

METHOD OF TEACHING IN NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES

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Contemporary society requires learners to develop abilities and skills besides having a basic knowledge of a discipline. This is because knowledge and technology becomes outdated rapidly and is updated constantly; much of what students will need to know in their future career after graduation has not yet been generated! This knowledge explosion cannot be solved by adding more courses. Therefore, the responsibility of teachers in university or college is not only to teach the students with the particular or professional knowledge of their discipline but also to help them develop successful lifelong learning skills. This has remained the philosophy and guiding principles of teaching in Nigerian Universities. Thus, different teaching methods are employed by university teachers in Nigeria depending on the course content. However, there are generally approved and outstanding modern methods of teaching prevalent in Nigerian universities. It is the aim of this paper to discuss some of these methods.

A teaching method comprises the principles and techniques used for instruction. Commonly used traditional teaching methods include class participation, demonstration, recitation, memorization, or combinations of these. The choice of teaching method or methods to be used depends largely on the information or skill that is being taught, and it may also be influenced by the aptitude and enthusiasm of the students. Below are some of the teaching methods prevalent in Nigerian Universities [1], [2].

Demonstration method of teaching in Nigerian Universities involves showing by reason or proof, explaining or making clear by use of examples or experiments. Put more simply, demonstration means to clearly show. By this method of teaching, students are set up to potentially conceptualize class material more effectively as shown in a study which specifically focuses on chemistry demonstrations presented by teachers. Demonstrations often occur when students have a hard time connecting theories to actual practice or when students are unable to understand application of theories. Teachers not only demonstrate specific learning concepts within the classroom, they can also participate in demonstration classrooms to help improve their own teaching strategies, which may or may not be demonstrative in nature. It is the process of teaching through examples or experiments. For example, a science teacher

may teach an idea by performing an experiment for students. A demonstration may be used to prove a fact through a combination of visual evidence and associated reasoning. This type teaching method makes use of overhead projectors and the internet service.

Demonstrations allow students to personally relate to the presented information. Memorization of a list of facts is a detached and impersonal experience, whereas the same information, conveyed through demonstration, becomes personally relatable. Demonstrations help to raise student interest and reinforce memory retention because they provide connections between facts and real-world applications of those facts. Lectures, on the other hand, are often geared more towards factual presentation than connective learning. Although, this method of teaching is cost- effective yet, it is one of the most effective methods of teaching in Nigeria.

Small-group teaching sessions for undergraduates are often given in Nigerian universities. This is known as *supervisions lectures*. They are usually one hour in length with 1-4 students and (usually) a member of the teaching staff who is a specialist in the subject. Supervisions are arranged by departments and are a great opportunity to explore course material in much greater depth than lectures allow. The structure of supervisions varies, and is often tailored for the students concerned. All supervisions aim to clarify points raised in lectures, to engage in in-depth problem-solving and to allow students to explore and discuss particular aspects of the course. Supervisions help students to develop skills to learn independently, in the ways most suited to them. Students are usually asked to prepare for supervisions, by either submitting essays or completed problems beforehand or preparing work for presentation during the supervision. Supervisions are not formally assessed (they do not count towards the degree) but are a way for students to receive feedback on their work. Students are encouraged to use them to explore new approaches to learning and topics outside of the lectures. All students receive regular reports from their supervisors, which may be used by the College to provide evidence to the University of Diligent Study, if required. However, many University students seem not to like this method in Nigeria as they argue that it is done outside their field of engagement.

Integrative teaching is one of the emerging and modern methods in education in the Nigerian Universities. It focuses on connections rather teaching isolated facts. For instance, a certain different subject may be

integrated in teaching another subject (e.g. the content of Science taught in teaching Language). With this, students will be able to realize that subjects being taught to them are not separate and isolated field of knowledge, but are linked to each other in order to achieve understanding and concept attainment. Furthermore, integrative teaching aims to connect what is learned in school to real life situations, thus it is more on developing problem solving and discussions of issues in the real world. Students will learn to relate what they learn and apply it to their own daily lives. In addition, integrative teaching involves consideration on the student's individual differences. These include multiple intelligences and learning styles. The teacher therefore presents the lesson in various ways that can cater each student's uniqueness.

Some courses give the opportunity for students to go on field trips, undertake work placements, language courses abroad or study visits. For instance, students in Modern and Medieval Languages spend a year working or studying abroad, and Engineering includes opportunities for a work placement with a company. This method gives the student on-hand experience of his field of endeavors and thus widens his professional knowledge.

Again, graduate research students in Nigeria are expected to work largely on their own initiative, but this varies according to the subject area and the chosen course of study. Study in the sciences usually involves daily attendance in the faculty or department and close contact with an appointed supervisor. Study in the arts and humanities often involve more work in one of the University libraries, and less frequent contact with a supervisor. Faculties and departments are responsible for appointing a supervisor, whose role is to guide the student in their program of study or research. All supervisors provide close individual support, and are experts in the chosen field. Most supervision involves regular discussions on progress and the submission of written work. Required submitted work, including dissertations, long essays or research projects, forms a significant part of many courses. This work gives students the chance to develop their skills in original research by testing out theories and advancing their own ideas.

In view of the critical roles modern teaching methods and novel techniques can play in transforming the learning behavior of students, Nigerian universities should invest in the necessary infrastructure and deploy novel technologies to assist effective teaching and learning in the classroom.

Furthermore, both new and existing academic staff in Nigerian universities should engage in capacity development initiatives aimed at upgrading their skills for effective teaching. In achieving this, Nigerian government should allocate more resources to Universities for funding of research and the opportunities for academic staff to attend both national and international conferences critical to fine-tuning their skills and knowledge, as well as building their capacity to engage in cutting-edge research.

Finally, Lack of adequate funding continues to pose a threat to the delivery of qualitative education in Nigerian universities. The unenviable trend calls for an effective Public-Private partnership agenda aimed at mobilizing resources to drive academic and research activities in Nigerian universities.

References

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