Re-visitaton of Modern Teaching and learning Techniques for Sustainable Education in Nigeria

By

Kajo. D. Ph.D

Introduction

Teaching like any other skill, can be acquired and refined with the help of methods and techniques peculiar to it. This work desires to re-awaken a renewed insight into the various methods, techniques and devices of teaching in order to enhance learning. We shall therefore proceed by way of looking at a new concept of education, creative education, the art of teaching, main characteristics of learning, good teaching, marxisms of teaching, and then identify the why for use of modern teaching and learning techniques, an exposition of modern techniques and methods of learning. We shall then do an appraisal for materials, techniques and modern methods of instruction and draw a conclusion.

A Sustainable Concept of Education

Today the world is passing through rapid changes. In such a world, education becomes the chief agent or vehicle of change and transformation and must itself too change along with the times. The imperatives of new times, new demands and new visions require an education of such quality as never was visualized in human history. No wonder a new and comprehensive concept of education is emerging. It is being realized that education is a concept philosophically evolved, psychologically developed and socially based. (Kochhar, 2007). Education is being considered a functional phenomenon and also brings changes in that phenomenon.

John Dewey, a progressive educator of the present century calls education, the development of all those capacities in the individual which will enable him to control his environment and fulfill his possibilities. Redden in Kochhar (2007) states “Education is the
deliberate and systematic influence exerted by the mature person upon the immature, through instruction, upon the immature, through instruction, discipline and harmonious development of physical, intellectual, aesthetic, social and spiritual powers of the human being, according to individual and social needs and directed towards the union of the educated with his creator as the 'final end'. Horne in Kochhar (2007) also writes, "The new education is an educational philosophy that is improving school-room practices, making learning a more powerful process, giving children the sense of reality in the school, making schools into workshops laboratories, libraries and inspiring educational experimentation.

Out of the sociological, psychological and philosophical basis of modern education there have risen a number of significant trends in teaching and learning practices.

Creative Education

One of the most significant trends in today's schools is the encouragement of creativity. Human advancement comes through original thought and invention. To encourage original thought and invention is the great role of creative education. To this end, the modern school awakens and develops whatever is unique and distinctive in every individual child, irrespective of psychological, physical or social differences. Difference or uniqueness is being cherished rather than lamented. Emphasis is laid on differences rather than sameness more or originality, inventiveness than on something old. A way of excellence is encouraged in all endeavours whether of intellectual, aesthetic or moral impart. Creative education becomes a key to greatness of effort and of spirit. The children are not made to fit into a set of educational mould now. In the new school there is much individual instruction, individual initiative and self education. Creativity is fostered through the organization of the entire school program in general and thorough creative expression in the arts in particular.

Children are helped to set their own goals, plan their own activities, work in groups in which opinions can be shared. Creativity exists in the entire fabric of the new school. Children have liberty to
experiment, opportunity to find new ways of handling materials and freedom to express their own unique personalities. Experience is enriched by expression; the expressive phase of activity gives meaning to experience. Creativity serves to quicken perception, strengthen emotion and unify interests. Imagination is allowed to have the full play. Pupils are encouraged to find relationships among facts, discover the similarities and differences among things in the universe, test hypothesis already formulated and solve problems keeping alive the spirit of adventure in learning.

The Art of Teaching

One of the basic truths in education is that the quality of education depends largely upon the quality of the teacher. Teaching is more than standing before a class and applying a few specific techniques. It is not merely presenting textbooks information and then resting the students ability to repeat it: there is no magic formula for transforming knowledge from the teachers mind to align the pupils. Teaching is not a mechanical process. It is an intricate, exacting, challenging job.

Teaching is not a monologue but a dialogue, a dialogue in which one partner is vocal, but the other partner may be simple expressions on the face, by some gesture or exclamation, or by brief participation in the form of a query partake in the dialogue.

Most other professionals who deal with children can afford some amount of specialization: much of the physicians attention is given to the diseased body; the psychiatrist is concerned largely with the disordered personality; the teacher must pay attention to the entire complex organism. He is concerned with the development of the whole child—intellectually, emotionally, socially, spiritually and in some degree physically. In the light of this requirement, the modern teaching process stresses three fundamentals:

a) Emphasizing the learner.

b) Guiding the learner and

c) Promoting learner development.

Teaching is considered an art, children are the material with which
the teacher has to deal. Teaching is a sublime art. It is impossible to separate the teacher and teaching. The teacher, in fact, mirrors himself into the child; he puts an indelible stamp on the young, growing plastic mind of the child. The child generally takes after the teacher. As a matter of fact, leaning is interaction. The teacher is not to make the children blind followers but intelligent leaders. He has no hammers and no brushes. He cannot touch the child yet he is to make an impact felt, introducing changes in the behaviour pattern and ultimately the personality of the child. Not only that, His influence should prevail even if he is not there. As a matter of fact, his greatest strength lies in being dispensable.

Teaching is an art and the teacher an artist so far as he;
1) Creates learning situations.
2) Motivates the child to learn.
3) Arranges for conditions which help in the growth of the child's mind and body.
4) Utilizes the initiative and play urges of the children to facilitate learning.
5) Turns the child into creative beings.
6) Inspires them with the nobility of thoughts feeling and action.
7) Makes them self-reliant and resourceful, and
8) Help them to be what they can be.

The teacher has to be a very careful artist. He has to create a new life pattern full, vigour and activity.

Main Characteristics of Learning
1. Learning is growth: Through his daily activities, the child grows both mentally and physically.
2. Learning is adjustment: Learning helps the individual to adjust adequately to new situations.
3. Learning is organizing experience: Learning is a synthesis of old and new experiences which result in new organization of pattern of experiences.
4. Learning is purposeful: It is goal directed.
5. Learning is intelligent: Learning takes place when an insight is
gained and the process understood.
6. Learning is action: The individual must become an active participant.
7. Learning is both individual and social.
8. Learning is un-enforceable: It cannot be enforced upon the human being.
9. Learning is a product of the environment: It does not take place in a vacuum.
10. True learning affects the conduct of the learner.
11. Learning is whole: All activities are related.
12. Learning frequently depends upon insights: It occurs when a situation originally without meaning, suddenly becomes charged with meaning or when the solution to a problem or the way to a goal becomes apparent.

Good Teaching
Teaching at all levels demands skill in same basic elements of good teaching, since the goal of teaching is desirable learning, the quality of teaching can be tested only in terms of the quality of learning to which it leads:
1. Recognizes individual differences among pupils.
2. It is need-centered: Learning takes place better if there are felt needs on the part of the pupils.
3. Improves the quality of living of every child.
4. Interesting.
5. Kindly and sympathetic. The teacher should be witty never sarcastic, critical or discouraging.
6. Challenge the child to learn.
7. Sense the productive moment.
8. Create the learning situations.
9. Causes, facilitates and promotes learning.
10. Conforms to the aims of teaching. Society invests in schools in order to get more and better answers to the many questions that perplex it.
11. Encourages general development.
12. Considers the social background of learners.
13. Is not tied to any method.
14. Dynamic
15. Reduces the distance between the teacher and the taught.
16. Well planned and systematic.

Maxims of Teaching
A good teacher should be familiar with the general maxims of teaching:
1. proceed from known to the unknown.
2. Proceed from analysis to synthesis.
3. Proceed from simple to complex.
4. Proceed from whole to part.
5. Proceed from concrete to abstract.
6. Proceed from the particular to the general.
7. Proceed from empirical to rational.
8. Proceed from psychological to logical.
9. Proceed from actual to the representative.
10. Proceed from near to distant.

Why Use Modern Teaching and Learning Techniques
There are five main reasons we might justify the use of these teaching/learning expedients. These are:

a) by engaging most senses, teach something more thoroughly so that the children may retain the subject matter taught.
b) to teach something more quickly, efficiently and effectively with a quicker chance of getting through the syllabus.
c) as a means of creating and sustaining interests.
d) as a means of integrating a number of separate pieces of work already learned by other means; and
e) as a means of bringing with the experience and understanding of children something which is new to them. This often includes the presentation to children, in simplified form of matters which are appreciated fully only by adults.

Thus a proper use of these tricks/techniques of trade makes learning
quickest and interesting.

**Modern Techniques in Teaching and Learning**

These are grouped in various ways: i.e.

a. **Techniques of limited application** = which include both skills in verbal presentation, suited only to particular facts and mechanical devices which illustrate single facts or the process. The mechanical devices include much specialized apparatus. Every fact offers its own opportunity for bright imaginary and forceful expression. e.g. counting sticks for teaching elementary numbers.

b. **Techniques of general application**: In this category, techniques such as use of cinema, film strip projectors, epidiascope, linguaphone e.t.c. may be used in the teaching of subjects.

Techniques/devices may also be divided into yet another category – teaching devices and fixing devices. Under the first category we have all the different types of devices which helps in effective teaching such as illustrations, questionings, answering e.t.c. fixing devices are meant to fix the material learnt in the mind of the learner. Drill, review, recapitulations, questioning, answering, e.t.c. It is not always possible to draw a line of demarcation between a teaching device and fixing device as the same may serve both purposes. Questioning is such a device.

There is another classification of techniques/devices – Artificial and Natural oral communication through narration, exposition e.t.c. are artificial devices school visits celebration of festivals or other aids are natural devices of teaching.

Other simple techniques include:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Narration</th>
<th>2. Description</th>
<th>3. Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4. Questioning</td>
<td>5. Answering</td>
<td>6. Illustrations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. Project Method</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

30. Classroom Methods—i.e. telling, Lecture, Discussion, Demonstration, Problem Solving Assignment, Supervised Study.
Appraisal For Materials, Techniques and Modes of Instruction

Materials for study in every field and area have increased enormously during the past few years. New improved books, the array of audio-visual materials e.t.c. are indication of our new riches. Educators have found that many teaching problems can be solved partly or wholly, by the proper use of the rich experience that can be gained through these aids. We have started explaining the potentialities of these teaching materials. Now, each of the new classrooms does not have only space using maps charts, pictures, specimens, models, exhibits, reference books, craft materials, picture projectors, recorders and record players, but also aquariums, growing plants, drawing boards, television, radio, everyday science experimental apparatus and the like. Every effort is made to ensure that each instructional room will provide a healthful living and working environment for pupils and teachers.

A variety of self-regulating self-acting and thinking machines are being used in educational institutions. Electronic and mechanical devices are helping the teachers and the pupil. A sophisticated instructional technology based on the existing knowledge of human behavior is coming up.

Institutions and services of a new kind intended to help people teach themselves-language, laboratories, programmed computers and personalized teaching aids, audio-visual (aids like radio, films, television e.t.c. and new types of instructional techniques like team teaching are integrated into educational systems. Not only that, photographs, radio bulletins, news and live programmers are being relayed through satellites. The new multi media approach has revolutionized teaching and learning. Students learn at their own pace. Teachers is in a position to look after a large number of children and influence positively their lives.

Conclusion

The modern techniques and methods of learning have made modern education a revolt against the bookishness of the past. Education has been psychologised and the psychology of childhood is cured of the childishness of psychology from which it has been hither to suffering. The child is placed on the pedestal of glory and the teacher's position in
this respect has altogether changed. Methods of instruction and contents of instruction have also undergone profound changes and have become new and novel. Large classes, inadequate equipment, cramming for examinations, futile teaching of under nourished children are characteristics of yester-years, instead of inculcating a dull reception, an uncritical acceptance and a passive spectatorship, the new methodology encourages active perception, active thinking and active acting. We must all embrace it in order to bring revolutionary change in the practice of education in our country.
References

Caswell, H.L. (1957), Great Challenges for Education, Teacher college Record.