PRIOR PRESENTATION OF BEHAVIOURAL OBJECTIVES: A MEANS TO ENHANCE ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AND RETENTION IN SOCIAL STUDIES EDUCATION

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Abstract

Teaching and learning is an art which requires a lot of methods, techniques and strategies. Prior Presentation of Behavioural Objectives has been contemplated as a means to enhance academic achievement and retention in Social Studies in this study. Two research questions and two hypotheses were formulated and tested at .05 level of significance. The subjects were made up of twenty nine thousand, five hundred and eighty JSIII students. The sample of the study was a total of forty JS111 students in four secondary schools in Uyo Senatorial District of Akwa Ibom State. The instruments were validated by experts, one in measurement and evaluation in the School of Education, College of Education, Afaha Nsit, two in the University of Uyo, Uyo. The reliability coefficient of .96 was obtained using Split Half Statistical Method. Data generated were subjected to descriptive statistics and analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA). The findings include that prior presentation of behavioural objectives to students should become a common practice in lesson delivery in all subject areas. It was recommended that Social Studies teachers should always present behavioural objectives to their students ahead of lesson so that students would learn and understand what is expected of them and do it by the end of the lesson.

Education is widely regarded as a veritable instrument for social change, national development and national integration. As a result of the fact that society and its many structures and institutions are subject to constant change, the educational process which serves as an engine of change must be dynamic and sensitive to societal expectations, aspirations and goals. There is also the need for evolving new methods, approaches and techniques aimed at improving the quality of the teaching learning process. School programmes and other pedagogical functions according to Olofu (2003) are guided by purposeful and expected outcomes such as positive change in behaviour, values and skills as well as acquisition of knowledge.

Since ancient time, educators have been interested in pedagogical techniques and ideas about how human beings learn best. They also outlined some steps for successful learning that teachers must follow if students are to learn materials, (Khader, 2010). One of these pedagogical techniques and ideas is setting learning objectives before the commencement of instruction. These objectives may be written in various forms. The forms are: (1) As aims (2) As goal, and (3) As objectives.

Aims, goals and objectives help to make dreams come true but, although interrelated, there are distinctions between them.

Aims tend to be more general than goals and objectives, because the latter terms relate to more specific tasks, while aims according to Marsh (2007) are broad outcomes which are achievable in the long run. Aims are vague, ambiguous and are usually achieved after a very long time. Goals are clear statement of intent and are more specific than aims. A goal is a broad statement that describes what the learner will gain from instruction, while objective is the steps needed to get there, (Marzona and Kendall, 2007). Objectives are the activities earned out to bring aims and goals to function. Objectives are usually stated in a more concrete, specific and measurable terms. According to Schunk (2011) specific and clear objectives are more likely to enhance performance. Therefore, clearly defined objectives form the learning activities and assessment measures. Such objectives are referred to as behavioural objectives.
An objective is simply a result or consequence of an action or process. Behavioural objectives are that result from learning processes. Aiken (2000) opined that learning objectives are statements that predict what learners would have gained as a result of learning. No wonder therefore that behavioural objective has become an essential component of the lesson plan.

Lesson planning involves the setting of objectives while other components of the plan deal with how to achieve the set objectives and how to know if the objectives have been achieved. A learning objective answers the question: what is it that your students are expected to do at the end of the lesson that they could not do before? They usually form the starting point of a lesson plan for effective teaching. Yusuf (2012) observed that statement of learning objectives performs the following functions among others, namely, guiding the teacher relative to the design of instruction, and for evaluation.

Egonmwan (2008) asserted that education is not only the potent instrument for human socialization and development; it is also the means of self-actualization and self-reliance. The major teaching functions include instruction, classroom management, student socialization and disciplinary intervention. Classroom teaching is indeed a complex activity. Marzano (2003) upheld that teachers' actions in their classroom have twice the impact on students' achievement as school policies regarding curriculum, assessment, staff collegiality and community involvement. The dominant view of an effective teacher is the teacher who possesses a broad repertoire of techniques and is able to skillfully use these techniques to effect academic achievement of the learners. One of such expected technique is the skill in lesson presentation for which one of the components is the presentation of behavioural objective. Draper (2001) asserted that the way a teacher presents behavioural objectives in lesson delivery is one of the pedagogical skills acquired for success in teaching-learning process.

Students today have different objectives to students of a generation ago. The nature of education and training has also changed, and the tendency today is towards a more direct and straightforward emphasis on learning in the sense that the appropriateness and effectiveness of teaching is being more and more questioned, for this reason, writing precise behavioural objectives, capable of observation and measurement, is becoming increasingly important. This has been emphasized by Umeron and Ogong (2007).

A good number of students in our secondary schools have academic-problems related to retention. Seidman (2005) observed that although schools have responded to student retention issues by implementing programmes and services, retention rates have not improved. Low retention rates does not only affects students and schools that must bear the economic burden connected to school-drop-out, but also the ability of a nation to "compete in a global economy" (Friedman, 2005; Seidman, 2005). Now more than ever, school administrators and teachers must be cognizant of the reasons why students drop-out of schools and what can be done to help students overcome these barriers so they can achieve their academic and career goals. Additional research is required to determine strategies to address this issue (Tinto, 2005).

One of the most important missions of the school is to provide meaningful learning experiences for their students. Students should be actively involved in the teaching-learning programmes. One of such ways of involving students actively in the teaching-learning process may be to provide them with behavioural objectives so that they can know what is expected of them and thus work towards it.

Educators all over the world recognize the importance of behavioural objectives in the teaching-learning process. A few decades ago, the emphasis on, and attention paid to behavioural objectives have waxed and waned as different ideas change about how best to express instructional intent (Kizik, 2004). Yet not much has been done on the effect of such instructional intents on student's achievement and retention should they be presented to students prior to the lesson.
A number of studies, however, have been carried out though with conflicting results due to variation in methodology (Guat and Teh, 2000). Most studies related to behavioural objectives and students achievement are more foreign. A few indigenous ones are related to sciences. There is need to examine the same concept in the areas of social sciences.

Statement of the Problem

Ukpai (2013) lamented on the spate of poor academic performance of students in senior secondary schools in Nigeria. In fact, a survey of the performance of candidates in public examinations such as Senior Secondary Certificates Examination (SSCE) and National Examination Council (NECO) over the years reveals a discernible decline. This view has been expressed by many researchers including Nnaka and Anaekwe (2004) and Ukpai (2013). This decline of course, is in spite of the various improved instructional materials and strategies well advocated of. This phenomenon has remained a source of concern to educators, school administrators, educational experts and other educational stakeholders (Nnaka and Anaekwe, 2004). There is an overwhelming outcry from the public that the standard of education is fast falling down (Ukpai, 2013). When such arguments are raised, it is usually directed to the quality of students turned out of the schools measured in terms of academic achievement.

It is possible that our schools have monumental and artistic buildings, qualified teachers, well articulated curriculum, improved instructional materials and methods, yet students' performances have remained poor, may be because students are not usually told before the lesson what they are expected to learn and is thus left frustrated and dissatisfied. He does not know where he/she is going, he does not know how to get there, nor does he even know when he has arrived there (Onogwere, 2000). Aniashi & Umoren (2007) investigated the effect of prior presentation of behavioral objectives of a lesson on students' retention of learnt materials. Results indicated a significant enhancement in retention of learnt material. Marzano (2007) investigated the effective use of prior knowledge in teaching of Chemistry in secondary schools. He found that students' achievement scores, in classes where clear learning goals were established, presented higher than the achievement scores for students who did not have clearly established goals.

At this junction, one may ask, would prior-presentation of behavioural objectives affect students' academic achievement and retention in social studies in the secondary schools? At what time would the presentation of behavioural objectives enhance students' academic achievement and retention? It is the gap that exists between these questions that gave impetus to this study.

Purpose of the Study

This study investigated the relationship between prior presentation of behavioural objectives and students' achievement and retention. Specifically, the study sought to achieve the following objectives:

1. To determine whether prior presentation of behavioural objectives would affect students' achievement in social studies.
2. To investigate whether prior presentation of behavioural objectives would affect students' retention.

Research Questions

The study answered the following research questions:

1. To what extent does prior-presentation of behavioural objectives affect students' achievement in Social Studies?
2. To what extent does prior-presentation of behavioural objectives affects students' retention in Social Studies?

Statement of Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated and tested at .05 level of significance.

1. There is no significant effect of prior-presentation of behavioural objectives on students' achievement in social studies.
There is no significant effect of prior-presentation of behavioural objectives on students' retention.

Method of the Study
Design of the study: Quasi-experimental research design was adopted for the study. In this experiment, there were four groups. Three groups were treatment groups while one group was taken as control group. The treatment groups were tagged as E1, E2 and E3, while the control group was tagged C.

Population for the Study
The population for this study comprised of all the junior secondary three students (JS3) in secondary schools in Uyo Senatorial District of Akwa Ibom State. The state secondary school enrolment statistics for 2015 showed the population of JS3 in the zone as 29,508.

Sample and Sampling Technique
A total of 40 JS3 students were sampled using simple random sampling technique. To select the sample, one out of the nine Local Government Areas in Uyo Senatorial District was selected through balloting. From the selected LGA, four secondary schools were selected through balloting and from each of the selected schools; ten JS3 students were respectively selected and constituted into four experimental groups.

Instrumentation
The instrument used for data collection was a thirty items multiple choice questions developed by the researchers set according to the content specified for teaching. The instrument was validated by three experts; two from University of Uyo, Uyo and one from College of Education, Afaha Nsit. Out of the two from the; University of Uyo was a Social Studies expert and one expert in Educational Measurement and Evaluation. The reliability coefficient of .96 was obtained using Split-Half Statistical Method.

Data Analysis Technique
Descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation were used in answering the research questions while Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) was employed to test the hypothesis at 0.05 significance.

Result and Findings
Research Question 1: To what extent does prior presentation of behavioural objectives affect students' academic achievement in Social Studies?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variation (Treatment Group)</th>
<th>XI</th>
<th>Mean (Pretest)</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Adjustment (Post-test)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 Days (E1)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Day</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>28.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immediately (E3)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>42.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control (C)</td>
<td>•10</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>13.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>59.9</td>
<td>21.8</td>
<td>102.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 above revealed a change in the trend of mean achievement of students. As could be seen, the mean performance of E3 was the highest followed by E2, E1-respectively. While C was the
lowest. It can be inferred from the treatment groups that prior presentation has a significant effect on achievement.

Table 2: Summary Data of Analysis of Covariance of this Effect of Prior Presentation of Behavioural Objectives on Academic Achievement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Variation</th>
<th>Sum of Square (SS)</th>
<th>Degree of Freedom (df)</th>
<th>Mean Square (ms)</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>1529.5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>509.8</td>
<td>30.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>1113.8</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>31.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2643.3</td>
<td>38</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The critical F at df 3 and 35 is 2.99 at .05 alpha level. Since the calculated F (30.7) is greater than the Critical Value, the null hypothesis is rejected. Thus, prior presentation of behavioural Objectives have a significant effect on students' academic achievement in Social Studies.

Research Question 2: To what extent does prior presentation of behavioural objectives affect students' retention on Social Studies?

Table 3: Mean, Standard Deviation and Adjustment of Retention Scores by Prior Presentation of Behavioural Objectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variation (Treatment Group)</th>
<th>XI</th>
<th>Mean (Pretest)</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Adjustment (Post-test)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 Days (El)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>27.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Day (E2)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>16.5</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>25.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immediately (E3)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>24.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control (C)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>16.1</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>13.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>63.9</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>90.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 above revealed a change in the trend of mean retention of students. As could be seen, the mean of group El was the highest followed by E2 and immediately group respectively, while the control group had the lowest. By inference using the treatment groups, it could be deduced that prior presentation of behavioural objectives affect students' retention in Social Studies.

Table 4: Summary Data of Analysis of Covariance of the Effect of Prior Presentation on Social Studies Retention.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Variation</th>
<th>Sum of Square (SS)</th>
<th>Degree of Freedom (df)</th>
<th>Mean Square (ms)</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>22852.8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7617.6</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>22501.5</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>31.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>44354.3</td>
<td>38</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The critical F at df 3, and 35 is 2.99 at 0.05 alpha level since the calculated F (7.4) is greater than the critical value, the null hypothesis is rejected. Hence, prior presentation of behavioural objectives has a significant effect on students' retention in Social Studies.
Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study is quite revealing. It has x-rayed the pedagogical advantage inherent in prior presentation of behavioural objectives to learners. The result revealed a no significant statistical difference in the pretest mean of all the treatment groups and the control group. Thus, both the experimental groups and the control group exhibited equal strength before the experiment. Hence, if there exist a significant difference in the post-test mean score, such would be attributed to the treatment variable.

In the post-test as revealed in Table 1 and 2, the mean score in academic achievement varied significantly between the experimented groups and the control group. These findings support the significant pedantic advantage of using prior presentation of behavioural objectives in the teaching-learning processes. This study lends credence to Marzano (2007) and Beskeni (2011) who respectively reported from their studies that prior presentation of behavioural objectives impact significantly on students’ achievement scores and general class performance. The study also re-enforces the findings of Aniashi and Umoren (2007) who reported a significant enhancement in retention of learnt materials. However, the study contradicts Draper (2001).

In the light of the findings of this study, suffice the claim that prior presentation of behavioural objectives to students should become a common practice in lesson delivery in all subject areas. This will enable students to know on time what is expected of them in terms of learning outcome in each lesson. This may enable them prepare ahead of the lesson, their mines, abilities, questions and confusions about learning contents. Consequently learning objectives must be clearly stated and must be students’ oriented.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of this study the following conclusions were drawn:

1. That Prior presentation of behavioural objectives has significant effect on students’ academic achievement.
2. That Prior presentation of behavioural objectives has significant effect on students' academic retention.
3. That time variation in prior presentation of behavioural objectives produces varied effect on academic achievement and retention

Recommendations

In the light of the above, the following recommendations are made:

1. That Social Studies teachers should always present behavioural objectives to their students ahead of their lesson presentation so that students would learn and understand what is expected of them by the end of the lesson.
2. That ample time be given for prior presentation of behavioural objectives to students. These will direct the thoughts of the students and stimulate their active participation in the lesson, thus promoting the ideology of learners' centred teaching.

References


Marsh, Patricia (2007). 'What is known about Student Learning Outcomes and how does it relates to the scholarship of teaching and learning. Vol. 1; No. 2.


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