THE 21ST CENTURY MILIEU: LEARNING PREFERENCES OF MSU-TCTO SOPHOMORE STUDENTS

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Abstract: The shift from teacher-centered to student-centered approach in the new milieu calls for teachers to adapt to the learners’ learning preferences. This study determined the levels of learning preferences of MSU-TCTO College of Education sophomore students along the different approaches and strategies in teaching, namely: Direct Instruction, Discussion, Indirect Instruction and Emerging Models of Teaching (EMT). It further determined if there were significant differences in the students’ learning preferences between and among the variables tested. A descriptive research design was used. After a semester of exposure to the different teaching strategies and class activities, the 114 Educ. 121N (Social Dimensions of Education) sophomore students, 1st semester, AY 2016-2017, were given a teacher’s survey questionnaire. Findings revealed that majority of the students “most preferred” the four teaching approaches, however, the EMT had the highest mean and the direct instruction had the least. Students preferred most the feeding program, clothes-giving and parlor games activities – a community immersion, the cultural dance presentation and the role play activity of the EMT approach. Listening to a classmate’s report and to a teacher’s lecture under the direct instruction had the least overall mean. Among the four approaches, ANOVA showed no significant difference in the students’ learning preferences. However, there was a significant difference in their levels of learning preferences between direct and discussion, direct and indirect, and direct and EMT. In conclusion, the college students preferred collaborative, performance-based and hands-on learning.

Keywords: Sophomore, Milieu, Learning, Preference, Approach, Strategy

Introduction

Teachers’ teaching strategies are vital in imparting knowledge, skills and values among learners. A strategy and class activity provides a learning experience from which the learners can acquire insights and understanding of facts, concepts and principles that they can use and apply in a variety of situations in life.

The new milieu is characterized by a shift from teacher-centred to learner-centred approach (Vega V. et al. 2009). In the traditional classroom, the teacher dominates all class activities, while students sit and listen; now the real world demands that students must go beyond rote and factual level of understanding. They must think critically and creatively to solve complex problems in a variety of situations in life (Bruer 1993). When a teacher employs methods as simulations, discovery, problem solving and cooperative learning, different from lower-level rote learning like simple recall of information, this emphasizes a shift in the learning experience from teacher centered to student-centred approach.

According to Vega et al. (2009), the shift from the traditional to the present-day classroom is as follows:

For the student: from passively waiting for the teacher to give directions and information to actively searching for needed information and learning experiences, determining what is needed, and seeking ways to attain it; from always being in the role of the learner to participating at times as the expert/knowledge provider; from always following given procedures to desiring to explore, discover, and create unique solutions to learning problems; from viewing the teacher as the one who has all of the answers to viewing the teacher as a resource, model, and helper who will encourage exploration and attempts to find unique solutions to problems. On the other hand, for the teacher, the shift is: from always being viewed as the content expert and source for all the answers to participating at times as one who may not know it all but desires to learn; from being viewed as the primary source of information who continually directs it to students to being viewed as a support, collaborator, and coach for students as they learn to gather and evaluate information for themselves; from always asking the questions and controlling the focus of student learning to actively coaching students to develop and pose their own questions and explore their own
alternative ways of finding answers; and from directing students through preset step-by-step exercises so that all achieve similar conclusions to actively encouraging individuals to use their personal knowledge and skills to create unique solutions to problems.

(Social Dimensions of Education Revised Edition Copyright, 2009 p. 154)

Broño and Palmieri (2006) in their professional education refresher course book with area of focus on the General Principles and Methods of Teaching categorized teaching approaches as direct, discussion, indirect and emerging models of teaching (EMT), arranged in the order from teacher-centred to student-centred approaches. Direct is a student-centred approach, also known as expository approach. The indirect approach on the other hand is a student-centred approach, also called an exploratory approach. Discussion is considered a bridge between the direct and indirect approach characterized by teacher-student and student-student exchanges. The emerging models of teaching (EMT) is a student-centered approach and constructivist characterized by a highly collaborative, performance-based and experience-centered teaching.

Learners as the heart of the school system are given utmost priority. Their preferences, needs and interests are accounted for in any learning endeavour. In fact, according to Lardizabal (1996), learners are the first to consider when choosing a method. Their characteristics and nature – age, maturity, grade level, abilities, interests, growth, health, problems, etc. should be considered for learning to take effect.

The Outcomes-Based Education which has been prescribed to all academic institutions include the implementation of the K-12 Curriculum for basic education, these are salient features of the 21st milieu that requires for teachers to keep abreast with the latest developments in education. A GRASPS Model by Wiggins and McTighe (2008), an acronym that begins with Real-World with the letter G for Goal, R for Role, A for Audience, S for Situation, P for Product and S for Standard, is one effective model for setting a real-world task for students.

The researcher intended to find out the effectiveness of teaching approaches applied and the learning preferences of students on this particular context at this particular period of time.

The study aimed to determine the levels of learning preferences of MSU-TCTO College of Education sophomore students along the different approaches and strategies in teaching.

Specifically, it tried to answer the following queries:

1. What are the levels of learning preferences of MSU-TCTO College of Education students along the different teaching strategies and class activities:
   1.1 written homework;
   1.2 issue poll;
   1.3 reflection activity;
   1.4 lecture;
   1.5 class discussion;
   1.6 drama;
   1.7 message relay activity;
   1.8 individual reporting;
   1.9 listening to a classmate’s report;
   1.10 film viewing;
   1.11 role play;
   1.12 group review;
   1.13 self-review;
   1.14 news reporting;
   1.15 group practice
   1.16 feeding program, giving of clothing and parlor games;
   1.17 props and corner preparation;
1.18 cultural dance presentation;  
1.19 journal writing; and  
1.20 major examinations?

2. What are the levels of learning preferences of MSU-TCTO College of Education sophomore students along the different approaches in teaching in terms of the following variables:  
2.1 direct instruction;  
2.2 discussion;  
2.3 indirect instruction; and  
2.4 emerging models of teaching?

3. Is there a significant difference in the learning preferences of the MSU-TCTO College of Education sophomore students along the teaching approaches direct, discussion, indirect and emerging models of teaching?

4. Is there a significant difference in the learning preferences of the MSU-TCTO College of Education sophomore students along the following variables:  
4.1 direct instruction vs. discussion;  
4.2 direct instruction vs. indirect instruction;  
4.3 direct instruction vs. emerging models of teaching;  
4.4 discussion vs. indirect instruction;  
4.5 discussion vs. emerging models of teaching; and  
4.6 indirect instruction vs. emerging models of teaching?

**Null Hypothesis**

There is no significant difference in the learning preferences of the MSU-TCTO College of Education sophomore students along the four approaches, direct, discussion, indirect and emerging models of teaching (EMT).

There is no significant difference in the learning preferences of the MSU-TCTO College of Education sophomore students along direct instruction vs. discussion, direct instruction vs. indirect instruction, direct instruction vs. emerging models of teaching, discussion vs. indirect instruction, discussion vs. emerging models of teaching and indirect instruction vs. emerging models of teaching.

**Significance of the Study**

The findings of this study would contribute to education development; improve its delivery from the national to the local levels. This would provide a feedback as regards the effectiveness of teachers’ teaching approaches and strategies as perceived by the learners – the primary recipients of instruction. It would also determine the trend of students learning preferences at this particular period of time.

To the school administrators, this study would serve as a guide in decision-making and policy formulation in order to cope with the learners’ needs and interests. It would serve as an assessment guide in identifying appropriate and relevant programs to support in order to improve the teaching-learning processes.

To the professors and teachers, this assessment gave a relevant feedback on the effectiveness of teaching approaches and strategies employed in the classroom. It provided for the direction of the class program according to the learning preferences of learners considering their learning styles, motivation, needs and interests.

To the students, this provided inclusive and holistic development as they were given subsequent attention in class activities.
This served as reference for future inquiry of researches in the field of education.

**Scope and Delimitation**

The study focused on the instructor’s strategies and class activities which were categorized into four approaches: direct, discussion, indirect and emerging models of teaching (EMT). The 114 sophomore students enrolled in three (3) Educ. 121N classes, College of Education, MSU-TCTO, 1st Semester, AY. 2016-2017, were the respondents.

**Definition of Terms**

As used in this study, the following terms were operationally defined:

*Direct Instruction* a teacher-centred approach that includes the professor’s lecture and listening to student’s report.

*Discussion* a bridge between direct and indirect approach; also known as a teacher-student and student-student approach which includes issue poll, group practice, group review and class discussion.

*Emerging Models of Teaching (EMT)* a highly collaborative and performance-based student-centred approach that includes drama, message relay activity, role play, news reporting, cultural dance presentation, props and corner preparation, feeding program, giving of clothing and parlor games activities.

*Indirect Instruction* refers to student-centred approach that includes journal writing, reflection activity, individual reporting, film viewing, self-review, major examination and written homework.

*Instructor* refers to the teacher handling the class, and the one who conducted the study.

*Learning Preferences* refers to the responses of students on the survey questionnaire.

*Levels of Learning Preferences* refers to the five scales 5 to 1 with corresponding interpretation most preferred (MsP), more preferred (MrP), preferred (P), less preferred (LtP) and least preferred (LtP).

**Methodology**

This study employed a descriptive research design as it described the levels of learning preferences of students enrolled in the three Educ. 121N classes, 1st Semester, AY 2016-2017. Educ. 121N (Social Dimensions of Education) is a professional educational foundation of students taking education course in the College of Education, MSU-TCTO. After a semester of exposure to the different teaching strategies and class activities, the 114 Educ. 121N sophomore students were given a teacher’s survey questionnaire that contained 20 items of strategies and class activities with five columns containing the scales most preferred, more preferred, preferred, less preferred and least preferred on which the students should put ticks based on his/her perception as to what level a certain strategy and class activity yielded a learning outcome among others. The items on the questionnaire were arranged according to the order of class activities employed from the beginning of classes up to the end. They were purposely not categorized into type of teaching approach on the questionnaire. This was conducted right after the final examination on December 13, 2016 at Room E-8, Academic Building, College of Education, MSU-TCTO, Sanga-Sanga, Bongao, Tawi-Tawi. To determine the level of learning preferences among students along the strategies and class activities, weighted mean was used. The mean ranges are the following: 1-1.49, least preferred; 1.50-2.49 less preferred; 2.50-3.49, preferred; 3.50-4.49, more preferred; and 4.50-5.0 most preferred. For further analysis of the results, the strategies and class activities employed by the teacher were further categorized along the four approaches in teaching, namely: direct, discussion, indirect, and emerging models of teaching in order to compare the results and recognize the trend of learners’ preferences in learning. To test if there was a significant difference along the four variables direct, discussion, indirect and emerging models of teaching (EMT), ANOVA was used. To test if there were significant differences between direct instruction and discussion, direct instruction and Indirect
instruction, direct instruction and emerging models of teaching, discussion and indirect instruction, discussion and emerging models of teaching, T-test was used. SPSS was used in the analysis and treatment of the data.

Findings and Discussion

Table 1. Weighted Mean of Levels of Learning Preferences of MSU-TCTO Sophomore Students along the Strategies and Class Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategies and Class Activities</th>
<th>Weighted Mean</th>
<th>Interpretation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Written Homework</td>
<td>4.19</td>
<td>MrP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issue poll</td>
<td>4.15</td>
<td>MrP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflection</td>
<td>4.71</td>
<td>MsP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecture</td>
<td>4.34</td>
<td>MrP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Discussion</td>
<td>4.68</td>
<td>MsP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drama</td>
<td>4.51</td>
<td>MsP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Message Relay</td>
<td>4.49</td>
<td>MrP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Reporting</td>
<td>4.40</td>
<td>MrP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening to a classmate’s report</td>
<td>4.31</td>
<td>MrP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Film Viewing</td>
<td>4.72</td>
<td>MsP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role Play</td>
<td>4.55</td>
<td>MsP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group review</td>
<td>4.60</td>
<td>MsP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self Review</td>
<td>4.35</td>
<td>MrP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>News Reporting</td>
<td>4.50</td>
<td>MsP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Practice</td>
<td>4.60</td>
<td>MsP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeding, Giving of Clothing &amp; Parlor Games</td>
<td>4.72</td>
<td>MsP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Props and Corner Preparation</td>
<td>4.54</td>
<td>MsP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Dance Presentation</td>
<td>4.59</td>
<td>MsP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal Writing</td>
<td>4.48</td>
<td>MrP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major Examinations</td>
<td>4.61</td>
<td>MsP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>4.51</td>
<td>MsP</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Legend: MsP - Most Preferred (5), MrP - More Preferred (4), P-Preferred (3), LsP-Less Preferred (2), LtP-Least Preferred (1)

Table 1 shows the weighted means of learning preferences of students along the strategies and class activities in Ed 121N classes. The strategies and class activities are discussed according to the order of weighted means with their corresponding levels of interpretations in descending order. Findings revealed that the feeding, giving of clothing, and parlor games and film viewing activities had the highest mean both 4.72, followed by the reflection activity, class discussion, major examinations, group review, group practice cultural dance presentation, Role play, props and corner preparation, drama and news reporting with corresponding weighted means of 4.71 4.68 4.61 4.60, 4.60, 4.59 4.55, 4.54, 4.51 and 4.50, respectively all with “most preferred” corresponding levels of interpretation. Message relay, journal writing, individual reporting, self-review, lecture, listening to a classmates report, written homework and issue poll with weighted mean values of 4.49, 4.48, 4.40, 4.35, 4.34, 4.31, 4.19 and 4.15, respectively with “more preferred” corresponding levels of interpretation. The overall weighted mean is 4.51 with “most preferred” corresponding level of interpretation.

Table 2. Weighted Means of Learning Preferences of MSU-TCTO Sophomore Students along the Strategies and Class Activities categorized according to Teaching Approaches
Table 2 shows the weighted means of learning preferences of MSU-TCTO Sophomore students along strategies and class activities categorized according to each type of teaching approaches in ascending order. Listening to a classmate’s report and giving of a lecture by a teacher under direct instruction have mean values of 4.31 and 4.34, respectively. The overall weighted mean is 4.33 with “more preferred” corresponding level of interpretation. Categorized under the discussion approach are issue poll, group review, group practice and class discussion with corresponding mean values of 4.15, 4.60, 4.65 and 4.68, respectively. The overall weighted mean is 4.52 with “most preferred” corresponding level of interpretation. Indirect approach that includes written homework, self-review, individual reporting, journal writing, major examinations, reflection and film viewing with corresponding mean values of 4.19, 4.35, 4.41, 4.49, 4.62, 4.71, and 4.72, respectively has 4.50 overall weighted mean with “most preferred” corresponding level of interpretation. Activities belong to the Emerging Models of Teaching (EMT) are message relay, news reporting, drama, role play, props and corner preparation, cultural dance presentation and feeding, giving of clothing and parlor games activities with corresponding mean values of 4.49, 4.50, 4.51, 4.55, 4.55, 4.59 and 4.72, respectively. The overall weighted mean is 4.56 with “most preferred” corresponding level of interpretation.

Among the four approaches, the emerging models of teaching (EMT) has the highest mean of 4.56 followed by the discussion approach with 4.52, indirect approach with 4.50, and the direct instruction with a mean of 4.33 has the least overall mean. This implies that the sophomore students likely preferred student-centred approaches to...
teacher centred approaches. It reveals that students would like to be engaged in any learning other than classroom environment dominated by a teacher.

Figure 1. Means Plots of Class Activities

Figure 1, a graphical presentation, shows the means plots of classroom activities.
Figure 2. Means Plots of Teaching Approaches

Table 3 shows a test of significant difference of the learning preferences of MSU-TCTO College of Education students along direct, discussion, indirect and emerging models of teaching (EMT) using ANOVA.

Table 3. Test of Significant Difference of the Four Approaches using ANOVA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approach</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.33</td>
<td>.02001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.52</td>
<td>.24726</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4.50</td>
<td>.19513</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emerging Models of Teaching</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4.56</td>
<td>.03048</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As shown in Table 3 ANOVA reveals that there is no significant difference in the learning preferences of the sophomore students along the four approaches direct, discussion, indirect and emerging models of teaching (EMT) with mean values of 4.33, 4.52, 4.50 and 4.56 and corresponding standard deviations of 0.02, 0.25, 0.20 and 0.03, respectively. An F-value of 0.029 between groups and 0.028 within groups and a p-value of 0.410 shows no significant difference at a 0.05 level of significance.

This shows that the learning preferences of students along the four approaches with the activities listening to teacher’s lecture and to a classmate’s report, issue poll, group practice, class discussion, group review, self review, reflection, written homework, individual reporting, film viewing, journal writing, major examinations, message relay, role play, drama, news reporting, props and corner preparation, cultural dance presentation, and feeding program, did not significantly differ. So the four approaches are all relevant in teaching considering that teacher may use one, two or more approaches in teaching a certain lesson. Teachers may use student-centered or teacher-centered or a combination of both approaches to teach a particular lesson to ensure learning. Therefore the null hypothesis that states “there is no significant difference in the learning preferences of MSU-TCTO sophomore students along the variables tested” is accepted.

Table 4 shows a test of significant difference in learning preferences of MSU-TCTO sophomore students between two approaches using T-test.

Table 4. Test of Significant Difference between Two Approaches using T-test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group Category</th>
<th>Mean Difference</th>
<th>t-value</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Direct vs. Discussion</td>
<td>-0.1908</td>
<td>-2.435</td>
<td>.016</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct vs. Indirect</td>
<td>-0.1585</td>
<td>-2.006</td>
<td>.046</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct vs. EMT</td>
<td>-0.2295</td>
<td>-2.836</td>
<td>.005</td>
<td>Highly Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion vs. Indirect</td>
<td>0.0323</td>
<td>.493</td>
<td>.623</td>
<td>Not Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion vs. EMT</td>
<td>-0.0387</td>
<td>-.572</td>
<td>.568</td>
<td>Not Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indirect vs. EMT</td>
<td>-0.071</td>
<td>-1.036</td>
<td>.301</td>
<td>Not Significant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4 on the test of significance of mean differences shows that on the learning preferences between direct and discussion, the mean difference is significant with a t-value of -2.435 and p-value of 0.16. Between direct and
discussion, hearing a lecture of a teacher and listening to a classmate’s report of the direct instruction are less preferred to issue poll, group review, group practice and class discussion of the discussion approach in learning. This means that direct instruction being a teacher controlled approach yielded a lesser learning outcome to discussion that is highly democratic; characterized by teacher-student and student-student exchanges. Between direct and indirect, Table 4 shows a significant mean difference with a t-value of -2.006 and p-value of .046. Students preferred indirect instruction, a student-centered approach to direct instruction, a teacher-centered approach. Activities under indirect instruction like self review, reflection, written homework, individual reporting, film viewing, journal writing, and major examinations generally preferred by the students to a teacher’s lecture and student’s report of the direct instruction. This means that students would like to be engaged in a learning activity where they have the opportunity to explore, discover and experience by themselves to promote independent learning than to become passive by just listening. Between direct and EMT, the mean difference is highly significant with a t-value of -2.836 and p-value of 0.005. Generally, students most preferred performance-based activities like message relay, role play, drama, news reporting, props and corner preparation, cultural dance presentation, and feeding program categorized under the EMT approach. This means that students’ preference indeed shifted towards a highly collaborative, performance-based and hands-on learning from a highly teacher-controlled approach. Students inclined to a real-world task. They carried out a task when engaged in a meaningful learning activity. Thus, the null hypothesis that states “there is no significant difference in the learning preferences of MSU-TCTO sophomore students between direct and discussion, direct and indirect, and direct and EMT” is rejected.

On the other hand, Table 4 shows that on the learning preferences between discussion and indirect, the mean difference is not significant with a t-value of 0.493 and p-value of 0.623. Since a discussion always involved students in learning activities, they did not perceive it differently from indirect approach, a student centered approach, in learning. Thus, students’ learning preferences on discussion do not differ from indirect approach. Between discussion and EMT, the mean difference shows not significant with a t-value of -0.572 and p-value of 0.568. Although students preferred most the EMT approach among the four approaches, students would still rely with the guidance of the teacher in learning. Thus, teacher’s presence inside the classroom as a facilitator is still very important. This means that students’ preferences along the two approaches do not significantly differ. Between indirect and EMT, Table 4 shows a high mean difference with t-value of -1.036 and p-value of 0.301. Although the EMT was much more preferred to indirect approach in learning, there was no significant difference in their preferences along these two student-centred approaches. Thus, the null hypothesis that states “there is no significant difference in the learning preferences of MSU-TCTO sophomore students between discussion and indirect, discussion and EMT, and indirect and EMT” was accepted.

Conclusion

It is concluded that the MSU-TCTO College of Education sophomore students preferred student-centred approaches to teacher-centered ones. They most preferred the activities classified under the emerging models of teaching which are highly collaborative, performance-based and experience-centered that promote self-discovery and independent learning.

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