

Practice-Oriented Teaching and Learning Methods: A Prerequisite for Effective and Efficient Content Delivery of Christian Religious Education in Secondary Schools in Nigeria

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Abstract: The study investigated into how practice-oriented teaching and learning methods could serve as a prerequisite for the effective and efficient content delivery of Christian Religious Education (CRE) in secondary schools in Nsukka Local Government Area of Enugu State, Nigeria. Two research questions were posed to guide the study. Using a descriptive survey design, the study made use of the population of 750 SS1 students from all the 30 government secondary schools in the area of study. The 150 students from 5 government owned schools were selected out of 750 SS1 students using simple random sampling technique. A questionnaire titled “practice-oriented Questionnaire” was used to collect data from the respondents. Weighted mean was used to analyze data. Some of the findings of the study based on the data analyzed and discussed showed that teachers of CRE in Nigeria do not: teach what appeals to student’s senses, imagination, feelings and interest, draw their lessons from the familiar things of the visible world and things of everyday life. Teachers of CRE in Nigeria secondary schools should frequently call on students to read and retell bible stories, role-play, mime, sing, debate and dramatize to enable depicts biblical figures and events, etc. discussions, recommendations and conclusions were made based on the findings of the study.

Key words: Practice-oriented, effective and efficient, teaching and learning, interest, methods, Christian Religious Education

INTRODUCTION

The sole aim of teaching and learning at any level is to bring a desirable change of behaviour due to experience in the lives of the learners. To bring this fundamental change, the appropriate method of teaching suitable for the learners and the specific objectives to be attained should be applied in the context of classroom content delivery. Based on the national policy on education (2013), Christian Religious Education is a subject that is basically taught at every level of Nigeria’s educational process. This helps in inculcating in the students discipline, character formation, humility, respect, love, kindness, justice, spirit of forgiveness, obedience, discipline, hard work and devotion to duty, selfless service, etc. In the views of Ogwu *et al.* (2016), Christian Religious Education is a subject that instills in the youths the spirit of tolerance, reconciliation, peaceful co-existence and non-violence which provides opportunities for the Nigerian youths to learn more about

God, thereby developing their faith in God. The teaching of CRE according to in Ogwu *et al.* (2016) helps the learners to develop a deep sense of responsibility, respect for authorities and sensitizes people to respect the rights and privileges of others.

A cursory look at the Nigerian society will definitely reveal that things have gone awry as there is a total negation of the aforementioned benefits of CRE in Nigeria. There is high rate of robbery, crime, kidnapping, rapping, fraud, corruption, etc., all these problems came as result of youth’s negligence of CRE that accrued due to poor teaching method which simultaneously led to decline in interest and value of CRE in Nigeria. Therefore, the teaching of CRE as a moral subject with practice-oriented methods like constructivist method, discussion, demonstration, drama, stimulation and discovery methods, etc. will be very pivotal in the effective and efficient classroom content delivery and in resuscitating the interest of the students which had declined due to the menace of poor teaching methods and consequently will

help in bringing back the nature and value of the subject. There are outcries in what should be done to bring back discipline and good morals in Nigerian society. Effective teaching of CRE in secondary school as outlined by Ogwu *et al.* (2016) will equally increase the interest of the students in the curriculum. These outcries are pointing towards the need for a paradigm shift from the conventional method of teaching to a practice-oriented based method of teaching.

Teaching methods are great weapons that teachers employ in their profession. This comprises the principles and means used for instruction in the classroom (Ogwu *et al.*, 2016). Teaching methods by Ogwu *et al.* (2016) can affect the learner's interest positively or negatively. However, researchers have noticed that teachers in the secondary schools teach CRE mostly with conventional methods like lecture method (Ogwu *et al.*, 2016). Lecture method according to Ogwu *et al.* (2016) encourages laziness, rote and memorization which kill student's interest and low enrolment in CRE. Practice-oriented based method of teaching is a contemporary teaching method that helps in human development in many ways like expanding the imagination, developing creativity and an aesthetic sense; developing social and psychological sensitivity (Ogwu *et al.*, 2016). Analyzing further, it is a method of teaching that involves more of physical activities in teaching and learning processes which invariably improves academic achievement and interest of the learners. Effective lesson delivery as noted by Ogwu must sustain student's interest and encourage their active participation.

In the classroom, no two teachers are alike in terms of teaching styles and methods. Empirically, an effective teaching style engages students in the learning process and helps them develop critical thinking skills. Traditional teaching styles have evolved with the advent of differentiated instruction, prompting teachers to adjust their styles toward student's learning needs. Education according to McKimm and Jollie (2007) is a learning process which deals with unknown outcomes with circumstances which require a complex synthesis of knowledge, skills and experience to solve problems which are often one off problems. Education refers its questions and actions to principles and values rather than merely standards and criteria" (McKimm and Jollie, 2007). In their analysis further, in mainstream education, practice can be defined as "a learning process with known outcomes, often dealing in repetitive skills and uniform performances which are expressed as standards or criteria." The concept of practice as opined by Playdon and Goodson has application when:

- There is some specifiable performance that has to be mastered
- Practice is required for the mastery of it and
- Little emphasis is placed on the underlying rationale

Teaching implies that a rationale is to be grasped behind the skill or body of knowledge". Teaching methods and approaches are important for understanding and improving educational processes, since, they shape student's learning environment and influence student's motivation and achievement. For instructions in the classroom to be progressive, interesting, student centered, interest-moulding and impoverishing, the method of classroom instructions has to dwell on what students can actually feel parts of. Over the past years and decades in the Nigeria's educational system which revolves around the cardinal points of teaching and learning, the methods of teaching has always been anchored on the traditional "chalk and talk" method of teaching. This method of teaching and learning for years now has been methodically and holistically explored and used in the course of Christian Religious Education (CRE) classroom instructions in Nigeria's secondary schools. Classroom teaching often involves seeking out opportunities for learners to practice classroom skills ranging from simple procedures to much more complex skills. In the teaching and learning of Christian Religious Education in Nigeria's secondary schools, much of the learning is necessarily 'learning by observation and little of 'experiential learning which is 'learning by doing'. Practice oriented teaching and learning according to McKimm and Jollie (2007) considers the challenges of teaching in opportunistic settings and looks at ways to integrate teaching commitments and learning activities into typical day-to-day practical scenarios. It is in this view that Nzewi cited in Nwagbo and Chukelu (2004) asserted that practical activities can be regarded as a strategy that could be adopted to make the task of a teacher (teaching) more real to the students as opposed to abstract or theoretical presentation of facts, principles and concepts of subject matters. Nzewi maintained that practical activities should engage the students in hands-on, mind-on activities, using varieties of instructional techniques to drive the lesson home.

Practice-oriented method of teaching in the view of Jackson (2012) urges the students to engage with the real world and analyze everything that happens in different life spheres. Instead of conventional teaching methods, students should be consequently taken to visit churches, seminaries, monasteries and different religious centers and organization where they will be able to witness how the knowledge that they have learnt could be applied to

the real world. Multiple days should be set aside for this practice and all students should be in attendance. The idea is to get Christian Religious Education (CRE) students engaged and to connect their learning to the real world. If (CRE) teachers can show them how what they are teaching connects to the real world then their own brain cells are going to connect them and associate them. New methods of teaching as stipulated by Jackson (2012) have the purpose to improve the quality of education and involve students in educational process. Innovations mean a progress and development. Methodology as posited by Ameh and Dantani (2012) is very vital in any teaching-learning situation. The method adopted by the teacher may promote or hinder learning. It may sharpen mental activities which are the bases of social power or may discourage initiatives and curiosity, thus, making self-reliance and survival difficult. There are different types of methods for efficient and effective teaching. These methods include: lecture, demonstration/drama, laboratory, field trip, assignment, peer-teaching method, constructivist teaching, etc. According to Nwagbo and Chukelu (2004), a number of factors have been identified as contributing to the non-acquisition of skills by secondary school students which invariably lead to poor performance and one of the factors is the teacher variable, that is the teacher's method of teaching. Furthermore, Okoli cited also in Nwagbo and Chukelu (2004) indicated that many teachers prefer the traditional expository/lecture method of teaching that is a teaching technique in which one person, the teacher, presents a spoken discourse on a particular subject and shy away from activity-oriented teaching methods which are student centered (such as inquiry method, discovery method. These teacher-centered approaches which places the teacher as the sole possessor of knowledge and the students as passive recipients of knowledge may not enhance achievement or promote positive attitude to Christian Religious Education in Nigeria. It is against this background that this study seeks to address how practice-oriented teaching and learning methods could help in the effective and efficient content delivery of Christian Religious Education in secondary schools Nsukka Local Government Area of Enugu State in Nigeria.

Statement of the problem: The traditional or conventional "chalk and talk method of teaching and learning of Christian Religious Education (CRE) that has persisted for decades of years in Nigeria is now acquiring inferior results when compared with the more practical, modern and revolutionary teaching methods that are available for use in schools today. Studies reveal that the teaching methodologies implored over the years had not been yielding positive anticipated results. Peaceful coexistence is required, problem-free society is envisaged, greater

student interaction and improvement is encouraged, the boundaries of authority are being broken down and a focus on enjoyment over grades is emphasized. As teachers, it's necessary to be able to teach and make the students remain engaging. It puts a greater level of responsibility on the students and consequently, makes the interest of students and value of Christian Religious Education (CRE) to be at a greater increased balance.

The poor academic performance and increased negligence of Christian Religious Education is of interest to the researchers, prompting, therefore, the push in interest towards finding the most practical solution to the alarming hindrance. These problems could be as a result of the teaching methods used by the teachers of Christian Religious Education in Nigeria secondary schools. There are many teaching methods which range from lecture method, discussion method, drama method, interactive method, teacher's centeredness approach, group-learning approach and so on of which many are not practice-oriented in nature. Therefore, this study aims at ascertaining how practice-oriented methods of teaching could help in the effective and efficient content delivery of Christian Religious Education in secondary schools in Nsukka Local Government Area of Enugu State, Nigeria.

Purpose of the study: The study aimed at describing how practice-oriented teaching and learning could help in the effective and efficient content delivery of Christian Religious Education in secondary schools in Nigeria. Specifically, the study has the following objectives.

To ascertain the different teaching approaches that CRE teachers have been using in the content delivery of Christian Religious Education (CRE) in secondary schools in Nsukka Local Government Area of Enugu State, Nigeria. To ascertain how practice-oriented teaching and learning could enhance the effective and efficient content delivery of Christian Religious Education (CRE) in secondary schools in Nsukka Local Government Area of Enugu State, Nigeria.

Research questions: What ways has teachers employed in the content delivery of Christian Religious Education (CRE) in secondary schools in Nsukka Local Government Area of Enugu State, Nigeria? How could practice-oriented teaching and learning enhance the effective and efficient content delivery of Christian Religious Education (CRE) in secondary schools in Nsukka Local Government Area of Enugu State, Nigeria?

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Design of the study: The study adopted a descriptive survey research design which according to Shields and

Rangarjan (2013) is used to describe characteristics of a population or phenomenon being studied. This design will therefore be useful to this study as it will help to describe how the features/characteristics of practice oriented teaching and learning methods like could enhance the effective and efficient content delivery of Christian Religious Education (CRE) in secondary schools in Nsukka Local Government Area of Enugu State, Nigeria.

Population of the study: The population comprises of all the 750 SS1 students from all the 30 government secondary schools in Nsukka Local Government area of Enugu, state (Post Primary Schools Management Board [PPSMB], Nsukka, 2016). The researcher's choice of students is because they are the direct recipient of the different teaching methods employed by CRE teachers in classroom content delivery. The choice of SS1 students is due to the fact that at this level, Christian Religious Education (CRE) is compulsory and the students have not chosen whether to continue with the subject or not. Consequently, if a good teaching method is applied at this level, the students could go on with the subject thereby making the teachers to maintain with the accurate adopted teaching style which is a prerequisite for effective classroom teaching and learning.

Sample and sampling technique: Using random sampling technique, 150 students were selected from 5 co-educational government's owned secondary schools. This corresponds with the findings of Egbe, Ezema (2015) which is of the view that if the population is a few hundreds, 20% of the whole population will suffice. Therefore, 20% of 750 is 150. Random sampling technique is very useful in this study because the researchers are studying the whole population and sampling for equal proportionality is needed.

Instrument for data collection: The instrument for data collection was a well structured questionnaire titled "practice-oriented questionnaire". It was face validated by experts in educational measurement and Christian Religious Education from the University of Nigeria, Nsukka in terms of clarity of items, appropriateness of language and expression to the respondents and relevance to the purpose of the research. Their contributions were incorporated into the final draft of the items used.

Method of data collection: The questionnaire was distributed manually to all the sampled population in the sampled schools with the permission of the principals of the sampled schools. The administration and retrieval of

the questionnaires was done by the researchers and this ensured accurate return of the 150 questionnaires given out.

Method of data analysis: Mean was descriptively used to analyze the data obtained to enable answer the research questions. SA (Strongly Agree) = 4 points, A (Agree) = 3 points, D (Disagree) = 2 points, SD (Strongly Disagree) = 1 point. Criterion mean of 2.50 was raised by adding the assigned values of responses and dividing it with the total number of the responses options which is the summation of $4+3+2+1 = 10/4 = 2.5$. Therefore, any score below 2.5 was rejected while 2.5 and above was accepted.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Students responses based on items 1-9 in Table 1 on the ways employed by CRE teachers in the content delivery of Christian Religious Education (CRE) in secondary schools in Nsukka Local Government Area of Enugu State, Nigeria obtained a grand mean of 2.39 which fell short on the acceptance criterion or benchmark of 2.5. This reveals to an extent that the teaching approaches and methods used by CRE teachers in classroom content delivery does no more appeal to the student's interest thus affecting student's interest in the subject the aboriginal value and nature of the once valued subject.

The responses of students based on items 1-10 in Table 2 on how practice-oriented teaching and learning could enhance the effective and efficient content delivery of Christian Religious Education (CRE) in secondary schools in Nsukka Local Government Area of Enugu State, Nigeria obtained a grand mean score of 3.71 crossing the acceptance benchmark of 2.5. This strictly affirmed that practice-oriented teaching method should be widely used in CRE classroom instruction and content delivery in secondary schools in Nigeria.

Result of the data analysis in Table 1 reveals that the teaching approaches and methods used by CRE teachers in classroom content delivery does no more appeal to the student's interest thus affecting student's interest in the subject and equally the the aboriginal value and nature of the once valued subject. This is in consonance with the findings of Ogwu and Ezema (2016) which affirmed that student's interest is strictly affected by the teaching methods used for learning which seems narrow and obsolete in approach. Evidence could be traced from some of the student's responses which revealed that teachers of CRE in Nigeria do not: teach what appeals to student's senses, imagination, feelings and interest, draw their

Table 1: Mean score of respondents on the ways employed by CRE teachers in the content delivery of Christian Religious Education (CRE) in secondary schools in Nsukka Local Government Area of Enugu State, Nigeria. No. of respondents = 150

| Items | SA | A | D | SD | Mean | Decision |
|---|----|----|-----|----|------|----------|
| Teachers of CRE in Nigeria | | | | | | |
| Emphasize on theories rather than local examples | 85 | 22 | 30 | 13 | 3.19 | Accepted |
| Teach what appeals to student's senses, imagination, feelings and interest | 40 | 12 | 80 | 18 | 2.49 | Rejected |
| Draw their lessons from the familiar things of the visible world and things of everyday life | 23 | 27 | 44 | 56 | 2.11 | Rejected |
| Often make full references to nature e.g., lilies of the field, the soil in the parable of the sower, the fig tree, the vine yard, the mustard seed and the sheep | 60 | 25 | 60 | 5 | 2.93 | Accepted |
| Always capitalize on the native interest of the students in order attract and sustain their interest just as Christ said to the fishermen that they were going to be fishers of men | 12 | 14 | 111 | 13 | 2.16 | Rejected |
| Often make use of visual communication and teaching aids just as Jesus used the fig tree to illustrate God's judgment of man who failed to produce fruit | 5 | 11 | 99 | 35 | 1.91 | Rejected |
| Often encourage taking the students out to field trips/excursion, to important religious places like adoration arenas, monasteries, churches, etc | 14 | 19 | 112 | 5 | 2.28 | Rejected |
| Often organize reorientation services for the students | 22 | 19 | 87 | 22 | 2.27 | Rejected |
| Teacher's lesson plan indicates fully the methods and techniques of instruction and instructional materials in classroom instructions | 12 | 50 | 35 | 53 | 2.14 | Rejected |
| Grand mean | | | | | 2.39 | |

Table 2: Mean score of respondents on how practice-oriented teaching and learning could enhance the effective and efficient content delivery of Christian Religious Education (CRE) in secondary schools in Nsukka Local Government Area of Enugu State, Nigeria. No. of respondents = 150

| Items | SA | A | D | SD | Mean | Decision |
|--|-----|----|----|----|------|----------|
| Teachers of CRE in Nigeria should | | | | | | |
| Frequently call on students to read and retell bible stories, role-play, mime, sing, debate and dramatize to enable depicts biblical figures and events | 115 | 34 | 0 | 1 | 3.75 | Accepted |
| Ask questions that find out whether students can apply bible lessons to their daily lives | 122 | 25 | 3 | 0 | 3.79 | Accepted |
| Allow students to handle and manipulate instructional materials | 100 | 50 | 0 | 0 | 3.67 | Accepted |
| Allow peer-help during exercises and in manipulating instructional materials | 80 | 67 | 1 | 2 | 3.50 | Accepted |
| Move from students to students or from group to group to check off task behaviour and calls on the student to provide the next response to the last stimuli | 144 | 7 | 0 | 1 | 3.99 | Accepted |
| Encourage taking the students out to field trips/excursion; to important religious places like adoration arenas, monasteries, churches, etc | 102 | 33 | 11 | 4 | 3.55 | Accepted |
| Organize reorientation services for the students | 61 | 77 | 8 | 4 | 3.30 | Accepted |
| often present students with a "focus" question and allow an open discussion on the topic | 133 | 13 | 2 | 2 | 3.85 | Accepted |
| Use a checklist and observation (Hands-on activities) in classroom content delivery | 127 | 22 | 1 | 0 | 3.84 | Accepted |
| Often use KWL (H) chart (What we know, What we want to know, What we have learned, How we know it) technique in assessing the progress of the students during teaching | 139 | 8 | 2 | 1 | 3.82 | Accepted |
| Grand mean | | | | | 3.71 | |

lessons from the familiar things of the visible world and things of everyday life, always capitalize on the native interest of the students in order attract and sustain their interest just as Christ said to the fishermen that they were going to be fishers of men, often make use of visual communication and teaching aids just as Jesus used the fig tree to illustrate God's judgment of man who failed to produce fruit, often encourage taking the students out to field trips/excursion to important religious places like adoration arenas, monasteries, churches, etc., often organize reorientation services for the students. More, so, teacher's lesson plans do not indicate fully the methods and techniques of instruction and instructional materials in classroom instructions.

Consequently, the data analysis in Table 2 holistically affirmed that the attributes of the practice oriented teaching and learning as itemized and analyzed which all covered the cardinal points of discussion, demonstration, drama, stimulation and discovery method should be used. This is crystal clear following the responses of the students affirming

that teachers of CRE in Nigeria secondary schools should: frequently call on students to read and retell bible stories, role-play, mime, sing, debate and dramatize to enable depicts biblical figures and events; ask questions that find out whether students can apply bible lessons to their daily lives, allow students to handle and manipulate instructional materials, allow peer-help during exercises and in manipulating instructional materials, move from students to students or from group to group to check off task behaviour and calls on the student to provide the next response to the last stimuli.

Teachers of CRE should also encourage taking the students out to field trips/excursion, to important religious places like adoration arenas, monasteries, churches, etc., organize reorientation services for the students. They should often present students with a "focus" question and allow an open discussion on the topic, use a checklist and observation (Hands-on activities) in classroom content delivery, often use KWL(H) chart (What we know, what we want to know, what we have learned, how we know it) technique in assessing the progress of the students during teaching and learning. Apparently, for

there to be a proper classroom content delivery, practice-oriented teaching and learning methods like discussion, demonstration, drama, stimulation and discovery method should be widely used. Ogwu *et al.* (2016) affirms that some of these innovative methods that are ignored are most effective and efficient among all other methods used in teaching CRS. This agrees with Ugwu, Edube and Odiegwu Ogwu that innovative and modern methods build students interest, allow full participation and increases knowledge. According to John Ogwu *et al.* (2016), a good classroom teacher should employ these appropriate teaching methods while delivering classroom instructions. These have implications for CRE teachers since the exposure of this study will guide the teachers towards the application and use of a more innovative and practice-oriented teaching and learning of the subject which in turn guarantees the sustenance of the subject and consequently, sustains student's interest.

CONCLUSION

Practice-oriented teaching and learning methods like discussion, demonstration, drama, stimulation and discovery method is indeed a prerequisite for effective and efficient CRE classroom content delivery. Engaging in these methods can be immensely valuable for Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers. Unquestioned assumptions as regards the waning down of the subject and the decline in interest of the students have been made which culminates from poor teaching methods and approaches from the teachers. Therefore, CRE teachers in Nigeria should always put into considerations the people we teach, how we teach and the methods we use where we teach and what the outcomes will be of our teaching. By being aware of current innovative and practice oriented teaching approaches in education and including ongoing changes and methodologies on our teaching in everyday practice, not only can we ensure that Christian Religious Education (CRE) students receive the best and most appropriate education for their needs and that they in turn become the competent, caring and effective teachers of the future but we can also get the most out of teaching and gain enjoyment and satisfaction from developing 'tomorrow's leaders and teacher's.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made. Teachers of CRE in Nigeria should change from the conventional/traditional methods (talk and chalk) of teaching Christian Religious Education instructions in secondary schools in Nigeria to a more interesting practice-oriented and innovative approach like

discussion, demonstration, drama, stimulation and discovery method. This will serve as a prerequisite for effective and efficient content delivery of Christian Religious Education (CRE) in Nigeria. Governments, educational administrators, parents and non governmental organizations should always emphasize on the teaching and learning of CRE in Nigeria because of the tremendous benefits of the subject to the nation especially as an agent of just and moral society. Government *at al.*, levels should always provide scholarships and job opportunities for those that studied Christian Religious Education (CRE). This will go a long way in making the subject more interesting and competitive.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We appreciate the study participants for their consent and dedication towards completing this study.

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