

FIRST-YEAR TEACHER TRAINEES APATHY TO EXTENSIVE READING: IMPERATIVES FOR FUTURE ACADEMIC SUCCESS AND SOUND PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICE.

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Introduction

- Reading has traditionally been divided into two types- intensive and extensive reading.
- Students read intensively for close linguistic study of text, while extensive reading involves reading a large quantity of text with lots of confidence while fluency prioritized.
- This study is solely concerned with extensive reading

Introduction

- Extensive reading stands on the proposition that every student should be able to read a large quantity of texts of interest in a relatively short time usually for pleasure and for obtaining general information and not for detailed linguistic study.
- Such materials read could be fiction/non-fiction- professional journals, hand-outs, specialized articles, biographies, cartoons, newspapers, poems, etc.

Introduction

- Studies- Day & Barnford (1998), Krashen (1993), Davis (1995), Maduekwe (2007) confirm that extensive reading is seen as offering many advantages:
 - Enhancement of spelling and vocabulary
 - High probability of developing reading habit
 - Provision of comprehensible input
 - Increase in positive attitudes toward reading
 - Enhancement of learners' general language competence
 - Widening of learners knowledge in other fields
 - Increase in academic success

Theoretical issues

- It would be impossible to study first year teacher trainees' apathy to extensive reading without reference to the multiple influences that exert forces on students' behaviour.
- In an attempt to provide a theoretical and conceptual clarity as to the circumstances in which extensive reading relates to academic success, researches- Asraf & Ahmed, 2006, Pigada & Schmit 2006, Nuttal 1982, Marrow 1980, Hafiz & Tudor 1989, Harmer 2005; have established a link between extensive reading and academic success

Theoretical issues (cont.)

- Harmer (2005) confirmed that the best way to help students acquire remarkable increase in language proficiency, motivation, positive attitude, academic success and skill empowerment in learning is to encourage them to read extensively
- In this instance, the impact of extensive reading is both cognitive and affective on long-term basis
- Studies by Block & Mangieri, 2002 confirm that students who spend more time on recreational reading activities scored higher in comprehension tests in grades 2, 4, 8 & 12; had significant grade point average and developed more sophisticated writing styles than peers who did not engage in extensive reading.
- Also, students who read recreationally over extensive periods of time learned significantly more words and had improved command of second language.

Theoretical issues (cont.)

- Current ideological framework recognizes that teachers play a multi-faceted role in extensive reading (Routman, 2003; Dymock, 2005; Wigfield & Guthrie 2005).
- They observed that most students will not do a lot of reading by themselves unless they are encouraged to do so by their teachers.
- Studies such as (Block, 2006; Carrel & Carson, 2000) suggest that home background is an important factor in the socializing of youths into adult reading.

Theoretical issues (cont.)

- Students who do best in literacy skills at school are those who have enabling environment in the home. Such childhood experiences, in turn affect all types of academic and professional success later in life.
- Based on this data, as new challenges emerge in the 21st century there is need to examine the reasons for first year teacher trainees' apathy towards extensive reading.

The Nigerian Context

- Researches and general evidence suggest that Nigerians do not have a reading culture
- The approach to teaching reading across various educational levels is faulty and generally, the environment do not promote reading for pleasure.
- Reading is mainly seen as a means of obtaining certificates hence it is not out of place to find undergraduates confessing to ever read for pleasure hence the distinction between being "learned" and being "educated".
- High percentage of females students read more than males (Bolarin, 1992).
- In most school, teachers are reluctant to encourage extensive reading which add to formal education.
- Most students read only when they are to sit for exams. At this time, reading becomes a strenuous task done under tension and the impact on readers' memory becomes momentary.

Statement of Problem

- At the university level, academic reading is central to intellectual productivity and indeed the overall national development in any society.
- The general concern among educators, parents and employers is that the average Nigerian undergraduate lacks sustained independent reading habits, have poor command of English and is largely academically unfocused.
- The "illiteracy syndrome" and the "deplorable quality" of products of teacher education is linked to low achievement levels and poor training in general.
- The problem also has had an international ripple effect.

Statement of Problem (cont.)

- The report of World Bank and Nigerian Institute of Social & Economic Research (NISER) indicated a decline in quality of reading, learning and training at all levels in the past one-half decades, thus:
 - "the pillars holding up the university system has been assaulted by a barrage of factors, including poor reading culture, poor funding, examination malpractices, cultism and a host of other negative practices" They concluded that the problem is much worse than anyone ever suspected, as the "very foundation of the country's future is in danger of imminent collapse" (Guardian, March 8, 2001, page, 9)

Statement of Problem (cont.)

- If the factors contributing to the trainees behaviour towards extensive reading at the grassroots level is not tackled urgently, our teacher trainees will eventually become educational misfits, unfit for the classroom, the labour market, and by extension, the society at large.

Purpose of Study

- The study aimed at determining whether factors such as gender, nature of university, and academic performance has any significant relationship with the trainees apathy towards reading extensively.

Research Questions

- Do boys and girls have similar experience reading extensively?
- Are teachers registered in a Federal University less motivated to read extensively than teacher trainees in a State University?
- Is there any relationship between apathy towards reading extensively and the teacher trainees' academic success?
- What are the major factors contributory to the first-year teacher trainees' apathy towards extensive reading?

Hypotheses

- H01 = There is no significant difference between boys and girls regarding their experiences towards reading extensively.
- H02 = There is no significant difference in the level of motivation to read extensively between teachers registered in a Federal University and those in a State University
- H03 = There is no significant relationship between teacher trainees' academic success and their apathy towards extensive reading.

Significance of the Study

- The data from this study will compliment findings from qualitative analysis and enable us to have deeper insights into the factors that influence pre-service teachers' behaviors towards reading and literacy skills.
- In the light of growing technological society and the increasing demands for literacy at higher level, it is important to elucidate what mechanisms are acting to maintain the relatively low levels of reading habits that has been observed to date in most Nigerian first -year teacher trainees' programme.

Methodology

- Sample include 240 teacher trainees (120 male & 120 female)
- Selected across six departmental groupings in two Nigerian Universities-
 - Adult Education,
 - Arts & Social Sciences,
 - Science & Technology,
 - Human Kinetics,
 - Educational Administration &
 - Educational Foundations.

Methodology

- Instruments include
 - Students Questionnaire
 - An interview employed to pull both the trainers' and trainees' views and reflections on materials read and challenges encountered.
 - Validity and reliability done with test-retest. Reliability coefficient obtained at 0.87.

Procedure

- Students located through course representatives
- Before the administration of the questionnaire, the researcher spent time to explain in clear terms the essence of the research, how to tick the boxes and the need to respond to all the questions without sentiments attached.
- The questionnaire was administered by the researcher and was collected back immediately.
- The administration of the questionnaire in Lagos State University was more difficult because the students were suspicious of the researcher's motive.

Summaries of Major Findings

- First- year trainees' apathy to extensive reading depended on several factors: poor academic background, lack of reading culture, surfing the internet, social distractions, time, lack of intrinsic motivation, mobility, job demand, difficulty in evaluating meaning, poor grammatical knowledge in textbooks.
- First- year teacher trainees have inherent negative attitude and beliefs towards reading which is firmly in place before arrival to the university and this continues to affects any serious engagement, flow, and intention to read and learn.
- Many lacks intrinsic motivation in the sense that they were not predisposed to respond in a consistently favorable manner with respect to versatile readership.

Summaries of Major Findings (cont.)

- There is dearth of reading materials covering a variety of topics, levels and genres of literature necessary to capture students' interest.
- Schedule of lectures is demanding hence the emphasis is on concentrating to pass examination.
- Most of the trainees are financially incapable and so the greatest challenge is to take up odd jobs which distract attention to read.
- There are no enabling environments to encourage trainees' participation in the reading and learning process.

Feedback from interview

- Tutor 1: *"This research is timely. The first year students feel that they can do it without struggling. We see people who didn't read getting As".*
- Tutor 2: *"The problem with extensive reading is attitudinal and multi-dimensional. You cannot isolate it from the larger society that does not have a reading culture. It is like the students are being swallowed by the larger society".*
- Tutor3: *"Until the youths start doing what is happening in Niger Delta the situation will not change. The orientation must start with re-orienting the elitist parents. You cannot change the youths when the roots are shaky".*
- Student1: *"We have a lot of distractions like family problems, financial problems, and emphasis on paper qualification".*
- Student 2: *"I think that a lot of us don't like to read too much. Again, our foundation is weak and the environment is not conducive to read. There is also lack of motivation."*

Imperatives for Academic Success

- The emphasis on the Unesco (1996) learning to learn through reading and the Millennium Dev. Goals (2015) of value orientation & job creation and employment calls that first-year experience should be the fulcrum of quality training for all other levels. There is a serious connection between training and the labour market.
- The growing technological society and the rapidly changing demands of teacher education has brought increasing demands for enhanced literacy and academic success.
- The child is the father of the man (William Worth sworth) In order to realize the potentials inherent in a student reading must be built, developed and sustained through continual practice at the first year level.

Recommendations

- It should be our goal as educators to help students develop positive attitudes and modify negative ones.
- Varied reading materials should be made available to first year students in order to encourage flexible approach to reading
- Teacher education programme must begin and continue to expose first year trainees to up-to-date knowledge of subject matter, learning theories, through provision of texts materials within the learners' competence
- The university system should provide up-to-date methods, techniques, application of ICT, other media and instructional aids in teaching and learning, professional development through micro teaching, practice teaching and continuous training.



Conclusion

- I conclude, hoping that this study will give educators a thought and reflections as they consider how best to help students become proficient reader..