

Instructional Strategies and Resource Utility in Language Teaching among Basic Educators in 21st Century Nigeria

OFODU, Graceful Onovughe

Ph.D, Institute of Education, Faculty of Education, Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria

E-mail: ofodugraceful@yahoo.com

Received: March 10, 2012

Accepted: March 31, 2012

Published: May 1, 2012

doi:10.5539/elt.v5n5p79

URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5539/elt.v5n5p79>

Abstract

Learning in the twenty-first century demands learning skills, strategies and utilizing resources which learners can deploy when they leave the school environment. The paper investigates the instructional strategies and resources employed by teachers in teaching and learning English Studies at the basic level of Nigeria's educational system. It emphasizes the place of instructional strategies and resources at this level. The descriptive research design of the survey type was used. All pupils and teachers in Irepodun/Ifelodun primary schools constituted the population for the study. One hundred and sixty pupils were purposively sampled from four schools in the population. A self-designed questionnaire was the instrument employed for data collection. Two research questions were generated. Data collected were analyzed using frequency counts and percentages.

Keywords: Strategies, Resources, Educators, Utility, Basic Education, Learners, School location

1. Introduction

Basic Education is the Universal Education Programme of the Federal Government of Nigeria whereby primary and junior secondary school students have access to free and compulsory education. This level of education is very foundational and crucial to any serious-minded government, persons and society. This is because the rest of the education system is built on it, therefore it is the key to the success or failure of the whole system of education (NPE, 2004). Prominent among the goals of this level of education are to inculcate permanent literacy and numeracy, and ability to communicate effectively; lay a sound basis for scientific and reflective thinking and give the child opportunities for developing manipulative skills.

One of the core subjects of Basic Education is English Language. The aims of the English Language curriculum among others are to ensure the inculcation of permanent literacy and the ability to communicate effectively in children in order to ensure their effective participation in social interaction and national development. Gidado (2002) asserted that the Universal Basic Education will create more access for children to various components of basic education so that they can avail themselves of learning certain modern skills and attitudes. Few among the skills are problem solving, collaboration, communication, social, leadership, media and information skills. These skills are translated into the classroom by the effective teachers' use of instructional strategies and resources.

Instructional strategies are techniques, methods and skills teachers employ in the teaching and learning process. Teachers are expected to have a repertoire of strategies that would make class control possible, learning active and participatory since learners learn at different rates and ways.

But observation and research have revealed that the most frequently used instructional strategy in schools is the chalk and talk or lecture method (Mahmood, 2010). Current thinking and the realities of the 21st century present us with the fact that instruction can no longer remain at this level. In addition, learning in the twenty-first century demands learning some skills which some call 21st century skills. More so, children by their nature cannot be kept in a classroom where everything is monotonous and boring. Excitements and practices that support true life situations should be everyday experiences in the language classrooms. Some of the instructional strategies that can help teachers to do these are play way, role play, storytelling, demonstration, recitation, field trip, library, discussion and use of games. Play way method involves engaging students in activities that bring pleasure or enjoyment to them. Such activities include: game playing, acting a play and playing music. It is unfortunate to note that these activities in many Nigerian schools are only done during special occasions such as end-of-session ceremonies or valedictory services. Froebel and Montessori (1971) are the initiators of this method of instruction and they noted that children learn best by engaging in activities of interest and enjoyment provided in a play. It provides opportunities for

learners to identify and develop some manipulative skills they are endowed with.

Role play is the strategic use of real life situations in the classroom. It involves the imaginative use of the learner's brain to act as or pretend to be a different person. It enhances the use of language in difficult contexts. It encourages learners to use natural expressions and serves as medium of communication based on actions and words (Salmon, 2004).

The strategic use of songs provides a good means of inculcating good pronunciation and retention skills since it is an enjoyable strategy for learners. Learners enjoying reciting poems especially when it is presented with enthusiasm coupled with demonstrations and pictures (Dada, 2001). A picture tells a million stories. Field trips or excursions are useful in realizing both cognitive and affective objectives. Learners may develop a sense of better relationship with one another and teachers (Omosewo, 2004)

Instructional resources are those practical aids that the classroom teacher deploys in the process of teaching in order to reduce excessive talking especially in abstract subjects such as languages including English language. Due to the abstract nature of language, the teacher must let the pupils see real objects, handle them, move them about, even make them, and above all, they do bodily actions (Adenigbagbe, 1997).

Resources function as stimuli and support for both teacher and learner during the teaching-learning process (Ogunnaike, 2000). Implied in this is the fact that Instructional resources are important catalysts for stimulating the learners' interest, piloting his attitude towards the positive side, thus increasing his motivation for learning especially among young learners of between 9 and 11 years. Classroom teachers would be more effective in English Language teaching if practical aids are used generously in the classroom activities so that pupils are not made to become mere speculators admiring the smooth-moving lips of their teacher of English.

There is a general belief that for any subject to be taught properly in the primary and post primary schools in this country, the subject teacher must employ audio – visual materials to supplement his verbal presentation. Audio – visual materials are considered so vital to teaching and learning that there is scarcely any ministry of education in this country that does not have an audio – visual unit (Adu, 2002). But the question is how many of these aids are practically provided in schools? Are they not just kept in these units for show casing the government's efforts? Where they are available, how many teachers utilize them? How frequently do teachers utilize them? These are some of the questions this research seeks to answer.

Dada (2001) asserts that instructional resources are of high utility value in the classroom and so the classroom teacher should have recourse to them as frequently as possible. To effectively teach English, there is the need for effective utilization of instructional strategies and resources in order to make acquisition of knowledge and comprehension easy.

Yet, experience has shown that many language teachers are forced to work in classroom situations where facilities such as textbooks, desks, seats and working materials are either not available or in short supply. However, there are some schools where these resources are available but how frequently do teachers utilize them is one of the concerns of this research. Again, the study hopes to investigate the type and frequency of use of instructional strategies because a combination of these variables in any classroom will make learning desirable, pleasurable and durable.

Several studies have been done in respect of instructional strategies as well as resources but none has combined these two variables together in order to know how these two are used. For instance, Adu (2002) investigated the extent to which audio – visual materials are used in the teaching of economics in our secondary schools and also to find out the economics teachers' perception of the benefits of audio – visual materials to the teaching of economics. 30 secondary schools were visited (both private and public) and 100 questionnaires were administered to economics teachers. Out of these 80 were recovered. The frequency was converted to percentage in order to analyze the results. It was found out that audiovisual materials are of great importance in the teaching of economics and that economics teachers appreciate the impact that the audio – visual materials have on the learning process. It was also discovered that the economics teachers make use of diagrams often due to its relevance, effectiveness and availability.

Adeosun and Oreowo (2008) investigated the effectiveness of the video tape and picture instructional strategies on junior Secondary school students' academic performance in Christian Religious Studies. The purpose was to determine which of the video with discussion method, picture instructional strategy with discussion method and the conventional method could be consider as effective for the teaching of Christian Religious Studies. The study made use of the pretest, posttest and control group quasi – experimental design. 180 JSS 2 students were randomly selected into two experimental and one control group. A 45 item text designed and validated by the researchers and some professional was used to collect the data. Data collected were analyzed using ANCOVA and post hoc analyses using Scheffe's multiple tests for pair wise comparisons. Two hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05

probability level. Result of data analyses showed the combination of video tape with discussion method was most effective among the methods used in teaching and learning of Christian religious Studies. Based on the findings, it was recommended that the video tape with discussion method should be used for teaching Christian Religious Studies in Secondary Schools. In addition, the government should provide videotape and picture instructional strategies to aid the teaching and learning of Christian Religious Studies.

Ofodu and Adeniyi (2008) in their study on personality and environmental variables influencing reading found that the instructional practices of teachers, lack of reading centers, reading groups and libraries constituted great hinderances to reading. Lack of libraries in school paralyzed many teachers' efforts in using the libraries as instructional strategies. Library use has been found to assist learners' knowledge, improve pupils reading, vocabulary and facilitate social integration.

Oyinloye and Ajayi (2008) investigated the effects of audio instructional packages on the academic achievements of students in listening skills in Junior Secondary Schools in Ekiti State. The study determined the ability of the students to produce correct articulation of sounds and writing of correct spellings after they were taught with audio instructional packages which aim at improving the listening of the students. The study was quasi experimental which involves a population of forty – four thousand, three hundred and eighty six students. The schools for the study were selected through stratified random sampling techniques and a sample of three hundred and twenty students was selected for the study. Two hypotheses were formulated for the study and the Data collected were subjected to t-test statistics. It was discovered that students taught with the audio instructional packages were able to produce sounds better than those not exposed to audio instructional packages. It was also discovered that female were better listeners than their male counterparts. The study recommends that English Language teachers should teach listening skills at the junior secondary schools using audio instructional packages produced by at least near native speakers.

Oluwagbohunmi (2008) examined the availability and utilization of instructional materials in teaching social studies in secondary schools and found that few instructional materials were available in schools and among the few only textbooks were often used by teachers.

A cursory look at literature revealed that researchers have examined the place of instructional materials in various subjects in education but none of these studies have investigated the degree of frequency of instructional strategies alongside with the resources in the light of 21st century skills. Even the ones done in English studies were limited to only a language skill. Again, the locale and sample sizes used in the studies reviewed are quite different from the current study.

1.1 Research Method

The survey research design was utilized. The population for the study was all primary schools in Irepodun/Ifelodun local government area in Ekiti state. Four primary schools were purposively sampled from this population based on school location. A total of one hundred and sixty pupils and their teachers were involved in the study. The instrument used for collection of data was copies of questionnaire. This instrument was a validated and reliable one used by Oluwatayo (2009). Using Cronbach alpha the reliability coefficient of 0.83 was obtained and found reliable for this study. The instrument tagged "QIRTES" had two sections. Section A elicited responses on rural and urban schools and sex, while section B required respondents to tick Very Frequently Used (VFU), Frequently Used (FU), Not Frequently Used (NFU). Data collected were analyzed using percentage and frequency counts while t-test statistical analysis was used to analyze the two hypotheses formulated.

1.1.1 Analysis Results

Research question 1: What instructional strategies do teachers frequently use in teaching English Studies?

Table 1 shows that educators use the following instructional strategies very frequently: chalk and talk, play way, demonstration, assignment, storytelling and songs while the least frequently used strategies are learning through media, library, excursion and field trip. It also showed that learning in group, the use of recitations and role play are not frequently used.

Research question 2: What instructional resources do teachers frequently use in teaching English Studies?

Table 2 reveals that the most frequent material used by teachers are chalkboards(94%); textbooks(78%); diagrams(63%); real objects(61%) while the not frequently used materials are filmstrip(75%); videotapes(74%) computers(73%); the use of posters, bulletins and movable boards to not frequently utilized in schools.

Hypothesis Testing: The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance

Hypothesis 1: There is no difference between the instructional strategies used by teachers in urban and rural basic

schools during English classes.

Table 3 shows that t -cal (3.21) is greater than t -tab (1.98). This shows that there is difference between instructional strategies used by teachers in rural and urban primary schools.

Hypothesis 2: There is no difference between the instructional resources used by teachers in urban and rural basic schools during English classes.

Table 4 indicates that t -cal (5.71) is greater than t -tab (1.98). This shows that there is difference between instructional resources used by teachers in rural and urban primary schools.

2. Discussion and Conclusion

The result is quite revealing as it shows that basic educators know their onions as many of them utilize the recommended instructional strategies such as play way, demonstration, assignment, storytelling and songs. One possible reason for this development might be the constant workshops organized by the federal and state governments for primary school teachers to update and upgrade the strategies and resources used in teaching.

However, the result showed that basic educators are still living in the past as they do not frequently use strategies such as learning through media, library, excursion and field trip. It also showed that learning in group, the use of recitations and role play are not frequently used to instruct learners. We live in age called knowledge and information age, where computers have assumed a strong and constant presence in daily activities of human beings. Computers contain the necessary ingredients to push the change that schools need in the 21st century. Instruction has gone beyond the teacher standing in front of a group of learners disseminating information to them without the students' adequate participation Ajayi & Ekundayo (2010). The finding on teachers' infrequent utilization of libraries as instructional strategies and resources confirms that of Ofodu and Adeniyi (2008). More so, the use of excursions and field trips should be greatly encourage, therefore it must not be seen as something to be used only once in a blue moon as this will not help learning. Excursion and fieldtrips to places within the community should be frequently utilized in everyday instruction. Children who are instructed to work in groups will develop social and cultural skills with which they will work appropriately and productively with others. This will assist in bridging cultural differences and encourage the use of differing perspectives to increase innovation at work (Mahmood, 2010).

The finding agrees with Oluwagbohunmi (2008) that textbooks were the most frequently used instructional resources in schools. This is not good enough as most of the learners sometimes come to school without a single textbook. All forms of electronic gadgets are completely not utilized may be because of the none availability or the inappropriate power supply that would make it functional.

The findings revealed that school location plays a significant role in the use of instructional strategies and resources. The probable reason for this might be that teachers in the rural area may not have access to innovative strategies and resources.

3. Conclusion and Recommendations

It can be concluded that the instructional strategies and resources utilized by basic educators are to some extent in compliance with what is recommended but basically out of fashion with the current realities of the 21st century. Based on this, it is recommended that government at all levels should give attention to current and innovative strategies and valuable resources that would make learning participatory, collaborative and learners ICT compliance.

References

- Adenigbagbe, O. G. (1997). *The teaching of English in elementary school*. Abeokuta: Goad Education Publisher.
- Adeosun, O. V., & Oreowo, J. A. (2008). Effectiveness of video tape and picture instructional strategies in junior secondary school students' achievement in Christian religious studies. *Research in Curriculum Studies*, 5(1), 160-167.
- Adu, E. O. (2002). Audio visual materials in the teaching of Economics in Oyo state secondary schools. *Ibadan Journal of Educational Studies*, 2(1), 495-503.
- Ajayi, I. A., & Ekundayo, H. T. (2010). *Contemporary issues in educational management*. Lagos: Bolabay Publishers.
- Dada, A. (2000). Dealing with the influences of mother tongue in the learning of English. In A. Dada & F. Fasanmi (Eds), *The practical and effective strategies for teaching Oral English in Primary Schools*. Ogun: Olaf Publishers.
- Froebel, F., & Montessori, M. (1971). *The encyclopedia of education*.
- Gidado, T. (2002). UBE Mandate, achievements and constraints of the programme. *UBE Digest* 2(2), 12-16.

Mahmood, A. (2010). *Teachers' handbook*. Pakistan: Qurban & Surraya Educational Trust.

Ofodu, G. O., & Adeniyi, F. A. (2008). Impact of personality and environmental variables on learners' reading abilities. *Journal of Educational Foundations and Management*, 6(1), 195-201.

Ogunnaike, J. (2000). Material resources method of teaching Oral English in the primary school. In A. Dada & F. Fasanmi (Eds), *The Practical and Effective Strategies for Teaching Oral English in Primary Schools*. Ogun: Olaf Publishers.

Oluwagbohunmi, M. F. (2008). Availability and utilization of instructional materials in social studies in Ekiti state secondary schools. *Nigerian Journal of Counseling and Applied Psychology*, 4(1), 47-56.

Oluwatayo, J. A. (2009). Assessing teacher's degrees of emphasis on assessment techniques senior secondary school chemistry. *International Journal of Research in Education*, 1(1), 102-109.

Omosewo, E. O. (2004). Formal instructional methods III. In I. O. Abimbola & A. O. Abolade (Eds), *Fundamental principles & practice*. Ilorin: University of Ilorin.

Oyinloye, G. O., & Ajayi, O. S. (2008). Effects of audio – instructional packages on the academic achievements of Junior Secondary Students in listening skills in English. *Research in Curriculum Studies*, 5(1), 219-228.

Salmon, M. F. (2004). Formal instructional methods II. In I. O. Abimbola & A. O. Abolade (Eds), *Fundamental principles & practice*. Ilorin: University of Ilorin.

Table 1. Instructional strategies used in English lessons

S/N	Instructional Strategies	VFU	%	FU	%	NFU	%
1.	Play way*	117	73	30	19	13	8
2.	Demonstration*	126	79	22	14	12	7
3.	Field trip	43	27	64	40	53	93
4.	Chalk and talk*	125	78	23	14	12	8
5.	Assignment *	120	75	26	16	14	9
6.	Learning in groups	33	21	60	37	67	42
7.	Learning through media	14	9	25	16	121	75
8.	Library method	13	8	52	33	95	59
9.	Learning through story*	97	61	50	31	13	8
10.	Learning through song*	96	60	52	33	12	7
11.	Gaming and simulation	66	41	64	40	30	19
12.	Learning through excursion	16	10	34	21	110	60
13.	Learning through recitation	65	41	57	36	38	23
14.	Competitive method	70	44	56	35	34	21
15.	Role play method	34	21	61	38	65	41

*Signifying most frequently used strategies at a glance

Tables about Research question 2: What instructional resources do teachers frequently use in teaching English Studies?

Table 2. Instructional resources and frequency of use

S/N	Instructional Resources	VFU	%	FU	%	NFU	%
1.	Chalkboard	151	94*	6	4	3	2
2.	Maps	36	22	72	45	52	33
3.	Charts	62	39	82	51	16	10
4.	Computer	14	9	29	18	117	73*
5.	Picture	86	54*	41	26	33	20
6.	Movable board	16	10	40	25	104	65*
7.	Real objects	97	61*	24	15	39	24
8.	Bulletin	18	12	55	34	87	54
9.	Diagram	101	63*	44	28	15	9
10.	Poster	32	20	86	54	42	26
11.	Textbook	124	78*	23	14	13	8
12.	Resource person	77	48	55	34	28	18
13.	Film strip	26	16	15	9	119	75*
14.	Video tape	28	17	14	9	118	74*

Table 3.

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Df	t-cal	t-tab	Decision
Rural	63	33.49	1.92	98	3.21	1.98	*Sig
Urban	37	33.94	2.58				

Table 4.

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Df	t-cal	t-tab	Decision
Rural	63	28.25	3.17	98	5.71	1.98	*Sig
Urban	37	31.65	2.28				