



An Analysis of Teaching Methods and Techniques of Learning Economics in Nigeria

JULIANA YUSUF MUGU
University of Jos, Nigeria

ENIWAIYE TOPE
University Press Ltd, Jos

Abstract. Teaching and learning can be accomplished and sustained if teachers can manage classroom effectively; subject matters are properly dealt with and comprehensible teaching methods and techniques are used. The significant of methods and techniques in the teaching and learning process cannot be overemphasized because it has become crescent clear that methods and techniques used in teaching/learning Economics. These methods include lecture method, problem-solving method and question method among. The paper consider factors to be consider before chosen any of methods; and when questions are to be ask when using the questioning method. For purpose of discussion methods, there are fundamentals that teachers must know before using such method. Recommendations are also given in this paper, that teachers must have a look at the subject matter to be taught before chosen a particular method. Student's ability to think critically and their ability to perform independent inquiry must be considered. Lastly, method use by the teacher must covered the three domains; cognitive, affective and psychomotor.

1. Introduction

Teachers can effectively and efficiently manage the classroom activities when the subject matter is properly dealt with and appropriate teaching methods are employed. Effective teachers are always on the prowl for new and effective teaching strategies that will keep their students motivated and engaged. It must be acknowledge that there are diverse. Whether you are a new or experienced teacher, you will it should be noted that there are diverse teaching methods to be adopted during the teaching-learning process, certainly of institutions of high learning across the nation are adopting lecture method which make learning less interactive, to integrate technology into the learning experience and to use collaborative learning strategies when appropriate. But two teachers are not alike, and any teacher with classroom teaching experience will agree that his style of teaching is uniquely his own. An effective teaching style engages students in the learning process and helps them develop critical thinking skills, (Steve, 2013).

Therefore, an effective and efficient teacher will be known through the mastery of subject matter and his/her ability to impart knowledge and skills through relevant Teaching methods and techniques. Teaching methods are very important to teachers because they help in effective and efficient classroom management when appropriate teaching methods are employed.

Steve A. (2013) defines teaching methods “to be strategies used to help students learn the desired course contents and to be able to develop achievable goals in future” According to Timothy. (2002), defines strategies (methods) as an overall plan for the orderly presentation of content or learning material. From these definitions above, it can be then summarized with the views of Abubakar (2009) that teaching methods means an appropriate approaches which a teacher adopts to explain subject matter or content knowledge to his learners.

While teaching techniques according to Timothy (2002) quoting Anthony (2005) defines teaching techniques as that which actually takes place in class. He further says, techniques depend on teacher, his individual ability and on the composition of the class. Particular problems can be tackled equally successfully by the use of different techniques an example of techniques within a lecture method is to list the main points of the lecture on the board. Another example within lecture method so as to create student interest, the teacher could speak clearly using short sentences and simple words.

2. Types of Methods and Techniques for Teaching Economics

There are two broad teaching methods and techniques to be discussed. They are:

- Direct teaching method
- Indirect teaching method

2.1 Direct Teaching Method: These teaching strategies can also be refers to as exposition teaching. This is considered to be the best way to communicate large amount of information in a short period of time. Exposition techniques involve the methods in which some teachers present information without over interaction taking place between the teacher and the students. This method includes lecture method, questioning method and demonstration method.

2.2 The Lecture Method: According to Tijani (2010), lecture Method is a process whereby the teacher verbally delivers a pre-planned body of knowledge to his students. That is, this method involves verbal presentation of ideas, facts, concept and principles. Since Economics is a subject of ideas, fact, figures, and concept, this is highly recommended for teacher both in secondary schools and tertiary institutions. This method allows the teacher to cover much work within a short period of time since the students have little or no opportunity for interruption. Furthermore, it allows independent learning. It must be noted that the use of one method can hardly give effective result; lecture method is therefore expected to be combined with other methods for effectiveness. This method could be used with a lot of teaching techniques so as to create student interest. The teacher should speak clearly using short sentence simple words.

2.3 Questioning Method: Abubakar (2009) quoting Curson (1985), from the days of Socrates, through the days of Christ up to our own days question and questioning have constituted effectives medium of instructions. Questions are asked by teachers basically to know the students level of critical thinking and to know if students can answer the questions correctly. Abubakar (2009) that Socrates and Christ asked

questions in their cause of teaching to enable them know whether their followers comprehend this discussion but there were distinctive, because a lot of learning were received from the questions.

Abubakar (2009) refers to question as a means of testing the knowledge and assimilation of a class. It also produces immediate feedback and provides a means of making continuous assessment. As a teacher, therefore, he/she must know when and how to ask questions to get the pupils attention and to stimulate critical thinking and discussion.

2.4 When to ask Questions by Teachers

Basically, questions can be asked at any time of the lesson but it must put the set objectives into consideration.

Questioning at the beginning of the class

This gives the idea or overview at what the student already know about the subject.

Help pupils to recall ideas which they would need to understand the lesson.

Questioning during the lesson

This helps to direct pupils thought and efforts.

Enables the teacher ascertain what the pupils have in mind on a given aspect of the lesson.

Questioning at the end of the lesson:

This enables the teacher to judge how much of the lesson taught has been effectively delivered and understood.

This enables the teacher to see which parts of the lesson need to be further treated.

2.5 The Demonstration Method: A demonstration method is a process of teaching by means of using materials and displays but the only person directly

involved with the materials is the teacher or individual conducting the demonstration. According to Mang (2002), demonstration method is the act of showing, teaching aids displaying something. It involves showing something for the students to see. Essentially, this technique deals mostly but not totally with showing how something works or with skills development.

With Demonstration strategy, students are guided to think along the same channel, also it can be used to introduce and climax a lesson, it is an attention inducer and a powerful motivator when it is employed to lesson. In Economics, the strategy will work effectively when teaching topic such as demand and supply of a commodity as well as change in price of the commodity and curves.

3. Indirect teaching strategies

There are two fundamental functions of education; these are; the development of students' ability to think critically and their ability to perform independent inquiry. This is often difficult, if not impossible, with the more direct teaching strategies. Fortunately, as a teacher who have different strategies at his disposal he should apply the appropriate method. These indirect methods typically are less teacher-directed, but they are more time consuming.

3.1 The Discussion Method: in the true discussion, students should talk more than the teacher. However, a discussion is not a bull session, but a carefully structural exchange of ideas directed towards a specific goal, according to Kenneth (1994). The most important role of the teacher in this strategy is to moderate this discussion, while all students are free to express their view in a discussion lesson. In Economics, government expenditure in his annual

budget (National come) and other component could be subjected to discussion method. Since discussion method is very important for the treatment of controversial and current issues, it can also develop positive interpersonal relationship with the teacher and with colleagues on the basis of acquiring knowledge from one another.

3.2 Factors to consider in Planning Discussion Method

Subject matter students must be thoroughly conversant with the related information (subject) prior to the discussion, that is, students must have concept or topic to discuss if the discussion method is to work. Students must be directed to be prepared with regard to contact knowledge or background information prior to the discussion.

Secondly, the teacher must decide whether the discuss is for large group (whole class) or small group activity. If the goal is the development of better content understanding or of the ability to analyze, synthesize, or evaluate a large group activity would be most appropriate.

Thirdly, the seating must be considered. A productive discussion requires interaction, which often is directed related to the seating arrangement. Seating should be arranged so that students can look directly at each other when interact.

Lastly, the teacher must consider the time allotted for the activity. A good format to follow is to give students very explicit directions as to what is to be accomplished and a time limit for the discussion.

3.3 Problem Solving/Investigative Method:- Problem solving is one of the most important skills students learn in

school. Problem solving has a special role in Economics. This is an investigative method of teaching which enable the students to systematically find solutions to problems with little help from the teacher. Here, what the teacher does is to teach the students how to go about in problem solving processes. With problem solving student become familiar with such mental processes as observing, inferring, classifying measuring data interpretation, hypothesizing. Furthermore, this method increases student's ability for critical thinking, acquisition of improved understanding of basic concepts, principle and fact. This method leads to better retention of information and development of favourable attitude.

3.4 Discovery Learning Method:-

According to Mang & Mankilik (2002), citing Trowbridge (1973), discovery strategy is an activity designed in such a way that the student, through his own mental processes, discovers concepts and principles.

This teaching-learning strategy involves where the learners are presented with problems and are asked to discover or enquire about their solutions. The students are usually guided in making use of the available resources of information like the library and other learning materials around. There are two types of discovery method; the guided inquiry and unguided inquiry.

3.5 Guided Inquiry:- When the general principle and steps to follow are given and the statement is required to use the principle in order to discover the solution to a specific task, this is usually used through deductive method and also when the solution to a specific problem is given and the student is required to discover the general principle on which the solution is based the guided inquiry ,method is adopted through the inductive method. But when neither the general principle nor the solution is given

and the student is required to discover both the principle and the solution, this is known as unguided inquiry method. This strategy promotes intellectual potency and also there is a shift from extrinsic to intrinsic reward which students find more satisfying.

3.6 Cooperative Learning Strategy:-

Cooperative learning is a successful teaching strategy in which small teams, each with students of different levels of ability, use variety of learning activities to improve their understanding of a subject. Each member of a team is responsible not only for learning what is taught but also for helping team mates learning; thus creating an atmosphere of achievement. Student work though the assignment until all the members successfully understand and complete it. In cooperative learning, each member of the teams participates in the discussion and this effort result in mutual benefit for all the group members.

This strategy of teaching provides each member with an opportunity to participate and thereby influences decision making; it also promote learner independence by allowing students to make their own decision in the group without being told what to do by the teacher, it encourages broader skills of cooperation and negotiation.

Despite all these merit, these methods also have some demerit; in some cases the teacher could lose control of the class and the whole class becomes noisy. It must also be noted that not all student enjoy it, since they would prefer to be the focus of the teacher's attention rather than working with their peers.

3.7 Brainstorming Techniques

Brainstorming according to Kenneth (1994) is a method of eliciting ideas without judgment or filtering. It is often in the early stages of futures workshop and in many

other contexts. It involves encouraging wild and unconstrained suggestions and listing ideas as they emerge.

Brainstorming is actually more of a technique or tool rather than a method per se. It is widely used in any method involving group thinking.

The main objective of brainstorming is to elicit ideas from a group of people used in a structural way. This technique can be highly effective way of moving participants out of conflict and towards consensus. Brainstorming is founded on the principle that the quantity of ideas increases their quality.

3.7.1 Basic Component of Brainstorming Technique

- Generating as many creative solutions as possible to tackle a problem.
- Setting time limits.
- Listing every idea presented without comment evaluation.
- All opinions are equal.

Subsequently, grouping ideas to reduce redundancy, allow for related ideas to be brought together.

3.7.2 Evaluating or assign priorities to the ideas.

Brainstorming in the classroom motivates students to freely express their ideas and thoughts on a subject. As there are no wrong and right answers, these sessions provide students with a platform where they can voice their thoughts without fear of failure.

Also these sessions give the class chance to tap into their previous knowledge and form connections between the current topic and what they have already learned. It also encourages them to listen and consider others ideas, thereby showing respect for their fellow classmates.

4. Factors to be Considered when Selecting Teaching Strategies

Since the responsibility of selecting appropriate method of teaching is of the teacher, he/she must also be aware that there are considerable factors he/she must look into before choosing any of the instructional method.

The below are some of the different factors that will affect the selection of the proper method to be employed.

Firstly, *the type of subject matter to be taught*: According to Yenkw (2005) when selecting the method to use, a teacher does not select a method for a complete lesson: rather, he selects methods, which will be most effective for the various part of the lesson. That is the subject matter often times gives direction of what type of method to be applied. A lecture method could be used for Economics teacher when teaching on “Economic Growth Development” with demonstration method will be more appropriate when handling courses. (e.g indifferent curves).

Secondly, the learner’s abilities: This has to do with learner age, readiness and maturity level of his students, their socio-economic background, and intellectual maturity.

The personality and style of the teacher: Considering individual difference, a teacher needs to develop a style that is effective and handy for the teacher himself. As a teacher, be natural, select and use those methods, which are most effective and convenient for you, and work towards improving your shortcomings so that you may use other methods.

Note as a teacher, there is no “best” method of teaching any lesson wholly by one single method. No method is ever mutually “exclusive”. In each of your lesson the

teacher should modify his presentation to meet the existing conditions. He/she should try to use those methods, which will bring the best out of him/her.

Lastly, *the objective of the lesson*: Every learning is centered on the statement of objectives and what the objective state determine the direction of the lesson. For instance if the objective reflects critical thinking and judgment the teacher cannot use lecture as a teaching method, rather the teacher in this regard should adopt discussion (expository) method.

5. Conclusion

As a matter of fact no method of teaching is ever mutually exclusive: For efficiency and effective teaching, teacher should consider any of the mentioned methods and techniques for use to meet the existing conditions. Furthermore, before any of these methods can be employed teachers should also pay attention to the varieties to be considered before making choice of these methods. I hereby recommend that teachers should make use of these methods and techniques discussed above.

6. Recommendation/ The Way Forward

Whether old teacher or new teacher in the classroom, whenever considering a method to select first of all have a look at the subject matter to be taught because most often times it gives direction of what type of method to be applied.

Furthermore, whatever method is being selected for use, the teacher must make sure the two functional functions of education are achieved that is development of students’ ability to think critically and their ability to perform independent inquiry.

Also, in questioning methods, we know that questions can be ask at any time of the lesson but must not belabor the students must be guided and be interment with the objectives of the lesson. In summary, it should not be above the ability of the learners.

More so, when using discussion methods there are factors to note whether for whole class or small group; the students must have prior information of the subject and the seating arrangement must be thoroughly consider.

What method use by the teacher, it must cover the three domains that is cognitive, affective and psychomotor.

Teachers should avoid the use of unrelated facts and materials when selecting method such as discovery and discussion methods.

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