

Assessment of Teaching Techniques on Learners' Participation in Federal Low-cost Day Junior Secondary School, Maiduguri, Borno State, Nigeria

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Abstract

Creating enabling environment for class participation is a technique with no right or wrong approach as long as the learners are participating. Teacher's role is not only presenting concept with good illustrations but pushing for active class interaction which gingers motivation and improved performance. However, not many teachers are good at making learners participate. To this effect, Thornton (2013) proposes the taxonomy of teaching technique with three teaching techniques from lower to higher level of participation, which include: directing technique involving activities of learning through listening and directions; discussing technique which makes interaction possible; and, delegating techniques which involve learning through task-base. This study examined the application of these techniques to assess the learners' level of classroom participation at junior secondary school using four lesson periods of one intake class with one teacher and forty-two learners. The study is observational design where check list was employ to collect data. Frequency counts was employed as method of analysis. The finding indicated that the lessons observed employed the lower level learning task experience which did not expose learners to interact during the lesson. The study recommended that teachers should employ all the learning task experience according to the learning content and purpose. Teachers should gradually transcend from lower learning task to the higher learning task make teaching engaging and inviting, thereby creating a participatory classroom situation.

Keywords: Class Participation, Learning Interest, Teaching, Learning Activity, Teaching Technique

Introduction

Teaching is a two-dimensional activity; it involves teacher activities and student activities (Rajagopalan, 2019). These activities push for interaction; thus, classroom participation begins (Emanuelsson & Sahlström, 2008; Ingram & Elliott, 2014). This means that for learners to understand classroom activities they should be actively engaged. Though, some psychologists believe that learners come to school with empty brains (Jensen, 2009; Rodriguez, 2012) but, no brain is empty according to the proponents of behaviourism (Power & Holland, 2018). Classroom concretizes ideas inherent in the learners through practice and interaction. Learning could be said effective when the learners are presented with 'input' through 'interaction' by assessing them for an 'output' as indicator for learning. Mere storytelling and showing have been distinguished from teaching. Teaching involves planned and well-organized interaction to bring about positive change in the learner's behaviour (Rajagopalan, 2019).

To make classroom interactive, teachers need to employ a number of techniques. Teaching techniques mean 'particular trick' or 'stratagem' employed to achieve a set goal in a classroom (Hadi, 2023). This means that teachers must employ stratagem while teaching in order to induce learning interest (Aziz, Quraishi, & Kazi, 2018), and encourage classroom participations (Knox, 1980), thereby creating connection between the teacher and the learners. According to Kay, Peyton, and Pike (1987), there is no right or wrong teaching technique. To them, the use of a particular technique largely depends on the nature of content and characteristics of the learners as well as the objectives. This is why teachers should master different techniques for application at different times, and for different purposes. To Thornton (2013) an effective teacher employs different teaching techniques at the same time. This author claims that teaching techniques can be categorized into three Ds: Directing, Discussion, and Delegating. He states that teaching techniques starts from lowest to highest level of interaction.



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Figure 1

Taxonomy of Teaching Techniques

Direct	Discuss	Delegation
Low----- Task Experience -----High		

Source: Thornton (2013), Three Teaching Styles.

The directing technique involves activities of learning through listening and directions. Learners are expected to do activities by themselves with the directive from the teacher (how to do and when to do the task). The specific teaching activities here include lecturing, assigning reading task, playing audio/video, physical demonstration, role play, among others. These activities encourage the following learning activities as the learners are active (participate in the learning): listening for teacher’s reading or visual/audio; taking note of the lecture; doing the role play; and generally practicing what they are told to do. Using this technique, firstly, the teacher should start from deductive to inductive (provide the context before launching into the specific). Secondly, learning instruction should be clear and precise for easy recall and comprehension. The learners must be told exactly what they should achieve and how the teacher will evaluate their tasks. This reduces anxiety in learners (Galti & Tahiru, 2016). The discussion teaching technique makes interaction possible. Teachers ask learners probing questions rather than yes/no type question to promote critical thinking (Aziz et al., 2018). The higher the level of the learners, the higher the quality of questions. Learners are encouraged to have discussions with logical conclusions. Learners are trained to develop how to back up their own opinions with facts and data. To achieve this, teachers are to prepare questions before-hand to ensure no student dominates the discussion; to encourage learners to create questions; and, to use clickers (easy way of engaging the learners through posing multiple-choice question). Whereas, the delegating techniques is learning through task-base. A task is given to learners with a clear objective; group learners for team work; and, allow learners to tell or write what they can do on a project given to them.

The employment of these or any of the teaching techniques facilitates effective classroom participation (Mustapha, Abd Rahman, & Yunus, 2010). Teachers use these techniques to trigger participation when learners are engaged in class, which show that participation has taken place (Abdullah, Bakar, & Mahbob, 2012). Though promoting classroom participation can be a disadvantage to shy and introvert learners (Mustapha et al., 2010), effective engagement of learners into classroom participation generally promotes learning and triggers interests (O’Connor, 2013). There are different levels of classroom participation: raising hand (Sahlström, 2002), responding to question and asking question (Ratto, Shapiro, Truong, & Griswold, 2003; Susak, 2016), seeking clarification (Kääntä & Kasper, 2018) from teacher or peer, following instruction, doing classroom work, working or discussing in group, making presentation (Karjo, 2018). Again, class attendance and listening attentively have been considered as classroom participation (Bekkering & Ward, 2021; Chiang & Sumell, 2019). Therefore, classroom participation could be any act that actively engages learners for the purpose of learning intrinsically or extrinsically. As such, effective employment of teaching technique triggers some of these actions which are considered participation. Thus, this study examines how the use of effective teaching techniques, particularly the taxonomy of teaching technique by Thornton (2013) encourages learners’ classroom participation.

Statement of the Problem

Teachers often complain of passive learners in classes, making teaching a teacher-dominant. This situation seriously contributes to the poor learners’ participation. A participatory classroom yields more positive learning outcome than only-teacher-dominant classroom teaching. Thus, engaging learners promotes learning and motivates learners. However, not many teachers promote participatory learning activities, thinking it is demanding. What Thornton (2013) has explained that teaching techniques redefine how teachers could easily engage learners to make classroom a participatory class. Employing all or any of these techniques encourages active participation. Yet, teachers in the Junior Secondary Schools often not employ all the learning task experiences but rather use the lower levels. Examining this technique can give an insight into the applicability of the techniques in relation to the learners’ active classroom participation.

Objectives of the Study

The specific objectives of this study was to:

- i. Examine the impact of applying the taxonomy of teaching techniques on learners’ classroom participation



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Research Question

The following questions are expected to be answered:

- i. Which of the techniques teachers often employed while teaching?
- ii. What observable participatory traits the learners exhibit during the lessons observed?

Methodology

This study is an observational survey. The researchers were interested in the occurrence of active engagement of the learners as the teacher present appropriated techniques. Data were collected using ‘check-list’ containing how often the teachers employed the teaching techniques for learners’ active engagement. The researchers used tally for the frequency of occurrence accordingly to show application of any of the techniques during lesson (in both real classroom observation and video recorded observation). The lessons were video recorded to re-observe the activities in case some were not captured during the physical observation considering the large number of the participants (learners). The tally was as thus: \emptyset for 0; / for 1; // or 2; /// for 3; //// for 4; #### for 5; ##### / for 6 and so on. Intake class was considered to make observation in as natural manner as possible. However, the consent of the teacher was sought before the observation. The researchers observed 4 lesson periods in one intake class (40 minutes per lesson) of 42 learners who were in the first year of Basic Junior Secondary Education in Federal Low-Cost Junior Secondary School, Maiduguri. Data collected were analysed using the frequency count.

Discussion of Findings

Table 1: Teacher’s Use of Teaching Techniques During Lesson

DIRECTING TECHNIQUE		Frequency
1.	Teacher starts from deductive to inductive.	/
2.	Learning instructions are clear and precise.	///
3.	Teacher listens attentively when learners ask questions.	###
4.	The teacher directs learners to do task/answer question by themselves.	///
5.	Teacher gives clear directives on how to response to question/ do assignment.	/
6.	Assignment deadline is clear and strictly adhered to by teacher.	////
7.	Teacher lectures throughout the lesson period.	### ## //
8.	Learners are allowed to listen to the teacher’s reading.	### ///
9.	Learners are allowed to take note of the lecture.	### ///
10.	Teacher assigns reading task.	//
11.	Video/audio are played as lesson presentation.	\emptyset
12.	Learners are allowed to listen to audio/video.	\emptyset
13.	Teacher physically demonstrates some examples.	///
14.	The learners do role play to illustrate some content.	<u>0</u>
15.	The learners are told the objectives of the lesson.	//
16.	Learners are told how they should be evaluated.	\emptyset
DISCUSSION TECHNIQUE:		Frequency
17.	The teacher asks probing question.	\emptyset
18.	The questions are yes/no type questions.	///
19.	Learners are encouraged to have discussion.	///
20.	The discussions are logical.	//
21.	Teacher identifies dominant student.	\emptyset
22.	Teacher redirects response of dominant learners for massive engagement.	//
23.	Learners are encouraged to create questions.	/
24.	Teacher uses clickers (easy way of engaging the learners through posing multiple-choice question).	\emptyset
DELEGATING TECHNIQUE:		Frequency
25.	Teacher groups learners for team work;	\emptyset
26.	Teacher allows learners to tell or write what they can do on a project given to them.	\emptyset

Based on the data in table 1, directing technique was the most frequently used technique in the class observed more than both discussion and delegation techniques. The result reveals that the teachers were frequently directing the learners by using lecture method and only allowing them to listen, making the lesson teacher-centred. This goes to show that the learners jotted notes rather than being actively engaged in the learning processes. Many of the skills that engage learners,



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such as application of audio-video, role play, as well as informing learners how the learning could be evaluated appeared zero throughout the lessons observed. Furthermore, the teachers did not encourage discussion through asking probing questions or created avenue for asking questions or triggered class discussion by the use of clickers during the lesson.

Table 2: Learners' Observable Participation Traits

Observable traits	Frequency
1. Learners attend lesson.	### ///
2. Learners listen attentively.	### ////
3. No side talks.	///
4. Learners raise hand.	//
5. Responding to questions.	//
6. Asking question.	///
7. Seeking clarification from teacher or peer.	//
8. Following instruction.	////
9. Doing classroom work.	/
10. Working or discussing in group.	0
11. Making presentation.	0

Data in Table 2 reveals that the learners passively participated during the lesson. Class attendance was impressive – they attentively listened to the domination of the teacher; but, they seldom asked questions but for clarification; and, they were not inquisitive. The learners are trained to be obedient by following instruction with inquiry. Active classroom participation seemed to be nil (zero). No student was demanded to make presentation, work in group or have group discussion.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, the study concludes that generally the learners were not actively engaged – no active participation from the learners throughout the lesson. This could be due to the fact that the teachers had not employed techniques that trigger the learners' curiosity to be fully engaged in the teaching. This agrees with the position of Barata, Gama, Jorge, and Gonçalves (2017). The study concluded that the teachers employed the use of the lower learning task experience (directing technique) rather than the medium learning task experience (discussion technique) or higher learning task experience (Delegating technique). This is why the lessons were not engaging the learners actively, and considered teacher-dominant lesson as identified in the study of Otukile-Mongwaketse (2018). The need for active learner participation in classroom as opined by Sahlström (2002) is lacking in the lesson. As pointed out by Mustapha et al. (2010), application of higher learning task experience encoaugres active participation. In fact, Mustapha et. al maintain that there no right or wrong teaching technique and that application of all or any is situational and dependent on factors. Therefore, teachers should learn how and when to apply appropriate teaching technique (Killen & O'Toole, 2023) to improve participation (Ali, Iqbal, Avaz, & Saiid, 2022; Mustapha et al., 2010) which breed effecive learning (Hopkins, 2023).

Recommendations

Based on the conclusion of this study, the following recommendations are put forth:

1. Teachers should gradually transcend from lower to higher learning task for the learners to be actively engaged.
2. Teachers should note that all techniques are right and applicable but they are factor-dependent.
3. Teachers should also allow learners to be able to freely and actively be engaged and invite them for participation.
4. Teachers should recognise learners by name, group them, give projects and other similar tasks to promote active participation as well as to develop learners' learning interest.
5. Teachers should understand that engaging learners starts from simple response to questions to project execution.

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