



EFFECT OF USING INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCE TEACHING STRATEGY IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (R.E.) FOR ACQUISITION OF VALUING SKILLS AMONGST YOUTH IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN KENYA

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Abstract:

The purpose of education is not to impart knowledge but instead to facilitate a child's thinking and problem solving skills which can be transferred to a range of situations. The major purpose of teaching is that of helping students gain knowledge, feelings and valuing skills that they need to function effectively in the society. One way of making students acquire valuing skills is through use of individual difference teaching strategy. In this respect, the purpose of the study was to find out the effect on the use of Individual Difference Strategy in the acquisition of Valuing Skills amongst youths in secondary schools in Kenya. The study was anchored on the Constructivism theory by Brunner and adopted a descriptive survey design biased to quantitative approach that utilize questionnaire to collect data from 13 teachers' and 309 students. Stratified random sampling technique was employed to select the sample of students and purposive sampling was applied in choice of the teachers. Piloting of instruments was conducted in two schools outside the study area to test reliability, and the validity was established by the expertise of the supervisors. The collected data was analyzed using descriptive statistics. The study revealed that both teachers and students opined that using individual difference strategy facilitated youths in secondary schools in the acquisition of valuing skills. The study concluded that Teacher Services Commission (T.S.C) in liaison with Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (K.I.C.D) need to facilitated teachers in building capacity to update teaching skills. The study therefore recommends an in-service training to enhance teachers' skills in use of individual difference strategies in teaching, encourage teacher training colleges to train teachers on innovative Instructional Strategy, and revise Religious Education (R.E) Curriculum

align to individual difference teaching strategy in order to assist youths in schools acquire valuing skills.

Keywords: effect, individual differences teaching strategy, valuing skills, religious education, youths

Introduction

Education's main concern is to make the learner mature into a responsible adult so that the learner has responsible behavior and is responsible for what he does and for his destiny. Institutions of higher learning across the nations are responding to political, economic, social and technological pressures to be more responsive to students' needs and more concerned about how well students are prepared to assume future societal roles.

Religion as a subject in the school curriculum plays a bigger role in shaping the character and personality of the learner. However, despite the teaching of R.E in schools, value problems like immorality, high crime, and suicide, use of illicit drugs, strikes/riots and robberies are on the rise in the Kenyan society (Musamas 2005/2006).

This picture however is bound to worsen given the challenges facing the Kenyan society, (Oyaro, 2004). The current situation raises serious concerns. This coupled with the diverse student population in our schools call for urgent measures to redress the situation. Studies have attributed the current scenario to the teacher. Various solutions to these problems have tended to focus on teaching methodology. Little efforts have been put on finding out the effect of using individual difference strategy in the acquisition of valuing skills.

Previous studies on this in Kenya have concerned themselves on using the strategy in teaching, (Kowino et al, 2011 &2012). However, they did not address the effect of using the strategy in a wholesome manner to include the acquisition of valuing skills. This has a gap in the empirical literature which this study therefore sought to establish the effect of using individual difference strategy in the acquisition of valuing skills amongst youth in secondary schools in Kenya.

Objective of the Study

The study focused on two objectives namely:

- i) Find out the opinion of teachers on the effect of using individual difference teaching strategy on the acquisition of valuing skills amongst youth in secondary schools in Kenya.
- ii) Establish the opinion of students on the effect of using individual difference strategy on the acquisition of valuing skills amongst youth in secondary schools in Kenya

Theoretical Framework

The study was guided by constructivism theory of learning by Jerome Brunner, (Brunner, 1990). Brunner emphasize on the fact that learners construct new ideas or concepts based upon existing knowledge, and learning is an active process. The theory emphasizes the significance of categorizing in learning, personalized instruction, content structuring, and use of reinforcement. This in all is about individual difference teaching strategy with variation of content and learning activities according to personal needs, experiences and aspirations. Using individual difference strategy involves organizing the material with the learner's ability in mind so that it is presented in the best manner to meet the learner's needs integrated with appropriate reinforcement strategies.

From the theory, there is interplay of three principles such that by using individual difference strategy, methods like differentiated assignments, guidance and counseling, or group work it facilitates interest towards learning. Secondly, when a teacher structures content in a sequenced manner, he is able to present the material in the best manner to meet the learner's needs. Learners will have a positive attitude towards learning methods that cater for their needs. Lastly, when a teacher reinforces, the learner gets actively involved in learning, this facilitates the learner's thinking, and problem solving skills hence learners can use such skills to develop values that are helpful in diverse situations in life in school and out of school

In this perspective, the variables of the study are conceptualized in terms of 'input and output' relationship. The 'input' is using individual difference teaching strategy which is independent variable and while the 'output' is the acquisition of valuing skills as the dependent variable. Intervening variables are into interplay and includes; the class space and the class size.

Literature Review

Brunner (1990) asserts that, the purpose of education is not to impart knowledge but instead to facilitate a child's thinking and problem solving skills which can be transferred to a range of situations. To Mwalulu (2007), R.E has the potential of inculcating moral values amongst secondary school students; the problem is the way it is taught. Value problems are part and parcel of the society today. High crime, divorce, suicide, use of illicit drugs and political scandals vividly illuminate the immense magnitude of the personal and social problems that nations face in the present century.

Value conflicts are numerous and many people appear to have no values at all. The mass media and tremendous mobility within our society expose our youth to a variety of lifestyles and belief systems. Because of the social and personal problems within our society that are rooted in value confusion, the school should play a big role in helping youths to identify and clarify their values and in making value choices intelligently (Raths et al, 1978). The Gachathi education commission Report (R. O. K, 1976) and Okullu (1983) observed that, Kenya was destined for moral decadence unless drastic measures were taken and the teaching of religion in schools was re-examined, made relevant and improved upon.

Previous research and documentary evidence obtainable have consistently reported that Kenyan students' moral standing and general conduct in the wider society does not reflect acquisition of values learned through the teaching of R.E at the Form Four level. In his research (Kowino et al 2011) found out that there is a discrepancy between the teaching of Christian Religious Education and inculcation of Moral Values amongst Secondary schools youths in Kisumu East District. Documented evidence (Musamas 2005/2006) indicates there is a missing link in education system as far as value based education in response to the increase in violence, suicide, forms of drug addiction, poor dressing, prostitution, corruption, and child abuse are concerned. Whereas schools have a tremendous responsibility to help youth make moral choices rationally, there is abundant evidence that educators have largely failed to help students deal with moral values intelligently.

Accordingly, (Oyaro, 2004) observes that the religious sector has become a conduit for immoral behavior and the school and the parents seem to have failed in offering value education to the society. To him, Kenya's morals are at crossroads, crime is rife in the neighborhood, crime in the streets, and pornography is a wash in the internet while families are consistently falling apart. The school system, but specifically the teaching of R.E, could be one such useful avenue that could effectively be used to enable the citizens and specifically learners become morally responsible.

Concurring with this thinking (Weber-et al 2005), says considering individual differences in learning allows learners to engage in learning and be responsible for their own learning, retain information longer, apply the knowledge more effectively, have positive attitudes towards the subject, have more interest in learning materials. Svitlana (2011) says catering for genetic differences can influence our potential to be successful in academic studies, fine arts and sports. To Svitlana, when learners actively participate in discovery learning process, learning is constructive, strengthens his motivation, reduces destructive behavior, builds student teacher relationship, and promotes active learning and responsibility for one's own learning. Felder et al (2005) says, co-operative taught students tend to have better and longer information retention, higher grades, more highly developed critical thinking and problem solving skills, more positive attitudes towards the subject and greater motivation to learn it.

Research Methodology

The study was quantitative and qualitative in nature. It adopted the descriptive survey design due to the nature of data that was collected from a large sample of participants on an existing phenomenon. The instrument used in data collection was a questionnaire with both open and closed ended items. The collected data was on the effect of using individual difference teaching strategy in the acquisition of valuing skills. The research was conducted in secondary schools in Kakamega County and the sample population constituted of 309 students and 13 teachers.

Stratified, proportionate, purposive and random sampling techniques were used to identify the participants. (309) students were stratified and random sampled from a total of (1030) in Form II in a stratum of schools namely: private, county and sub-county. Proportion sampling was conducted to pick 13 schools in the various strata; purposive sampling was applied to pick form II class; and a simple random sampling was used to sample the students in each selected form II class in respective selected schools. The 13 teachers were purposively sampled from the selected schools. These techniques gave equal opportunity to the respective participants to be selected – see table 3.1. The overall sample size constituted 30% of the target population (Mugenda and Mugenda 2003).

The Reliability was established through a pilot study which yielded a Cronbach's reliability Coefficient of 0.754 for the students' questionnaires and a Cronbach's reliability Coefficient of 0.845 for the teacher's questionnaire. Content validity was adhered to by preparing items in the instrument that covered the study objectives. The Supervisors' expertise was utilized to ascertain content and face validity of the

instruments. The collected data was analyzed using descriptive statistical tests that involved frequency counties, distribution tables and percentages.

Findings and Discussion

The response rate was 100% which provided significant data for the analysis. The data was analyzed and interpreted into useful information reflective of the objectives of the study and addressing the purpose of the study.

Teachers' Opinion on the effects of Using Individual Difference Teaching Strategy in the Acquisition of Valuing Skills

Table 4.1 illustrates the teachers' responses. The table shows 92.3% of the teachers agreed with the statement that use of Individual difference strategy facilitates a child's thinking and problem solving skills which can be applicable to a range of situations in life. This means when learners are custodians of their own learning, they are able to invent new ideas that are productive. Such learners when faced with challenges concerning morality are able to make objective decisions through the skills acquired in class.

92.3% of the teachers supported the statement that, using Individual difference strategy in R.E can help youths identify and clarify their values and in making value choices rationally. This is interpreted to mean through use of Individual Difference Strategy, students can develop critical thinking skills. A critical mind will be able to get the best solution to moral issues that evolve in their day to day lives. This agrees with (Mwalulu, 2007; Kowino et al ,2012) who assert that, learners lack valuing skills which would enable them come up with appropriate moral decisions in a morally challenging situation due to poor pedagogy.

92.3% of the teachers agreed with the statement; when learners participate in learning by making their own enquiries and discoveries, it reduces destructive behavior and increases their levels of success. This implies, when learners participate in searching for knowledge, they develop critical thinking skills and this automatically bars them from misbehaving or negative effects like wanting to drop out of school or delinquent behavior. This concurs with (Svitlana, 2011; Kushman et al, 2000).

The table further shows 84.6% of the teachers agreed to the statement that, using individual difference strategy makes students to recall the skill or information learnt so that when faced with a difficult situation, the student can use the skill to solve it. This is interpreted to mean, individual difference strategy of instruction enables students to

develop retention skills that enable them to apply what they learnt to a variety of situations that come their way in their day to day lives.

This agrees with Stephene (2006) who says that the strategy is a powerful student-centered approach that enables learners to develop new concepts and skills. It is this skill that can help the youth when faced with moral issues in life to face them positively.

The findings (Table 4.1) shows that on overall, (86.5%) of the teachers agreed on various statements on the Effect of using Individual difference strategy in the acquisition of valuing skills, (9.6%) were undecided and (3.8%) disagreed. This means teachers are agreeing on the fact that using individual difference strategy in learning lead to the acquisition of valuing skills necessary in facing the diverse challenges that youths find themselves in, in school and thereafter.

The Students' Opinion on the Effects of Using Individual Difference Teaching Strategy in the Acquisition of Valuing Skills

Students also responded to the various statements on the effects of using individual difference strategy. Table 4.2 shows the students' responses. The students' findings coincided with teachers' responses. According to the table, a majority of the students agreed on the various statements on the effects of using Individual Difference Strategy in the Acquisition of Valuing Skills, (7.4%) was undecided and (6.8%) disagreed.

From the findings, it is possible to state that:

- I. Using Individual difference strategy facilitates a student's thinking and problem solving skills.
- II. Using Individual difference strategy in R.E can help youths to identify and clarify their values and make value choices intelligently/rationally.
- III. Using Individual difference strategy in R.E can make student to recall the skill or information learnt so that when faced with a difficult situation, the youth can use the skill to solve it
- IV. It is important for students to participate in learning by making their own enquiries and discoveries as it reduces destructive behavior.

Conclusions

Both teachers and learners acknowledged that the use of Individual Difference Teaching Strategy can lead to the Acquisition of Valuing Skills. This is seen in the fact

that a majority of the teachers and learners (86.5% and 85.8%) respectively held positive opinion to the following statements:

- I. Using Individual Difference Strategy facilitates a student's thinking and problem solving skills which can be applicable to a range of situations in life. The researcher may interpret this to mean using this strategy will give youths skills that enable them make objective decisions under challenging situations.
- II. Using Individual Difference Strategy in R.E can help students make value choices rationally that promotes critical thinking skills. This may be interpreted to mean using this strategy enables youths to make appropriate moral decisions in a morally challenging situation.
- III. Using Individual difference strategy in R.E can make students to recall the skill or information learnt so that when faced with a difficult situation, the student can use the skill to solve it. This could be interpreted to imply using this strategy will free youths from the social and personal problems within the society that are rooted in value confusion.
- IV. Participation in learning by making own enquiries and discoveries that promotes creative thinking skills, reduces destructive behavior. This could be interpreted to imply, that this strategy is a powerful student-centered approach that enables youths to develop new concepts and skills that enable them face moral issues in life positively.

From the foregoing findings and respective discussion, the following conclusion was made:

Using individual difference strategy will make students acquire valuing skills such as critical thinking skills, problem solving skills, discovery skills, decision making skills, creative thinking skills, teamwork skills, interpersonal skills and self-esteem. With the dynamic society that we live in, youths will be able to go a long way in using such skills to handle the situations they come across.

Recommendations

As a result of the above conclusion, the following recommendations are made:-

- I. The M.O.E.S.T needs to in-service teachers on Individual Difference Teaching Strategy so that R.E teachers can get skills on how to use this strategy to assist students acquire valuing skills. This could be done through mounting capacity building insets for R.E teachers.
- II. The M.O.E.S.T needs to review the allocation of time for R.E in the school timetable so that R.E is given more time allocation to allow teachers to use the

strategy to facilitate students' acquisition of skills that can help them in the valuing process.

- III. Both teachers and students held an opinion that using individual difference strategy in R.E will lead to the acquisition of valuing skills. The society now is dynamic and because of this, there is need for all youths to acquire valuing skills. Once teachers are trained or in serviced on the use of individual difference strategy and are able to use the strategy in teaching R.E, it calls for the M.O.E.S.T to consider making R.E a compulsory subject at secondary school level since all learners need valuing skills necessary in making value choices intelligently, and R.E as a subject has the avenue to promote this.
- IV. Since values are dynamic, the M.O.E.S.T through the K.I.C.D need to quickly embrace and employ the use of individual difference strategy in learning R.E so that students can acquire valuing skills that can help them in the valuing process. This could be done through revising the R.E curriculum so that learners are taught the valuing process and not particular values through African heritage at Form one level as per the current practice.

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Annexure: Tables

Table 3.1: Sample Matrix of the Sample Size

| Type of school | No. of Schools | Population | %Sampled | Sample Size |
|----------------|----------------|------------|----------|-------------|
| Private | 1 | 62 | 30 | 19 |
| County | 2 | 236 | 30 | 71 |
| Sub County | 10 | 732 | 30 | 219 |
| Total | 13 | 1030 | 30 | 309 |

Table 4.1: Teachers’ Opinion on the Effects of Using Individual Difference Strategy in the Acquisition of Valuing Skills

| Statement | S | A | A | Tot | U | D | D | S | D | Tot | Cum | Total | | |
|--|---|-------------|---|-------------|------|---|------------|---|------------|-----|------------|-------|----|-----|
| | F | % | F | % | % | F | % | F | % | % | F | % | | |
| Using Individual Difference Strategy facilitates a child's thinking and problem solving skills which can be applicable to a range of situations in life | 9 | 69.2 | 3 | 23.1 | 92.3 | 1 | 7.7 | | | | 13 | 100 | | |
| Using Individual Difference Strategy in R.E can help learners identify and clarify their values and make value choices rationally/intelligently (critical thinking skills) | 7 | 53.8 | 5 | 38.5 | 92.3 | 1 | 7.7 | | | | 13 | 100 | | |
| Catering for learners’ needs builds student-teacher relationship (interpersonal skills) | 3 | 23.1 | 7 | 53.8 | 76.9 | 1 | 7.7 | 2 | 15.4 | | 13 | 100 | | |
| Use of diverse teaching styles that complement learners’ learning styles will make learners experience academic success within the education system (cognitive skills) | 5 | 38.5 | 5 | 38.5 | 77.0 | 3 | 23.1 | | | | 13 | 100 | | |
| Catering for genetic differences can influence learners’ potential to be successful in academic studies, fine arts and sports (cognitive & psychomotor skills) | 7 | 53.8 | 3 | 23.1 | 76.9 | 2 | 15.4 | | | 1 | 7.7 | 7.7 | 13 | 100 |
| When learners participate in learning by making their own enquiries and discoveries, it reduces destructive behavior and increases their levels of success (creative thinking skills) | 7 | 53.8 | 5 | 38.5 | 92.3 | 1 | 7.7 | | | | 13 | 100 | | |
| Using individual difference strategy will make learners to recall the skill or information learnt so that when faced with a difficult situation, the learner can use the skill to solve it | 9 | 69.2 | 2 | 15.4 | 84.6 | 1 | 7.7 | | | 1 | 7.7 | 7.7 | 13 | 100 |
| It is necessary to in-service teachers on the use of individual difference strategy so that they can adopt the strategy so as to improve learners’ achievements | 7 | 53.8 | 6 | 46.2 | 100 | | | | | | 13 | 100 | | |
| Total % Effect of Using Individual Difference Strategy in the Acquisition of Valuing Skills | | 51.9 | | 34.6 | | | 9.6 | | 1.9 | | 1.9 | | | |
| Total % of overall Effect of Using Individual Difference Strategy in Acquisition of Valuing Skills | | | | 86.5 | | | 9.6 | | 3.8 | | | | | |

Table 4.2: Students’ Opinion on Effects of Using Individual Difference Teaching Strategy in the Acquisition of Valuing Skills

| Statements on valuing skills | S | | A | | Tot | U | | D | | S | | Tot | Cum | Total |
|--|-------------|------|-------------|------|------|------------|------|------------|-----|------------|-----|------|-----|-------|
| | F | % | F | % | % | F | % | F | % | F | % | % | F | % |
| Using individual difference strategy facilitates a child’s thinking and problem solving skills which can be applicable to a range of situations in life | 131 | 42.4 | 127 | 41.1 | 83.5 | 33 | 10.7 | 10 | 3.2 | 8 | 2.6 | 5.8 | 309 | 100 |
| Using individual difference strategy in R.E will help learners identify and clarify their values and make value choices rationally (critical skills) | 206 | 66.7 | 56 | 18.1 | 84.8 | 15 | 4.9 | 23 | 7.4 | 9 | 2.9 | 10.3 | 309 | 100 |
| Catering for learners’ needs builds student-teacher relationship (interpersonal skills) | 131 | 42.4 | 127 | 41.1 | 83.5 | 33 | 10.7 | 10 | 3.2 | 8 | 2.6 | 5.8 | 309 | 100 |
| Use of diverse teaching styles that complement learners’ learning styles will make learners experience academic success within the education system (cognitive skills) | 127 | 41.1 | 126 | 40.8 | 81.9 | 27 | 8.7 | 11 | 3.6 | 18 | 5.8 | 9.4 | 309 | 100 |
| Catering for genetic differences can influence learners’ potential to be successful in academic studies, fine arts and sports (cognitive & psychomotor skills) | 222 | 71.8 | 77 | 24.9 | 96.7 | 6 | 1.9 | 3 | 1.0 | 1 | 3.0 | 4.0 | 309 | 100 |
| When learners participate in learning by making their own enquiries and discoveries, it reduces destructive behavior and increases their levels of success | 206 | 66.7 | 56 | 18.1 | 84.8 | 23 | 7.4 | 15 | 4.6 | 9 | 2.9 | 7.8 | 309 | 100 |
| Using individual difference strategy will make learners to recall the skill or information learnt so that when faced with a difficult situation, the learner can use the skill to solve it | 214 | 69.3 | 50 | 16.2 | 85.5 | 23 | 7.4 | 10 | 3.2 | 12 | 3.9 | 7.1 | 309 | 100 |
| Total % Effect of Using Individual Difference Strategy in the Acquisition of Valuing Skills | 57.2 | | 28.6 | | | 7.4 | | 3.8 | | 3.0 | | | | |
| Total % of overall Effect of Using Individual Difference Strategy in Acquisition of Valuing Skills | 85.8 | | | | | 7.4 | | 6.8 | | | | | | |