Effects of Discovery and Lecture Methods of Instruction on Students' Achievement in Poetry

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ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this research was to compare the effects of discovery and lecture methods of instruction on poetry achievement of SSIII students in Oju Local Government Area of Benue State. Four research questions and four null hypotheses guided the study. The study used quasi-experimental pre-test-post design. By simple random sampling, a sample size of 240 male and female students were obtained from six secondary schools. The instrument used to generate data was poetry achievement test, and reliability of the instrument was determined using Pearson Product Moment statistics formula. The index of 0.97 was obtained which indicated a high reliability. Prior to the treatment, a pretest was administered to all the subjects in the three groups. The groups were taught for eight weeks using three contact periods of forty-five minutes per week, after which a post-test was administered, scores obtained from the data and t-test was used to test the hypotheses. The findings revealed that discovery method was more effective than lecture method. The findings equally revealed that there was no sex differences in poetry achievement of students. Appropriate recommendations made among others were to train teachers in the use of discovery method in teaching poetry and develop distinct curricula for literature.

INTRODUCTION

People point accusing fingers on teachers for poor performance of students in literature in general and poetry in particular. This continual poor performance of students in literature especially poetry has continued to be a source of worry to scholars (Obah, 2005; Iwuchukwu, 2003, Folashade, 2009). They attribute the problem to poor teaching method. Of the three genres, prose, drama and poetry, poetry is the least enjoyed by Nigerian secondary school students (Osisanwo, 1998). Anyone who is familiar with poetry teaching in schools and colleges will agree that our poetry teachers emphasize the product of poetry at the expense of process. The effect of this emphasis is that our students are drilled to respond cognitively to poetry. Affective responses which should be the most important outcome of the lesson are not emphasized and developed.

The current methods of teaching poetry in our schools and colleges do not enable the students to acquire a set of skills they can use in decoding poetry texts. Furthermore, our students are not taught strategies for interpreting and understanding arguments. They are usually unable to take a stand since they do not understand the point of view being presented. More importantly, our students are usually unable to share the feelings of pleasure or displeasure when they read some poetry texts because they fail to understand when the experiences in such poems are directed towards eliciting emotional responses from them.

This traditional method has led students to develop the dependent complex of relying on the teacher for everything. Students' responsiveness to lessons and eventual achievement is considerably dependent on the methods adopted and implemented by teachers in the classroom. It is against this backdrop that this research is set out to investigate the effect of discovery and lecture methods on students' achievement in poetry with a view to recommending solutions to the problem.

Poetry like prose and drama is another genre of literature. It is about the whole life and universe. It enables one to share the experiences of other people-how they feel, think, see things, their hopes, and disappointments, fears, aspirations, tragedies and comedies. Poetry helps us to have insight into the human mind and nature in compacted yet profound and beautiful language. As Bright and Oyetunde (2003), point out, poetry begins in delight and ends in wisdom. Like folktales in the traditional setting, poetry features as songs used on various occasions, for example, baby-sitters render them, to calm babies when they cry- the

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lullaby. There are also songs sung by youths as they make merry on festive occasions- ballad. At mournful occasions, someone can burst into an emotional song-dirge. In other words, poetry has been as old as the tradition itself. Poetry in the modern times is rendered in a language different from that of our tradition that is why special attention is given to it and efforts being expanded to make it interesting to students.

Iwuchuckwu (2003) citing Wordsworth (1906) maintains that poetry is an overflow of spontaneous emotions recaptured in tranquility. Poetry is about beauty, passion, rhythm, and grace therein in any emotional expression. Inspired, the poet conceptualizes or imagines an idea, based on an object, an incident or an aspect of it. He uses words, phrases, poetic devices like figures of speech and imageries to concretize this idea in a poem. He arranges the words in a systematic pattern to achieve rhythm, harmony, symmetry, and grace. With these, he creates a vivid picture of his idea for the enlightenment and entertainment of his audience.

According to Eliot (2003), poetry is that form of expression which communicates some new experience or some fresh understanding of the familiar or the expression of something we have experienced but have no words for which enlarges our consciousness or refines our sensibility, a form of expression which moreover gives pleasure. This definition holds within it the key to the elusive quality of poetry. It is clear that the subject matter of poetry could be virtually anything. For examples, we find poems on love, hate, war, birth, death etc. There are poems on the unfamiliar- communicating a new experience, and poems on the familiar-communicating a fresh understanding or putting into words our common experience. So long as these forms of expression perform these functions and help us to see things differently or to feel, hear, taste, touch and think about things in some way that we didn't before, then these forms of expression are poetry.

In other words, these will be poems so long as they enlarge our consciousness, our knowledge of ourselves and our environment, or refine our sensibility by making us more attuned to our environment, more receptive to signals from around us, not merely through the use of our natural eyes, ears and other sense organs but primarily through the use of our inner eye and ear and through the exercise of our ability to feel for other creatures of humanity.

Eliot's definition also helps us to understand another feature of poetry, which has sometimes contributed to its elusiveness. Not only can a poem be on any matter, it can also appear in

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different forms. We are familiar with poems that are laid out in stanzas, which are units of two or more lines of verse corresponding roughly to the paragraph in prose.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to determine the effectiveness of discovery and lecture methods of instruction on students' achievement in poetry. In order to achieve this purpose, the following specific objectives were pursued:

1. To determine the effects of discovery method on students' achievement in poetry.

2. To determine the effects of lecture method on students' achievement in poetry.

3. To determine which of the methods is more effective.

4. To determine gender differences in students' achievement in poetry.

Research Questions

Based on the stated problem, the following research questions were used as the guide in the study:

1. To what extent would discovery method affects students' achievement in poetry?

2. To what extent would lecture method affects students' achievement in poetry?

3. To what extent would lecture method of teaching poetry to be more effective than discovery method?

4. Would there be sex differences in poetry achievement of students?

Hypotheses

To guide in the conduct of this research, the following null hypotheses were formulated:

1. There is no significant effect of discovery method on SS III students' achievement in poetry.

2. There is no significant effect of lecture method on SS III students' achievement in poetry.

3. Lecture method of teaching poetry is more effective than discovery method.

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4. There are no sex differences in poetry achievement of SSIII students.

Theoretical Background

This study anchored on the cognitive theory of learning. Piaget's (1957) theory of cognitive development maintains that the basis of learning is the interaction of activity with the social and physical environment of the learner. He asserted that the child's mental activity is organized into structures called "Schemata" or pattern of behavior. According to the theory, mental processes such as reasoning and remembering help in problem-solving and discovering new ideas: The cognitive theorists hold that learning must be meaningful and the human mind should be actively involved.

The theory believes that meaningful learning can only be achieved when appropriate conceptual materials are related to the learner's cognitive developmental level. This will reduce their developmental lag. Thus, the students should be allowed to learn at their own pace given the required and varied instructional materials. Piaget also posits that different learners acquire certain spatial concepts or skills essential for reasoning and process differently, thus, they should be encouraged and motivated by the use of appropriate teaching materials.

METHODOLOGY

The study made use of the pre test-post test control group of quasi-experimental design. The population of the research work consisted of all senior secondary three (SS 3) students of 2006/2007 academic session who were offering Literature-in-English in Oju LGA, Benue State which stood at 510 students in 13 grand aided secondary schools in the area (Ministry of Education, 2007).

The sample for the study comprised of 240 students (123 boys and 117 girls) selected from six secondary schools. Poetry Achievement Test (PAT) and lesson plans prepared by the researcher and validated by two experts in language education were the research instruments used for data collection.

The reliability coefficient of the instrument was obtained from the pilot study test scores using Pearson product moment correlation formula and it was found to be 0.97%. Six

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experienced literature teachers were used as research assistants. T-test statistics was used to test the null hypotheses.

RESULTS

The results of this study were presented based on the research hypotheses earlier formulated.

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant effect of Discovery method of instruction on SS III students' achievement in poetry.

Table No: 1 Independent t-test analysis of pre-test and post-test achievement in the poetry of students taught by discovery method (experimental group).

Group	No. of Subject	Pre-test Mean	Post-test	Mean Diff	t-test
Experimental	80	3.35	15.86	12.51	*45.712

* Significant 0.05; Critical t=1.98

Table 1 shows that the calculated t=value of 45.712 on the post-test achievement is greater than the critical t-value of 1.98 required for significance at 0.05 level of significance. This means that achievement of the students in poetry differed significantly when taught by discovery method. Thus, the null hypothesis, as earlier stated is rejected.

Hypothesis 2

There is no significant effect of lecture method of instruction on SS III students' achievement in poetry.

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Table 2: Independent t-test analysis of pre-test and post test achievement in the poetry of students taught by lecture method (control group).

Group	No. of Subject	Pre test Mean	Post test	Mean Diff	t-test
Control	80	2.95	11.2	8.25	*37.411

* Significant 0.05; Critical t=1.98

Table 2 shows that the calculated t-value of 37.411 on the post-test achievement is greater than the critical t-value of 1.98 required for significance at 0.05 level. This means that achievement of the subjects in poetry differed significantly when taught by lecture method. Thus, the null hypothesis, as earlier stated is rejected.

Hypothesis 3

Lecture method of teaching poetry is more effective than discovery method.

Table 3: Independent t-test analysis of pre and post tests achievement in the poetry of students taught by discovery method (experimental) and those taught by lecture method (control).

Group	No. of Subject	Pre test Mean	Post test	Mean Diff	t-test
Experimental	80	3.35	15.86	12.51	45.712
Control	80	2.95	11.2	8.25	37.411
Mean Difference		0.4	4.66		
t-test		*1.461	*14.919		

* Significant 0.05; Critical t=1.98

Table 3 shows that the calculated t-value of 1.461 for the pre-test is less than the critical t-value of 1.98 required for significance at 0.05 level. This means that there is no significant difference in the pre-test achievement of students both in the experimental and control groups before treatment. The calculated t-value of 14.919 on the post-test achievement is greater than the critical t-value of 1.98 required for significance at 0.05 level. This means that

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discovery method (experimental) of teaching poetry is more effective that lecture method (control).

Thus, the null hypothesis as earlier stated is rejected.

Hypothesis 4

There is no sex difference in poetry achievement of SSIII students

Independent t-test analysis of the difference between discovery and lecture methods in poetry achievement of SS III students based on gender.

Table No 4: Independent t-test analysis of the difference between discovery and lecture methods in poetry achievement of SS III students based on gender.

Group	Gender	No. of Subject	Post test Mean	Mean Diff	t-test
Experimental	Male	40	8.0	0.04	*0.981
	Female	40	7.96		
	Total	80			
Control	Male	40	5.85	0.2	*0.816
	Female	40	5.55		
	Total	80			

*Not Significant at 0.05, Critical t=1.98

From table 4 above, the calculated t-value of 0.981 and 1.816 are respectively less than the critical t-value of 1.98 required for significance at 0.05 level of significance. This means that male and female students taught by discovery and lecture methods do not significantly differ in poetry achievement. Thus, the null hypothesis is upheld.

DISCUSSION

The results of this study indicated that students taught poetry by discovery method of instruction had higher academic achievement than those taught by lecture method. The reason for the higher achievement of students in discovery method is that students are actively involved in the learning process instead of passive and their interest are sustained. Further, it

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was found that there is a significant difference in the achievement of students taught poetry using discovery method.

The findings of this study are in agreement with Achibong (1997), Aworati and Abimbola (1997) and Osa (1998) who at various times and studies found that there was the significant difference between the achievement of students in the experimental group and those of the control group.

The finding of this study is in consonant with the findings of Achibong (1997) who found that students exposed to activity-based approach performed significantly higher than those taught with the lecture method did. In addition, the findings of this study are in conformity with the findings of Aworati and Abimbola (1997) who in their study to compare the effect of integrative approach and lecture method found that students in the integrative approach significantly achieved higher than those taught with the lecture method. The findings of this study agree with the findings of Osa (1998), who in the study of the effect of activity-based and lecture methods found that students in the experimental group significantly achieved higher than the control group.

The findings of this study indicated that male and female students taught by discovery and lecture methods do not significantly differ in academic achievement. The findings confirmed earlier studies by Lasisi and Onyehalu (1993), Ige (1998), Iyang (2002) and Uwatt (2002) that gender of students had no significant effect on their academic achievement.

The result of these research findings on gender agrees with Jatau (2004) and Oyebola (2004) that the society and not essentially a reflection of the natural abilities or disabilities of the gender impose most of the factors used to discriminate male and female. Hence, the female can accomplish equally, if not better tasks performed by the male. The teacher's knowledge of this fact in preparing his lesson shall aid in improving learners' performance because correlation exit between a learner's academic achievement and the teacher's academic expectations of the learner.

CONCLUSION

In view of the findings of this research work, the following rational conclusions were made**:**

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That discovery and lecture methods of instruction have the positive effect on poetry achievement of students.

That discovery method of instruction was more effective than lecture method.

That there were no sex differences in poetry achievement of students. The reason for this might be traced to the slogan that what a man can do, a woman can do it even better" thus, there is now enough sensitization among the female folks to bridge the differential achievement gap between them and their male counterparts in secondary school literature. This means that the achievement of students depends on the cognitive demands of the test items (remembering, understanding and reasoning or thinking) and not the gender of the students.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made:

The first step to arresting the problem of poetry teaching is to train teachers to be thoroughly grounded in current methods of teaching. A situation where some teachers in the various secondary schools are not known to have attended professional in-service training for more than ten years is disturbing. They need to be trained, equipped and motivated to cope favorably with the challenges of teaching highly creative arts like literature in a modern world. The government, in collaboration with various institutions, should endeavor to organize and sponsor the workshop for these personnel to update their knowledge and methods of instruction. They can also be sponsored on in-service training. It should be emphasized here that the current trend where two or three day's conference is periodically organized by some institutions would not suffice. The time is usually short for many benefits to be derived from them and teachers scarcely attend most of the conferences due to rather a prohibitive cost of self- sponsorship.

Discovery method of instruction places emphasis on reasoning, remembering, and background experience, and activation of the learner's prior knowledge. This requires that the school be conducive and rich for learning. The government and managers of our institutions should make the environment, the idealized versions of society. The schools should contain the best forms of features and events commonly found in the society. The teacher can draw from her to activate the prior knowledge of the learner and effect positive change in his

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perception and insight. The great implication of this to poetry is the need for careful selection and gradation of poems recommended for study at the secondary school level.

Literature as a course of study largely involves reading. The situation where poetry is subsumed under the English Language at primary and junior secondary schools level does not augur well and should be discontinued. Here, much of the reading the child does, are tailored towards teaching him the grammar of the Language and creative uses, which are prevalent in literature. It is therefore advocated that distinct curricula for literature be developed for primary and junior secondary schools and taught independently.

This work has also made clear the need to discourage the common society imposed practice in our school system, whereby the female students tend to be interiorized for reason of her sex in preference to the male. The female is endowed with equal abilities and capabilities, latent and potentials like the male, to record significant achievement in education. The teacher needs to bear this in mind in designing his lesson.

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