

INFLUENCE OF FORMATIVE FEEDBACK ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF STUDENTS IN THEORY AND PRACTICE OF CHILD FRIENDLY SCHOOL CURRICULUM IN FCE (T) GOMBE

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Abstract

This study sought to investigate if formative feedback can improve performance of students in theory and practice of child-friendly school curriculum in Federal College of Education (Technical) Gombe, Gombe state Nigeria. Two hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance. The study adopted a quasi-experimental design which involves the pre-test and post-test using the experimental and control groups. A sample of one hundred and twenty N C E one students was used. The students were divided into two groups of sixty each. Group A which was the experimental group was taught using formative feedback while Group B which was control group was taught without it. t-Test for related sample was used in testing the hypotheses. The result revealed that formative feedback had significant influence on N C E one students' performance in the experimental group than the control group. The paper recommends that for students to achieve more, there is need to adopt formative feedback in the teaching and learning of theory and practice of child friendly school curriculum.

Keywords: Formative Feedback, Assessment, Child friendly, Students' performance.

Introduction

Academic attainment is an important parameter in measuring success in students. Observations and reports have shown that success or high academic achievement has become a herculean task to accomplish by students in recent times. Poor academic performance was recorded both at the secondary and tertiary levels of education in Nigeria. The performance of students at all levels in educational institutions in Nigeria has attracted much criticisms from all and sundry from time immemorial. The decline in the academic performance of students in Nigerian Universities had been observed by Soyinka (1999) that University system in Nigeria needed restructuring. He went further to say that academic standard had fallen drastically and the quality of graduates being produced by the

nation's universities is questionable and subject to re-examination.

Poor academic performance of students has been of great concern to educationists, despite, all the programmes and strategies mounted in schools to improve the students' academic performances yet poor performances were recorded yearly. It becomes necessary to find out the causes of such poor performance in Nigeria higher institutions. Though, these poor performances have been attributed to a lot of indicators such as student's factors, like student's attitudes to school, approach to learning and academic self-concept.

The Child Friendly School Curriculum introduces students to the child friendly concept, its underlying assumptions and key principles from which the main characteristics of a child friendly school (CFS) are derived. It

discusses CFS models as being holistic and based on a concept of quality education that is multi-dimensional and concerned with the total needs of the child as the central focus and beneficiary of all education decisions. The primary goal of the initiative was to “foster” the right of the child to quality basic education in a well conducive learning environment (NCCE, 2012).

Schooling is one experience that most children worldwide have in common and the most common means by which societies prepare their young for the future. On any given day, more than a billion children are in primary or secondary schools; 689 million in primary schools and 513 in secondary schools (UNICEF, 2006).

Child-Friendly School is considered as a place where the learning environment is conducive, the staff are friendly to children, and the health and safety needs of the children are adequately met. Thus, the school which is community based, takes cognizance of the rights of all children, irrespective of gender, religious and ethnic affiliation, physical and mental abilities and other cultural dissimilarities (UNICEF, 2006).

It is equally seen as a stimulating place where the best interest of the child dominates and, in this environment, there should be quality care and stimulation for holistic development of the child. The school should be comfortable, beautiful, attractive, purposeful and accessible to all levels of learners within the centre. It should be an enabling environment for effective growth and successful development of the child (Chauhan, 2010).

Therefore, Child-friendly schools aim to develop a learning environment in which children are motivated and able to learn. Staff members are friendly, welcoming children and attend to all their health and safety needs.

However, Feedback is an essential component in all learning contexts and serves a variety of purposes including evaluation of students' achievements, development of students' competences and understanding, and elevation of students' motivation and confidence (Hyland, 2000). Within teaching

and learning activities in a higher education setting, feedback can be perceived as any information communicated to the learner as a result of a learning-oriented action (Race, 2006). In order to be effective, feedback on formative assessment needs to possess a number of qualities: it needs to be timely, constructive, motivational, personal, and directly related to assessment criteria and learning outcomes (Race, 2006; Irons, 2008; Juwah, Macfarlane, Matthew, Nicol, & Smith, 2004). A formative feedback strategy should address as many as possible of these attributes in order to promote learning. Assessments become formative when the information is used to adapt teaching and learning to meet student needs. When teachers know how students are progressing and where they are having trouble, they can use this information to make necessary instructional adjustment, such as re-teaching, trying alternative instructional approaches or offering more opportunities for practice. These activities can lead to improved students success (Sawyer, Graham & Harris, 1992).

Feedback given as part of formative assessment helps learners become aware of any gaps that exist between their desired goal and their current knowledge, understanding, or skill and guides them through actions necessary to obtain goals (Sadler, 2005). In addition to that, formative assessment helps support the expectation that all children can learn to high levels and counteracts the cycle in which students attribute poor performance to lack of ability and therefore become discouraged and unwilling to invest in further learning (Vispoel & Austin, 1995).

According to Ugodulunwa (2008) Formative feedback is the type of assessment carried out periodically during the course of teaching for monitoring students learning progress and provides feedback to students and teachers. In addition to that, formative feedback represents information communicated to the learner that is intended to modify the learners thinking or behavior for the purpose of improving learning. However, the main goal of formative feedback delivered by teacher, in the classroom or elsewhere, is to enhance learning

and or performance, engendering the formation of accurate, targeted conceptualizations and skills (Narciss & Huth, 2004).

Effective and high-quality feedback has been identified as an integral part of the learning process (Ramsdeen, 2003). Extensive research, not only underpins the importance of feedback in enhancing achievement levels, but also emphasizes the obligation of academic institutions to effectively integrate feedback in the learning experiences (Yorke, 2003). Feedback given as part of formative assessment enables learners to consolidate their strengths, identify their weaknesses and guide them about the necessary action in order to achieve the learning outcomes (Brown, 1997). Although it is true that no matter how well a lesson is planned and implemented, some students will still experience difficulty in achieving the desired learning outcome, but with formative feedback, teachers can improve their pedagogy.

Statement of the problem

With the introduction of new curriculum in the teacher education system in Nigeria, child friendly practice is a concept that must be studied by all the NCE students in the teacher training institutes. However, a Poor performance recorded by NCE 1 students of Federal College of Education (Technical) Gombe in the Theory and Practice of Child Friendly School curriculum during the 2014/2015 academic session is very alarming. The 62% failure recorded as against the only 38% that passed the course is not too encouraging.

The poor students' performance might be as a result of Theory and Practice of Child Friendly School teachers' inability to identify and address learning needs of students through the use of feedback from instruction. In this era of professionalization of teaching, it is therefore imperative to find out if students taught using formative feedback perform better than those taught without it.

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant difference in the mean scores of the pre-test of students' who were exposed to formative feedback and those that were not exposed to it.
2. There is no significant difference in the mean scores of post-tests of students taught using formative feedback and those taught without it.

Methodology

Research Design

The research design used in the study was a quasi-experimental design which involves pre-test and post-test using the experimental and control groups. There were two groups sample in this design drawn from the population of N C E one. Assigning of treatment and control groups was done through the administration of pre-test in Theory and Practice of Child Friendly School curriculum. The test was administered to the N C E one group A & B of the college after which the result was used to regroup the students into experimental and control group. The selection of the two groups was determined by the pre-test result which indicated equivalent ability levels among them.

Population and Sample

The population for this study consisted of all N C E one students in Federal College of Education (Technical) Gombe of Gombe state. A sample used in the study was 120 N C E one students, made up of 60 female and 60 males students. Each group had 60 male and female students. A simple random sampling technique was used. The choice of this technique was to ensure that an equal and independent probability of selecting the students.

Instrument for Data Collection

The instrument used for the data collection was pre-test and post-test Theory and Practice of Child Friendly School achievement test. The test consisted of twenty (20) objective test items. The instrument was subjected to validation by experts based on content, cognitive level and appropriateness. The reliability of the instrument was determine

using the result obtained from the trial-testing, using Kuder Richardson method (K-R20) and the reliability co-efficient of 0.78 was obtained which shows that the instrument was reliable.

Procedure

The researchers with the assistance of the Theory and Practice of Child Friendly School teachers organized the N C E I into examination hall. The pre-test was administered under the normal condition for writing examination. The result was computed and used in regrouping the students into experimental and control group. The groups were taught for six weeks. The experimental group was given two formative feedback tests on areas of weaknesses of each student on each test. A diagnostic test was prepared for students in the experimental group to determine mastery of the students, in the area of skills, aptitude, ability and mastery. The two formative feedback tests reflected the

behavioural objectives stated in the curriculum. The control group was not given any feedback test or diagnostic test. The post-test was administered to the experimental and control groups under the normal condition for examination.

The hypotheses were tested using t-test at 0.05 level of significance. The Vassastat online statistical software was used for the data analysis. For the decision rule, where the calculated t value was greater than the table value the hypothesis was rejected. However, where the calculated value was less than the critical value the hypothesis was accepted

Results

Hypotheses 1

There is no significant difference in the mean scores of pre-test of students who were exposed to formative feedback and those that were not exposed to it.

Table 1: Score of Experimental and control groups for pre-test

Group	N	x	Sd	Df	t-cal	t-critical
Experimental Group	60	5.2	1.92	118	0.95	2.00
Control Group	60	5.2	1.93			

The result in table 1 indicates that the calculated t-value of 0.95 is less than the table value of 2.00. This therefore means that the null hypothesis was accepted hence, there is no significant difference in the mean scores of the pre-test of the experimental and control group.

Hypotheses 2

There is no significant difference in the mean scores of the post-test of students taught using formative feedback and those taught without it.

Table 2: Score of Experimental and control groups for post-test.

Group	N	x	Sd	Df	t-cal	t-critical
Experimental Group	60	10.7	1.5	118	5.52	2.00
Control Group	60	6.3	2.79			

The result in Table 2 indicates that the calculated t-test value of 5.52, is greater than the table value of 2.00. This therefore means that the null hypothesis was rejected in favour of the control group and the condition is that, there is a significant difference in the means scores of the post-test of the students taught using formative feedback than those taught without it.

Discussion

It is evident from the findings that students taught using formative feedback performed significantly better than those taught without it. This is in agreement with the views of (Vispoel & Autin 1995, Yorke 2003, & Huth 2004) that feedback from instruction has the potentials to improve performance. Therefore, adopting formative feedback strategy in the teaching and learning will be of great importance in improving students' academic achievement.

Conclusion

Having discovered from the findings of the study that formative feedback is significant in teaching and learning of Theory and Practice of Child Friendly School, and by extension, all subjects. The paper concludes that for any lesson to be successful, formative feedback is needed.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Teachers should always incorporate formative feedback into their lessons because it aids in enhancing their teaching.
2. Students should be encouraged to provide formative feedback in all lessons so that the teachers know how far they have learned a given lesson.
3. Curriculum planners and educational administrators should consider formative feedback as valuable part of

teaching and learning, so that it should always be incorporated in the curriculum.

4. Teachers should look at possibilities of integrating formative feedback on students learning through an online feedback system.

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