themes, setting and subject matter were first exposed in the opening scene with late Nelly Uchendu's musical video ("Nigeria Amaka"-Nigeria is good) songs and dance. The combination of these techniques in the exposition of the themes made the lesson lively, interesting, attractive and easy to comprehend by the students who hitherto were wondering how to go about the exploration. Furthermore, the subject matter was reduced from the superficial to the concrete through relating the various incidents in the storyline with recent events in the country as they relate to oil bunkering, kidnapping, cultism and drug addiction to the students

Television and the Teaching of Civic Education in Nigeria: The Friedel Kropf's Experiment.

by having them play the roles. Names like Kingpin, Area, Commander, Big Boss, Capone, officer, used in the exploration were local names associated with the ills being explored and easily identified by the class. This made the dead words of the story to come alive, thereby making the students to identify and empathize with the characters.

Furthermore, while the themes, setting, and subject matter were being exposed to the audience, the drums, singing and clapping included in the chorus was to entertain and keep the class focused. The change mantra theme chorus "*oh oh oh, change begins with me*" was used by the researcher at the end of each exploration. The dramatization was recorded and later played back to the participants. This greatly assisted during the discussion period and helped to deepen the understanding of the lesson by the students.

After watching the play back of the recorded enactment, the students requested that the video be played again before discussing the explorations. Having identified with the subject matter through participation, comprehension became easy. To enable the students clearly discuss the drama, the following questions were framed by the researcher for the participants:

1. Write at least three themes of the dramatization and elaborate with examples

2. Outline three consequences of each of the following
 - a. oil bunkering
 - b. cultism
 - c. kidnapping
 - d. drug addiction

Emmanuel Iroh

From the answers received, branching questions were framed by the researcher and administered on the class who freely proffered answers:

1. If you are to fight these ills, outline/ state clearly your action plan
2. Who is to be blamed for the rot in the society?
3. What role can the youths play to avert future occurrence?
4. What lessons can we learn from that song “Nigeria Amaka”?

Findings /Impact of the Experiment on the Students

The choice of using Television as a medium of instruction appears to have greatly enhanced learning and greatly concretized the topics. The process engaged the student as they were fully involved in the learning process. The television was used to stimulate their knowledge and a change in their perception of events. The Cultivation theory of Gerbner which focuses on the current and inescapable pattern of cultural environment that shapes public ideas, actions and policies is of the view that viewers are influenced by the perceptions, opinion and views of such programme. This is evident from the reactions of the students during our discussion segment after the enactments.

Thus Chiamaka, one of participants testifies: Truly, I now know that most of the kidnappers are cultists. The evil effects of kidnapping cannot be quantified. Infact, based on this little experience from this short television documentary and the drama, I will not wish that my worst enemy be kidnapped.

Television and the Teaching of Civic Education in Nigeria: The Friedel Kropf's Experiment.

The magic effect of television on the viewers cannot be overemphasized. The methods employed in teaching connected the students with the culture of abstaining from economic sabotage and other vices where students are shown the benefits of joining hands to build a viable economy and rejecting the lure of ill gotten wealth. Complex ideas such as economic sabotage, kidnapping, cultism were reduced to the student's level of understanding through the documentary, thus making it easy for the understanding of the topic. This provided an avenue for fruitful discussion among the students on the societal values as well as an avenue for self assessment.

Again, Chidi another student declares:

Truly, it was during the discussion time that some of those confusing terms became clearer to me. The discussions we had on the role we played, the questions other students were asking and the clarifications from our leader, made me and indeed the whole class to understand the topics such that it will be difficult to forget.

The television which enabled the students to build mental representations from words and pictures greatly contributed to the success of the experiment by the lesson more real and natural than abstract or intangible. The students were able to experience, see and hear first hand, what was being taught and even participated in the creation of the learning materials through the exploration and recording of the drama performance. Again, the lessons transcended all the senses (visual, auditory psychomotor and cognitive). This removed tension, made internalization more possible as it is received and processed simultaneously by the senses making for easy recall and subsequently increases student's motivation to learn

Emmanuel Iroh

as well as intra and inter personal co-operation and relationship. Nwanneka observed that:

I was not under any pressure during the lessons. I forgot that I was in the class as the teacher was absent but at the same time present. This is because we assumed the teacher's responsibility even to the point of recording our sketches, asking and answering our questions and even planning and presenting or dramatization.

The teacher only guided and advised us when necessary.

Music was infused into the lesson. The video of Late Nelly Uchendu's song, "Nigeria Amaka" was played at the beginning of one of the explorations. This helped in sustaining the interest of the class. The variation of the teaching methods lies in the fact that this study acknowledges the multifarious constitution of the members of a class, as well as the fact that students learn better in different ways. Three major categories of learners generally identified in a learning environment are the visual (eyes), the auditory (ear), and the tactile (touch/ feeling) learners. Therefore, a combination of different styles of teaching accommodates and facilitates the retention and recall of learned materials. This is in line with the submission of Thomas B. Corcoran who puts it more succinctly thus:

Teachers need to deepen their content knowledge and learn new methods of teaching. They need more time to work with colleagues, to critically examine the new standards being proposed, and to revise curriculum. They need

Television and the Teaching of Civic Education in Nigeria: The Friedel Kropf's Experiment.

opportunities to develop, master and reflect on new approaches to working with children "(http://archives.org...ED388619)

Recommendations

The world is constantly changing and, gradually, it is being fused into a global village with many challenges. The trend of development has necessitated the need to utilize varied teaching methods geared towards catching and sustaining the attention of young learners. This can best be achieved when educational contents are delivered in a student and participant oriented manner using such a medium as television. Therefore, the researcher is calling for the adoption of varied student oriented methods in teaching all subjects and not just the teacher centered approach. Furthermore, government at all levels should provide educational technological equipment in schools to enable the students experience these varied teaching and learning experiences.

Conclusion

The main aim of introducing an alternative teaching method as I have earlier posited is to make "the lesson more real and natural than abstract or intangible" (138). The teaching method utilized in the study provided ample opportunity for the students to develop their innate abilities such as self discipline and control, intuitive, cognitive and imaginative ability and, integration through working with fellow students. The methods also enabled the students to comprehend and appreciate the subject matter through the development of artistic awareness as well as self expression. Most importantly, the students internalized the lessons rather than taken in information. This is because they were practically involved in the learning process.

Emmanuel Iroh

The experiment, though challenging, was educating to the researcher as the children's contributions during the discussion and evaluation period provided insights into the challenges that may not ordinarily have occurred to the researcher. Thus, the evaluation period which served as an assessment period enabled the researcher to analyze the data (practical experiment) gathered from the experiment (participatory approach) through the explanation analysis of each practical session. The researcher was able to conclude that children's imaginative and problem solving abilities are tasked and enhanced when they work together as a group.

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Television and the Teaching of Civic Education in Nigeria: The Friedel Kropf's Experiment.

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