

## **An Assessment of Teachers towards Activity Based Teaching and Learning in Nwafor Orizu College of Education, Nsugbe**

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### **Abstract**

The study investigated the attitude of teachers towards activity based teaching and learning in Nwafor Orizu College of Education, Nsugbe. The study adopted the descriptive survey research design in which validated questionnaires (for teachers) termed the 'Questionnaire on Attitude of Teachers towards Activity Based Teaching and Learning (QATABTL) was developed in line with the research questions, and used to elicit information from teachers in Nwafor Orizu College of Education, Nsugbe. The statistical inference of the simple percentage was used in analysing data generated from the study. Along with the main research questions determining the attitude of teachers towards activity based teaching and learning, the research results provide substantial evidence over the positive nature of the attitude of teachers on activity based teaching/learning. Consequently, recommendations were made from the findings.

**Keywords:** Attitude, activity based teaching/learning, active learning strategies

### **Introduction**

Research evidences overwhelmingly support the claim that students learn best when they engage with course material and actively participate in their learning. The traditional teaching model has positioned students as passive receptors into which teachers deposit concepts and information. The model has emphasised the delivery of course materials and rewarded students who are adept at reflecting the course content on assessments. The spoils tended to go to students with good short-term memories and reading skills (Anyadiegwu, 2016).

Among the student population, there have always been those who have the wherewithal to make connections among course concepts, generate and ask themselves meaningful questions and then search for answers, and interact with readings through annotations (i.e., dialoguing with the texts through notes in the margins rather than the copious highlighting that leaves most textbooks filled with more secondary colors than black on white). But the majority of students need to be provided with active learning opportunities to approach this ideal; and even those who are self-directed will learn more and be able to apply their learning more adeptly when course activities are based on active learning.

Active learning shifts the focus of instruction from what the instructor should teach or deliver to students, to what students are able to do with course material. Similarly, students must enter class prepared to use assigned reviewed material from past classes, etc. Not only are students expected to be up-to-date on course material, but to have assimilated the material so they can use and build on it. When students recognise that a lesson involves active learning, they will also recognise that they must be active if they are to succeed in the lesson.

Subsequently, the paper will treat both the conceptual and theoretical framework for this study and thereafter, discuss data generated from the study.

Teaching and learning in this era has witnessed the changing role of the teacher from the all-knowing figure to a facilitator of knowledge, one who guides and elicits knowledge by creating the required environment that helps the child to discover knowledge for himself. The focus of teaching and learning has shifted from the teacher and has centred on the learner; hence the term, learner centredness. In spite of the obvious benefits of activity based teaching and learning, the traditional classroom where teachers are the all-knowing figure and students are tabula rasa that needs to have their heads stuffed up with knowledge still holds sway in classes. In this globalised and digital era, the traditional mode of teaching by teachers has continued to reduce students as mere passive receptors of information. This study therefore was aimed at investigating the attitude of teachers in Nwafor Orizu College of Education, Nsugbe to see their position on the line of the divide.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions would guide the study:

1. What is the attitude of teachers in Nwafor Orizu College of Education, Nsugbe towards activity based teaching and learning?
2. To what extent do teachers in Nwafor Orizu College of Education, Nsugbe adopt activity based teaching and learning in their class?

3. What are the challenges teachers in Nwafor Orizu College of Education, Nsugbe face in adopting activity based teaching and learning in their class?

### **Conceptual framework**

#### **Attitude**

Attitude is one's predisposition towards something or someone. It is what one feels about someone or something. Attitudes can be positive or negative, they could also be indifferent. In this case, there is no like or dislike about the subject or object. Attitude can be defined as the way in which a person views and evaluates something or someone, a predisposition or a tendency to repond positively or negatively toward a certain idea, object, person or situation. ( Dodeen, 2003). It is traditionally structured along three dimensions; cognitive (perceptions and beliefs), affective (likes and dislikes, feelings, or evoked emotions), and behavioural (actions or expressed intentions toward the object upon the cognitive and affective responses (Alfonso et al, 2016).

Psychologists define attitudes as a learned tendency to evaluate things in a certain way (Awanbor, 1996). This can include evaluations of people, issues, objects, or events. Such evaluations are often positive or negative, but they can also be uncertain at times (Kendra, 2013). Attitudes affect our choices, preferences and activities. The attitude of teachers in Nwafor Orizu College of Education, Nsugbe towards activity based teaching and learning, will definitely affect their predisposition, employment of it

#### **Activity Based Learning (ABL)**

Activity-Based Learning (ABL) is, most simply, creating tasks, situations, activities, and other instructional ways to guide children to acquire, understand, and apply new information and skills that will help them in their studies and their lives. ABL expects learners not just to think but to do and to feel (i.e., to have emotions). It involves them practically, personally, and socially. The research is clear that children learn better when (i) they learn with all five senses, (ii) they can handle and apply their lessons, and (iii) they are motivated with a clear sense of purpose (Kira & Scott, 2012). Fundamental to using ABL in the classroom according to Kira & Scott (2012), are a diverse set of learning behaviours and practices that require students to:

- (i) to observe, discover, think, and use information and techniques;
- (ii) have clear learning goals;
- (iii) link their lessons directly to the "real world;"
- (iv) come up with good questions and the strategies to answer these; (v) monitor, evaluate, and adjust their learning;
- (v) seek information and help from outside sources, not just the teacher or text; (vii) record and communicate their work and results; and more.

The responsibility of the classroom teacher within ABL is to: (i) create meaningful, interesting, active learning tasks, situations, and other opportunities for students; (ii) provide clear, precise instructions and goals for a learning task; (iii) make sure there are suitable, safe conditions and enough of the necessary materials to perform the task; (iv) monitor and provide useful feedback to students as they progress in their work; (v) guide students to collaborate effectively; (vi) support students in assessing their work—both the process and the final results, or product; and more (Bonwell & Eison, 1991)

#### **Active Learning Strategies**

All active learning strategies/techniques are intended to help learners make relevant connections among course materials; transforming course materials from opaque language or ideas into something learners can integrate into their own long-term memory and knowledge bank. The activities that follow are intended to help learners achieve these objectives. Instructors may, however, find that some just do not fit their style of teaching or that others would work well in their classroom or online environment with modifications. And some teachers may find that many activities they have done or currently do in class need only be informed by active learning principles to become active learning techniques (Meyer & Jones, 1993).

Anyadiegwu and Nzekwu (2023) give some example of active learning strategies, their implication and application in the English language class: ice breakers/warmers, think/pair/share, write/pair/share, question and answer pairs, numbered heads together, roundtable, corners, problem-based learning, ten-two strategy, shared brainstorming, note check, background knowledge probe, jigsaw teamwork, rotating chair discussions, collaborative listing and ranking, mind mapping, concept mapping, visual webs, charts, matrices, flowcharts, models, case study, mini-case study, role-playing, drama and simulations, student debate, student field work with reflection, visual-based active learning, collaborative learning, peer teaching, class discussions

**Theoretical Framework: Functionalists’ Attitude Theory**

Following Katz (1960), Anyadiiegwu (2016) posits that attitudes are determined by the functions they serve. Consequently, she distinguishes four functions attitudes serve as: utilitarian, value-expressive, ego-defensive and knowledge. In relation to language, utilitarian function according to him is the benefits users are to derive from using a language. If the gain is more, then there is a positive attitude to the language. Value-expressive on the other hand is the satisfaction individuals derive from expressing attitudes appropriate to their personal values such as self-expression, self-development and self-realisation. Ego-defensive is the security users derive from current or future threat which use or disuse of object poses to them.

**Methodology**

The study was done in Nwafor Orizu College of Education, Nsugbe. The design for this study is quantitative in nature that is, descriptive and inferential as well. Thus, a questionnaire on attitudes towards activity based learning class known as Questionnaire on Attitude towards Activity Based Learning Questionnaire on Attitude of Teachers towards Activity Based Teaching and Learning (QATABTL) was used as instrument, and administered to 54 lecturers taken from five Schools of the College. The instrument was structured on four-point rating: Very High Extent (VHE)points, High Extent (HE), Low Extent (LE) and Very Low Extent (VLE). The instrument was subjected to both face and content validity by experts in Measurement and Evaluation and Educational Technology before use. The questionnaire was also subjected to a reliability testing to make the instrument satisfactorily fit for the study. The direct retrieval method of instrument for data collection was adopted for the study to ensure effective and prompt data collection. A total of 54 copies of questionnaire were distributed and retrieved. The output responses for the VHE and HE were merged as positives; while those of VLE and LE were merged as negatives. The total figure for the positives and negatives were converted to the simple percentage.

**Data Presentation and Discussion of Findings**

Data would be presented in line with research questions for the study

**Table 1**

*Attitude of teachers in Nwafor Orizu College of Education, Nsugbe towards activity based teaching and learning*

SN	Variables	VHE	HE	%	VLE	LE	%
Active learning strategies can:		VHE	HE	SA	VLE	LE	
		(SA)	(A)		(SD)	(D)	
1	Make students have positive learning experience	24	14	70%	6	10	30%
2	Give students a sense of participation	20	18	70%	8	8	30%
3	Integrate students’ learning experiences	31	12	80%	4	7	20%
4	Create desirable attitude in students towards learning	17	21	70%	6	10	30%

*Source: Field Study on Attitude, 2024*

The table above shows that 70% agreed that active learning strategies make students have positive learning experiences, while 30% disagreed. 70% also agreed active learning give students some sense of participation 80% believe it integrates learning experiences while 70% agreed it creates desirable attitude in students towards learning.

**Table 2**

*Extent teachers in Nwafor Orizu College of Education, Nsugbe adopt activity based teaching and learning in their class*

SN	Variables	VHE	HE	%	VLE	LE	%
		VHE	HE		VLE	LE	
		(SA)	(A)		(SD)	(D)	
1	I use ABTL to teach some of courses	11	9	37%	14	20	63%
2	I use ABTL to teach all my courses	5	3	15%	20	26	85%
3	I do not use ABTL to teach my courses	20	15	65%	10	9	35%
4	I do not feel confident using ABTL	23	10	61%	10	11	39%

It is obvious from the table above that only a very few employ the use of activity based teaching for their courses. 37% do not use ABTL; 15% responded they use it to teach some of their courses ; 65% do not use ABTL while 61% do not feel confident using activity based teaching

**Table 3**

*The challenges teachers in Nwafor Orizu College of Education, Nsugbe face in adopting activity based teaching and learning in their class*

SN	Variables	VHE (VHE SA)	HE (HE A)	%	VLE (VLE SD)	LE (LE D)	%
1	Large class	22	18	74%	6	8	26%
2	Lack of knowledge and skill of some active learning strategies	22	20	81%	6	6	19%
3	Lack of resources	37	12	91%	3	2	9%
4	Consumes a lot time	38	10	88%	3	3	12%

**Source: Field Study on Attitude, 2024**

Most of the respondents agree that large class size (74%), lack of knowledge and skills of some active learning strategies (81%), lack of teaching resources (91%), and high consumption time (88%).

In summary, the great majority of the teachers in Nwafor Orizu College of Education, Nsugbe had good and positive attitude towards active learning strategies as they enable students to participate actively in classes, and integrate their learning experiences. Therefore, teachers' responses are in favour of the utilisation of active learning strategies to teach their courses. Active learning strategies improve their classroom interaction. The support and utilisation of active learning strategies become realised, only when resources are available, class size is small, there is enough time and the teachers have necessary training on active learning strategies.

### Conclusion

Teachers under the study showed quite a positive attitude towards the utilisation of active learning strategies. They were of the opinion that active learning strategies make students participate in discussion, integrate their learning experiences, and raise their interest in learning. Though teachers showed positive attitude towards active learning strategies, the majority of them do not use it to teach. A number of factors are hindering them from utilising the approach properly. These included lack of training, large class, lack of knowledge and skill on the use of some active learning strategies, lack of instructional resources time consumption

### Recommendations

Since the quality of education is a product of stable and solid leadership, sound and conducive policies, great concern and sustained commitments are vitally important. The reform of instructional practice in favour of active learning strategies should start with sound policies about class size, provision of instructional materials and training. There is every need that teacher trainers themselves be trained on the use of active learning strategies so that they would be able to model such to their trainee teachers who themselves would carry on the baton. Academic administrators can help these initiatives by recognising and rewarding excellent teaching in general and adoption of instructional innovations in particular. Comprehensive programmes to demonstrate this type of administrative commitment should address institutional employment policies and practices, the allocation of adequate resources for instructional development, and the development of strategic administrative action plans.

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