



RESEARCH ARTICLE

STUDENTS AND TEACHERS' PERCEPTION OF TEACHING METHODS NECESSARY FOR THE TEACHING OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH COURSES IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN EDO STATE: IMPLICATION FOR CURRICULUM PLANNING

¹Dr. Osayande Eric Iyobo and ^{2,*}Dr. John Egharevba

¹Department of Health, Environmental Education and Human Kinetics, University of Benin, Benin City

²Department of Curriculum and Instructional Technology, University of Benin, Benin City

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ABSTRACT

The study examined the choice of students and teachers in regard to the use of teaching styles for effective teaching environmental health courses. This study investigated the relationship between the independent variables of students' and teachers' perceptions and the choice requirements necessary for the validation and development of dependent variables of the teaching method of environmental health. The descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. The population of the study consisted of health and physical education, geography, biology and agricultural science teachers and students in selected secondary schools in Edo State. The sampling method used was the multi-stage sampling technique which was employed to select 1000 participants for the study. The instrument used for the study was a questionnaire. The data collected were subjected to statistical analysis using Pearson Product Moment correlation, Spearman correlation coefficient for two independent sample mean, the Scheffe post hoc test. They were used to test the null hypotheses formulated to solve the problem of the study at 0.05 alpha level of significance. Results of the study revealed a significant relationship between students and teachers perceptions towards the teaching method used in environmental health with a calculated mean of 1.7631, standard deviation .58504 and rho value of .507 (P<0.05). Based on the findings, it is recommended that the teachers should use adequate and effective teaching method to bring about effective understanding of the content of environmental health course.

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INTRODUCTION

Due to the present National Education Policies of Education (2004), most of our children, hopefully, will be exposed to some form of educational experience within the framework of formal school system. An environmental health education programme takes on an added importance when viewed from the fact that the greatest number of children ever in the history of the nation would be modified or influenced in one way or the other through the educational process. It therefore becomes the full and essential responsibility of school authorities and appropriate personnel within the school system to see that these children develop behavioural dispositions that are capable of helping them become healthy (Ajala & Owie, 2008).

In schools, however, teaching is not simply a matter of helping students to learn. It is a matter of seeing to it that students learn certain designated materials which is the content that makes up the bulk of the curriculum. Ostensibly, this curriculum material is arranged so as to facilitate learning. It follows that what has been learned previously, paves the way for what is to come. Yet, in every teaching situation you will be faced with the necessity of selecting from several alternative strategies, styles and tactics the ones most likely to result in the desired learning. Unfortunately, the results may not always be as hoped, but if the content and methods the teacher select are appropriate, teachers should have a high degree of success (Cunningham & Cunningham, 2004). Moreover, conscious efforts have been made by man over the ages to combat and forestall the implementation of environmental health curriculum which although was one of the courses of study prescribed by the National Policy on Education under the 6-3-3-4 system of education.

*Corresponding author: Dr. John Egharevba,
Department of Educational Psychology and Curriculum Studies
Faculty of Education, University of Benin, Benin City.

Other courses are personal health, mental health, nutrition, environmental health and first aids which were under health education subject (Imogie, 1986). A lot of terminology exists that describe the teaching methods available. The health educator only has to select the ones that suit the topic of discussion. These can be in form of plays, storytelling, or role playing, equipment centered technique involving the use of picture projectors, tape recorders, field trip, group discussion, lectures, lectures-discussion, material-centered and method using graphs, charts, flannel boards, picture resource or guest speakers. Since the list is such a long one, Oshodin (1990) devised some strategies that can help the teacher in his or her selection of teaching aids and method.

They include the following:

- Any instructional procedure should be regarded as an educational tool and not merely for the purpose of entertainment.
- The technique should be suited to the readiness and the maturity of the group and the grader level using it.
- The method of presentation should be guided by the objectives of the subject field, the purpose of the school, and education in general.
- Adequate time, space and equipment should be available to ensure effective implementation.
- The procedure should provide for sequential growth and development through a planned progression of activities and concepts.
- There should be adequate planning and preparation on the part of the teacher in the use of any instructional approach.
- The procedure should be of interest and appeal to the learner and considerate of his problems and needs.
- The method should utilize or incorporate experiences that assure a significance in the thinking and behavior of each learner.
- In all instances, the technique or procedure should be a vehicle by which to facilitate definite learning.

In spite of all the suggested guidelines and strategies, the teacher should at least be at ease at making his or her choice. However, the dilemma that accompanies the problems of choice does not end with curriculum content and methods. The same dilemma confronts the teacher on choice of materials and style of teaching. Curriculum materials are commonly paper, chalk, chemicals, electricity, the print and non-print materials such as style of teaching, books, films and audiotapes which can be referred to as "software". It is almost impossible today to list all that is available under material in bibliography. But one must be careful to select the most relevant, versatile and effective medium that best relate to the content.

In situations where materials available are too general, it is worth considering the possibility of actually making one improve instead. According to Pratt (1980), teachers have been known to have made films or even write their own textbooks. Therefore, making slides, overhead transparencies, filmstrips, videotapes may not be above the abilities of the teachers. Also, students can become deeply involved in producing books of short stories, anthologies of poems, films, slide-tape presentations, scientific models, sets of flash cards or multimedia kits.

Statement of the Problem

Environmental health course lacks coherent teaching style because the course is not available in the school curriculum and where it is available in the related field, there is no correlation with the instructional materials available and environmental health course that exist in a related field. In most cases, the contents of environmental health are better presented on the field because is an exploratory course, which need a good combination of teaching style and content in order to bring about behavioural change. Specifically, the study intends to ascertain teachers and students perception of teaching method for teaching environmental health course.

Hypothesis

One major hypothesis was formulated and tested.

Ho₁: There would be no significant difference in students and teachers' perception on the objective/contents that would be considered appropriate for environmental health course.

Methodology

The descriptive survey design was used for the study. The population of the study consisted of health and physical education, geography, biology and agricultural science teachers and students in selected secondary schools in Edo State. The sampling method used was the multi-stage sampling technique which was used to select 1000 participants for the study. The data collected were subjected to statistical analysis using the Pearson product Moment correlation and the Spearman correlation coefficient of two independent sample mean.

Instrument

The instrument used for the study was a questionnaire. The instrument was an adoption from Mills (1996) and the West African Examination Council (WAEC) 2003 syllabus, content on health science, biology, agricultural science, geography and physical education. The research instrument was divided into six sections. These include: Section A for demographic data, Section B which focused on curriculum objectives of environmental health, Section C which dealt with the content of environmental health, Section D which addressed objectives and content that were observed by the invigilator, Section E dealt with teaching aids and Section F which contained items related to teaching methods employed in teaching environmental health. This instrument had a reliability coefficient of 0.84 using Cronbach's alpha. The instrument was administered to the sampled respondents in the selected ten (10) secondary schools from the three (3) Senatorial Districts in Edo State personally with the aid of four research assistants.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Hypothesis

There would be no significant relationship between the students and teachers' perception on teaching method that will be considered for teaching environmental health courses.

Table. Spearman rank order analysis of significant relationship between students and teachers' perception on teaching method used in environmental health course

Variable	N	Mean	Std	rho	Df	t _{cal}
Students and teachers	848	1.7631	.58504	.507	847	43.622
Students		0.986	0.363			
Teachers		0.788	0.222			

P<0.05

Table above shows the rho results for the responses on students and teachers' perception on the teaching method, a calculated mean of 1.7631, standard deviation .58504 at an alpha (α) level of 0.05 and a rho value of .507, shows that there is a relationship between students and teachers towards the teaching method to be included in the environmental health course. From the table above, it shows that there is a positive relationship between the students and teachers because rho is +.507. Hence, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between students and teachers' perception towards the teaching method was rejected indicating that there is significant relationship between students and teachers perception towards the teaching method used in environmental health course.

The hypothesis sought to find out if there is significant relationship in the students and teachers' perceptions on teaching method that will be considered appropriate for teaching environmental courses. The teaching methods define the teacher's personality because without a good method of teaching, the topics will not be coordinated, and well passed across to the learner, most students observe the teacher's personality because of the method the teacher has adopted in teaching. The students are always in the best position to determine which method is most effective for them to absorb the instruction being passed across by the teacher. The findings tally with the needs of the students because there was high correlation in the chosen methods by the students and teacher. The study revealed that there is agreement between the students and teachers towards the teaching method appropriate for teaching environmental health course.

These methods include

- Field trip method
- Lecture method
- Experimental method
- Demonstration method
- Audiovisual method
- Macro teaching method
- Incidental teaching method
- Discussion method
- Tutorial method
- Role playing method

These findings of this study support that of Arie (1977) which stated that the general educational goals must determine the curriculum direction which normally translates into specific curriculum activities that also determine teaching strategies to be employed including communication media to be used.

There is need to harmonize the objectives/course content as identified by students with those of the teachers. Admittedly, Singh (2007) supported the findings that even the best curriculum and the most perfect syllabus remains dead unless quickened into life by the right methods of teaching and the right kind of teachers. This agrees with the finding in the result of hypothesis nine that all the methods are significant to the teaching of environmental health course.

Conclusion

That a good teaching method is very vital in defining the teachers personality as an important component of environmental health education course content.

Recommendation

The best teaching method or method considered good for teaching environmental health education should also be emphasized in curriculum planning and development.

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