EFFECTIVE STUDENT-CENTRED STRATEGIES FOR ENHANCING QUALITATIVE TEACHING AND LEARNING OF BUSINESS EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

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Abstract
Teaching and learning are the most important activities in the educational enterprise. Business education is a skill course which requires practical application of knowledge. Overemphasizing the use of the teacher-centred techniques is ineffective and negatively affects students' perception of the practical aspects of the discipline. This paper thus, looks at how student-centred techniques such as discovery, problem-solving, project, field trip, simulation and role play methods could improve the quality of teaching and learning of Business education in Nigeria. As a way forward, the paper suggests that there should be increase in fund voted for Business education programme, the use of student-centred approaches should be encouraged, available resources should be adequately utilized, plan should be made and implemented and there should be good class control and management.
Key words: *student-centred strategies, qualitative, teaching, learning, Business Education*

Introduction
Teaching and learning are the major activities in a country's educational system. This implies that teaching and learning are the most important activities in educational enterprise. This is due to the fact that teaching and learning contribute toward generation, transmission and application of knowledge which are the focal points of a nation's educational objective. The productivity of the teachers (teaching) and the skills acquired by the learners (learning) also determine the quality of a country's education. This is because they have influence on effectiveness of the educational system and may also be used in categorizing the standard of a country's education as being high or low.

Teaching leads to learning. It has to do with exchange of ideas between a teacher and a student(s). According to Ifeagbu in National Open University (NOUN) (2008),

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teaching deals with series of activities which are directed toward helping the students to acquire skills on how to learn. In line with this, Aliyu (2013a) is of the opinion that teaching is the process of imparting knowledge in the classroom. Similarly, Msheliza (2015) reports that teaching could be seen as a practical activity whose goal is to bring about learning through indicating the content to be learnt and presenting it using a method(s) which could help the learner to acquire the desired skill(s).Teaching could be done using the Teacher-centred technique in which the teacher dominates the teaching process and play active roles while the learners pay attention and play passive roles. It could also be done using the Student-centred technique which gives opportunities to the students to play active roles and participate immensely in the teaching-learning process, while the teachers serve as facilitators. Learning deals with skills acquisition leading to desired change in behaviour. As deduced from NOUN (2008), learning is a behavioural change which is occasioned by experience. This shows that it is a product of teacher-students' interaction in the classroom. Based on this, Aliyu (2013b) states that learning is relatively permanent and it is manifested by an ability to do what one cannot do before.

It is no longer news that a number of factors affect teaching and learning in Nigeria. These problems thus, affect the quality of education provided in Nigeria. According to Omo-ojugo and Ohiwerei (2008), the dominant use of expository method which always put a teacher in control is ineffective and it negatively affects students' perception of the practical aspect of Business education. To avoid this situation, earlier in 2004, Osuala suggests the use of student-centred methods in teaching General Business education. This is because Osuala (2004) is of the notion that learning would be most effective if the adopted methodology emphasizes the actions and activities of the students as opposed to those of the teacher. Effective teaching-learning condition also depends on the ability of a teacher to motivate the learners to pick interest in learning. It is therefore, based on the foregoing, the desire of contributing towards enhancing qualitative teaching and learning in Nigeria and the fact that student-centred approaches would enable students to pick interest in learning since it is based on the principle of "do it yourself", that this paper focuses on student-centred approaches as effective strategies for improving and enhancing qualitative teaching and learning of Business education in Nigeria.

Concept of Business Education

Business education is a component of vocational education. It is offered in Nigerian schools at the secondary and tertiary levels of education. Business education leads to development, understanding and acquisition of skills and attitude which will enable the recipient to enter into the business world or teaching profession in order to earn a living. According to Okiridu, Ikpo and Onwuchekwa (2012), Business education offers training in Office management and technology, Marketing and advertisement,

Information and communication technology, General education, Computer, Classroom activities, Entrepreneurship and General business. It should be noted that Business education also teaches Accounting and Management studies. Okiridu, Ikpo and Onwuchekwa (2012) also state that the goals of Business education are to enable the students:

1. To play productive role in a free enterprise economy.
2. To keep simple records of financial and other transactions in the office and operates and cater for office machines and equipment.
3. To recognize values and demonstrate responsibility in duties assigned to them.
4. To apply various business concepts acquired in class to real life situation.
5. To acquire skills and the competencies required for the performance of basic business jobs such as taking administrative decisions and dealing with correspondences.

It could be seen from the foregoing that Business education is a skill course which could lead to development of practical skills necessary for enhancing the much desired development in Nigeria.

Influence of Student-centred Techniques on Teaching and learning of Business Education

The student-centred teaching technique is known as the learner-centred method. This is because it gives much preference to the activities that are carried out by the learners. According to NOUN (2008), the methods make the learners to be more active than the teacher during the teaching-learning process. The methods also give chance for discussions, debates and questioning by the students. In the same vein, Aliyu (2013a) states that this method encourages students' participation in teaching-learning process which leads to initiation of ideas and expression of opinions by students which are scrutinized and clarified by the teacher in a conducive atmosphere. Since Business education is a skill course, it is expected that the learner-centred techniques would lead to proper teaching and learning of the discipline. This owes to the fact that the techniques stimulate learners to simulate real world working, contextualize problems and make meanings from the facts collected. The following therefore explain the influence of some student-centred teaching methods on the teaching and learning of Business education.

Discovery Method

This is an element of inductive teaching approach. As deduced from Singh (2007), this method is based on the assumption that a learner should be told little and be encouraged to learn the rest by himself. He also states that the discovery method leads to the achievement of higher order cognitive objective. It is in line with this that NOUN (2008) states that the discovery method enables the teacher to prescribe solution(s) to a problem(s) which would be tried out by the students in order to stimulate them to reason out what the teacher planned to teach, determine the relationships between concepts and

draw valid conclusions. Similarly, Msheliza (2015) points out that the discovery method gives opportunity to the learners to make independent use of their mental ability to contribute to knowledge and principles which could provide answers to problems with little guidance from the teacher. Singh (2007) states that this method is appropriate for teaching Commerce, while NOUN (2008) points out that it could be used in teaching Shorthand and Typewriting. It should however, be noted that the method could be used in teaching and learning of all the components of Business education. This is because it makes it possible for the learners to better understand what the teacher wants them to learn through comparing, evaluating and analyzing the information they receive. This method can therefore enhance and improve the quality of teaching and learning of Business education due to the fact that it leads to adequate thought and planning on the part of the teacher and stimulation of the learners to proffer solutions to problems on their own which leads to creativity.

Problem-solving Method

The problem-solving method is a deductive strategy through which the teacher presents concepts and principles to the class and gives the students the opportunity of applying them to solve problems. This implies that the teachers only facilitate, guide and supervise the students when applying the concepts and principles. According to Osuala (2004), the problem-solving method is used for developing students' ability to carry out independent thinking, analysis and decision making. Similarly, Singh (2007) points out that it aims at stimulating reflective thinking on the part of the students in order to arrive at a solution to a problem. NOUN (2008) also states that the method is used for developing concepts and judgement which would lead to cognitive development. This is because an ability to solve a problem could lead to solution of a similar problem. Osuala (2004) is of the view that this method is useful in teaching Book-keeping, Insurance and Business Mathematics. In the same vein, NOUN (2008) points out that it could be used in teaching and learning of Shorthand and Typewriting, while Aliyu (2013a) is of conviction that it is appropriate for teaching Shorthand. This method could be used in enhancing and improving the quality of teaching and learning of Business education owing to the fact that it would create an enabling environment for the learners to apply what they were taught. Finally, the method would stimulate the students to be active, develop the habit of independent study and views, learn at their respective rate and apply their previous knowledge in similar situation(s). It is expected that these would lead to creative thinking and discoveries which could improve instruction and production of competent manpower that would be useful to the society.

Project Method

This method takes cognizance of students' differences in terms of ability and interest (Osuala, 2004). It is based on this that Singh (2007) states that it is an activity

willingly carried out by the student(s) and lays emphasis on learning by doing. In the same vein, Efanga (2010) points out that it is an individualized method of instruction in which a student naturally carries out an activity based on experience, through application of knowledge with the zeal of achieving some predetermined objectives under the guidance of a teacher. This method could be used in enhancing and improving the quality of teaching and learning of Business education since it gives free hand to students, which leads to autonomy. This method is also flexible and leads to generalization which could enhance breakthrough in specific areas of Business education. This is because Ajileye (2012) states that the project method is a practical approach to learning new concepts and it involves investigation and problem solving by an individual or a small group of people.

Field Trip

This method is also called excursion method. According to NOUN (2008), this method enables a teacher to make use of community resources to make teaching to be more meaningful and allow students to experience concrete practical illustrations of theoretical skills acquired in the classroom. To Aliyu (2013a), this method is used because not all learning resources are available within the four walls of the classroom. The field trip or excursion is thus a process of visiting or taking trip(s) to a place(s) where such materials could be found. This method makes teaching and learning to be more effective and enables the students to observe, classify, collect data, study relationships and manipulate objects. Field trip is mostly used in teaching and learning of Commerce and Office practice. Although this method is expensive and difficult to plan, it could be effective in teaching and learning Business education in the sense that seeing is "believing" and the students would get practical touch of the theories they learnt in the classroom. It is expected that this process would create indelible marks in the minds of the learners. This method is therefore a potent tool for enhancing and improving the quality of teaching and learning of Business education in Nigeria.

Simulation and Role Play Methods

In making use of these methods, a teacher could create situation which looks like a real one (simulation) and asks the class to demonstrate the condition in order to make teaching and learning more meaningful (role playing). Role playing requires adequate planning and the students must be fully involved in it. This explains why Singh (2007) states that roles should be assigned according to the taste, attitude, aptitude and inclination of the students. He also states that role playing style could be dramatic (which is in form of drama), exemperous (where students are made to play some roles without prior practice) or surprise (where students are suddenly made to play other people's roles. Osuala (2004) is of the notion that simulation and role play methods could be used in teaching and learning of banking, and other business environments. To Singh (2007), the role play method is useful for teaching topics such as Insurance, Bank, Book store, Trade, Company and Post office. Finally, NOUN (2008) sees Simulation and Role Play methods

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as being most useful in teaching and learning Commerce and Office Practice. These methods could aid toward improving and enhancing qualitative teaching and learning of Business education. This is because the method could lead to development of affective, cognitive and psychomotor domains of learning. The realization of these, leads to fruitfulness in teaching and learning exercise which would ultimately make the exercise to be meaningful.

Conclusion

Business education is a skill base course whose teaching and learning requires pragmatic efforts. Overemphasizing the use of teacher-centred approaches does not augur well for the programme and as such calls for emphasis on the use of student-centred techniques such as discovery, problem-solving, project, field trip, simulation and role play methods. The implication of this is that, for Nigeria to realize the objectives of Business education, efforts should be made toward effective and efficient use of the learner-centred strategies. The expectation is that they would improve the quality of teaching and learning of Business education, which would in turn lead to qualitative education in Nigeria. Failure to this, may spell doom for Business education programme in Nigeria because much emphasis may not be laid on the students who are to acquire the skills being impacted by the teachers.

Recommendations

Based on the foregoing, coupled with the benefits that are associated with the use of student-centred techniques, the following recommendations are suggested as the way forward:

Increase in Funding

As a skill course, Business education requires a lot fund. The efficacy of the student-centred approaches, especially the field trip, simulation and role play methods requires much fund and provision of necessary teaching resources. The government at all level (Federal, State and Local Government) should therefore, vote more fund for the Business education programme. This could also be supported by wealthy individuals through providing endowment funds which would make adoption of the student-centred techniques viable.

Encouraging the Use of Student-Centred Techniques

Educational policy makers and administrators should encourage the use of student-centred strategies. If this is done, the teachers would stimulate the students to play active roles in the educational enterprise and as such a tool for improving the quality of instruction and learning.

Effective use Utilization of Available Resources

The teachers should ensure that the available teaching resources are effectively and efficiently utilized. A strict adherence to this would enhance qualitative teaching and learning through the use of student-centred approaches.

Plans should be Made and Implemented

The teachers should map out strategies for effective realization of teaching objectives using the student-centred techniques. The teachers should ensure that the plans are religiously implemented following the steps and procedures earlier mapped out. This implies that the teachers are not expected to surrender their responsibilities to the students. They should be part of the process right from beginning to the end.

There Should be Good Class Control and Management

The teachers should use their positions as facilitators, supervisors and influencers to ensure that there is proper class control and management. This is because if these are not done, some students may not pay attention and be committed to the teaching-learning activities. The class may also go out of hand and the students may be attacking one another during discussions, which could make teaching and learning to be ineffective

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