

**EFFECT OF THE CONSTRUCTIVIST INSTRUCTIONAL
APPROACH ON ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF
BUILDING TECHNOLOGY STUDENT IN TECHNICAL
COLLEGES IN NIGER STATE.**

A RESERCH PROJECT PRESENTED TO

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2012

CERTIFICATION

I, NELLY AYENI, with Matric No. 2009/3/33100BT an undergraduate student of the department of industrial and technology education certified that the work education embodied is original and has not been submitted in part or full for any other Diploma or Degree of this or any University.

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Name

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Signature

APPROVAL PAGE

This research project has been read and approved as meeting the requirement for the award of B.TECH Degree in Building Technology of the department of Industrial and Technology Education, School of Science and Science Education, Federal University of Technology, Minna,

Project supervisor

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this project to the almighty God and in memory of Grace Ogah.

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ABSTRACT

This study was designed to determine the effects of the constructivist instructional approach on Academic achievement of Building Technology students in Technical Colleges Niger state. A pre-test, post-test, non-equivalent control group, quasi-experimental research design was adopted. 50 students constituted the subjects in the experimental group and 50 students constituted the subjects in the control group for the study. A total of 100 students were involved in the study. Three research questions which include a null and void hypothesis, tested at 0.05 level of significance, guided the study. The instruments were also subjected to face validation by three experts in Industrial and Technical Education and Building Technology. The reliability coefficient obtained was 0.76. Mean was used to answer the research questions; while T-test was employed to test the hypothesis. The study revealed that students taught Building Technology using the constructivist instructional approach had a higher mean score than students taught using the conventional teaching method in cognitive achievement test, psychomotor achievement test. In each of the cases, the high mean scores were found to be significant. Furthermore, the mean score of boys taught Building Technology using the constructivist instructional approach was higher than the mean score of girls taught using the same constructivist instructional approach in the cognitive achievement test, the researcher recommended that. The National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) should consider a review of Building Technology curriculum for Technical Colleges with a view to incorporating the constructivist instructional approach into the teaching of Building Technology.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Building technology involves the application of scientific knowledge in the design, selection of materials, construction, operation and maintenance of Building structures. (Federal Ministry of Education (FME), 2001), offered as building construction work in Nigeria Technical colleges. A national curriculum is adopted in all the Technical Colleges accredited by NBTE. The programs in Technical Colleges are offered at two levels leading to the award of National Technical Certificate (NTC) and Advanced National Technical Certificate (ANTC) for craftsmen and master craftsmen respectively (FME. 2000). The curriculum for building technology in the Technical Colleges is developed to offer a complete secondary education in general education subject in addition to occupational area. Avvolua-efebo (2002) pointed out that the main feature of the curricular activities for technical colleges is structured in foundation and trade modules; the curriculum for each trade Consists of general education, theory and related courses, workshop practice, industrial training component and small business management and entrepreneurial training.

The challenge for preparing students for the 21 century, workplace basic skills therefore has necessitated a shift from instructional approaches based on the behavioral learning theories to those rooted in cognitive psychological learning theories for which constructivist instructional techniques is one (Avvolua-efebo, 2002). Constructivist according to Epstein and Ryan (2002) is based on the concept that learning is a constructive process in which the learner is building an internal illustration of knowledge on a personal

interpretation of experience. Constructivist is a theory of learning based on the idea that knowledge is constructed by the learner based on mental activity. Two important notions orbit around the simple idea of constructed knowledge (Demmert 2001). However explained that the first notion is that learners construct new understandings using what they already know. The second is that learning is active rather than passive. Learners apply their understanding in the light of what they encounter in new situations. If what learners encounter is inconsistent with their current understanding, their understanding can change to accommodate new experience. Learners remain active throughout this process; they apply current understandings, note relevant elements in new learning experiences, judge the consistency of prior and emerging knowledge, and based on that judgment, they can modify knowledge.

Constructivist is, therefore, a model of instruction and learning, and interactive process in social settings; it is problem solving oriented, allow students to explore and work in groups, making meaning of task and setting out to solving problems that are perplexing to them. Constructivist instructional techniques facilitate learning in the classroom. Constructivist instructional techniques are to improve students' thinking skills and problem solving abilities. In a nutshell, the constructivist instructional approach is defined in this study, as an eclectic approach to teaching which involved the use of thinking skills, oral discourse, authentic/situated learning, collaborative work and framing instructional strategies combined during the class lesson as appropriate to Suit the content of the lesson in such a way that made the students construct their own knowledge and accomplish their learning tasks based on Jerome Brunner's three principles that guide the development of instruction in a constructivist classroom listed in Cleminson (2000). These are: instruction must be

concerned with experiences and contexts that make students willing and able to learn (readiness); instruction must be structured so that the students can easily grasp it (spiral organization) and; instruction should be designed to facilitate extrapolation and/or fill in the gap (going beyond information given). Based on these principles, the constructivist instructional approach is expected to enhance the learning of building technology students in the Technical Colleges.

Over the years, teaching methods based on behavioural learning theory has been adopted to teach vocational subjects in the Technical Colleges irrespective of the fact that technological advancement in industry requires that students be equipped with workplace basic skills such as thinking skills, problem solving and collaborative work skills which will make them adaptable to changes in work places. According to Rojevski (2002) lecture and demonstration methods which are based on behavioural learning theory are the main teaching/learning methods employed for implementing the curriculum in the technical colleges. Apart from the fact that these methods are teacher-centred students are not given enough opportunities to participate in the classroom instruction. These methods which are predominantly used in teaching building technology in the technical colleges emphasize knowledge transmission from the teacher to passive students and encourage rote memorization of fact (Boyle, Duffy and Dunleavy, 2003). Besides, teaching methods which are based on behavioural learning theories are directed towards isolating the learner from social interaction and towards seeing education as a one-on-one relationship between the learner and the objective material being learned (Epstein and Ryan 2002). The consequence of the use of these methods in teaching vocational subjects such as building technology in the technical colleges is that students are unable to retain their learning and apply it in new

situations (Rusbult 2005). Indicated that traditional teaching- learning approaches based on behavioural learning theory do not adequately equip students with higher-order thinking skills, collaborative and problem solving skills, but constructivist theory does, Perhaps, if thinking skills, oral discourse, authentic/situated learning, collaborative work and framing instructional techniques are combined during instruction to teach building technology in the Technical Colleges, it will assist in developing students' thinking skills and problem solving abilities which in turn may help them improve their learning methods employed by teachers in the technical colleges thus, seem inadequate for equipping the students studying building technology with the work place basic skills required for work in the building industries which is vast changing with technological advancements. This raises the questions as to whether beside the teacher-centered method there is no such teaching technique of the constructivist instructional approach which can influence this ugly trend in the subject.

According to Doolittle and Camp (2000) constructivist learning environments offer the potential for locating learning in the context of real-life situations and problems. Such environments offer a rationale for curriculum integration that connects learning with the workplace .Therefore, if constructivist instructional techniques are adopted in the teaching of building technology in the Technical Colleges, perhaps the students will be able to acquire workplace basic skills such as collaborative work skills, problem solving skills and thinking skills required in the vast technological world of work and be able to transfer learning under varying technological conditions. The problem of the study therefore was to determine the effects of using the constructivist instructional approach on academic achievement of building technology students in Technical Colleges.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine the effects of the constructivist instructional approach on academic achievement of learning of building technology students in Technical Colleges. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Determine the cognitive achievement scores of students taught building technology with the constructivist instructional approach and those taught using the conventional teaching methods.
2. Determine the psychomotor achievement scores of students taught building technology with the constructivist instructional approach and those taught using the conventional teaching methods.
3. Compare the cognitive achievement scores of boys and girls taught building technology using the constructivist instructional approach

Significance of the Study

The findings of the experiment on effects of the constructivist instructional approach on academic achievement of learning of building technology students in this study, upon dissemination will be of immense benefit to students of building technology and other vocational subjects in the Technical Colleges.

The result of the use of the constructivist instructional approach in this study, will also benefit the technical teachers as it will improve teachers' skills in the use of varieties of instructional techniques, and use of instructional resources that will help to maintain the interest of the students and stimulate teaching and learning processes in the classroom and

Laboratory curriculum planners and educational administrators will benefit from the findings of this study as it will help them to develop curriculum that will incorporate new teaching/learning innovations and assessment techniques that will facilitate training of building technology students to acquire the basic work place skill required for work in the industries.

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide this study:

1. What are the mean cognitive achievement scores of students taught with the constructivist instructional approach and those taught using the conventional teaching methods?
2. What are the mean psychomotor achievement scores of students taught building technology with the constructivist instructional approach and those taught using the conventional teaching methods?
3. What are the mean cognitive achievement scores of boys and girls taught building technology using the constructivist instructional approach?

Hypotheses

The following null and void hypotheses guided the study:

HO: There is no significant difference between the mean cognitive achievement scores of students taught building technology with the constructivist instructional approach and those taught using conventional teaching methods.

H1: there is significant difference between the mean cognitive achievement scores of students taught building technology with the constructivist instructional approach and those

taught using conventional teaching methods.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The review of literature for this study was organized under the following sub-headings:

- Oral discourse Instructional Strategy
- Collaborative Work Skill Instructional Strategies.
- Authentic/Situated Learning Instructional Strategy.
- Learning Frame Instructional Strategy.
- Building Technology in the Technical Colleges.
- The Methods of teaching in the Technical Colleges in Nigeria.
- Technological Development and Changes in Buildings
- The Need for Change in Methodology in the Technical Colleges
- Summary of Review of Related Literature.

Oral Discourse Instructional Strategy

Oral discourse is very often used as a tool in a constructivist classroom (Riding *et al*, 2002). When designed properly and used thoughtfully, discussion tasks can be an effective learning tool that promote creativity, as well as generate meaningful interaction and understanding for the learner. Well designed discussion tasks lead to progressive knowledge-seeking inquiry or expansive learning where learners are actively synthesizing new information with prior knowledge and experiences in the process of creating not only new knowledge but also new understanding of the learning process. Teacher uses discussion tasks to achieve

different goals- critical inquiry, debate and reflection. Oral discourse is the core process in formulating and sharing human experience. It has an immediate creative nature. It can lead to the acquisition of knowledge if the formation of concepts is really based on thought, JIallak (2000) admonished that teachers should have ways of stimulating it. The easiest way, he says, is to make students talk about what they think Verbalization involves reviewing what is to be verbalized. This review is a form of thinking that often brings out inconsistencies and gaps in a chain of ideas. He concluded that it is crucial to initiate conversations when there is a problem to be solved, and believes that it may eventually become a habit for the students and any opportunity to solve problems is then transformed into a conversation. Von Glaserfeld had observed that any attempt for the teacher not to appreciate students' views is the surest way of extinguishing any spark of motivation they may have. He said it may not be surprising if the students lose any interest in tackling new tasks.

Boyaci (2006) calls classroom dialogue, thinking together, and sees its goals as achieving cognitive focus and mutual construction of knowledge. The teacher ensures that relationships are formed in the flow of discussion. Slant on pointed out that a number of tools are available to the teacher as; a supervisor of conversation. They include: reciprocal teaching, scaffolding, inquiry teaching, and cooperative learning. Caberera (2002) suggested a list of basic discourse abilities or skills such as:

- How to take turns in conversation
- How to listen
- Ways of asking for different kinds of information
- How to speak to others and appreciate their needs
- That others have a point of view and

- That others' points of view may be different from ones own.

Avvolua (2002) believed that purposive dialogue will naturally elicit such traits as intellectual empathy, fair-mindedness, faith in reason, and movement toward reciprocal rather than egocentric attitudes. In conclusion, the emphasis on the use of oral discourse instructional strategy in this study is on creating opportunity for students to engage in conversation when solving problem in Building Technology. This strategy is used in a constructivist classroom in conjunction with thinking skills collaborative work skill and authentic task instructional strategies to provide opportunity for students to extrapolate during instruction

Collaborative Work Skills Instructional Strategy

Collaborative learning according to Bonwell *et al.* (2003) is an instructional strategy in which students work in groups toward a common goal. Collaborative learning also known as cooperative learning occurs whenever students interact in pairs or groups to share knowledge and experiences (Boyaci, 2006). FGN (2000) asserted that in collaborative learning, the teacher systematically organizes students into groups to work and learn together. The students are often assigned roles in their group for completing the given task. Boyle (2003) noted that there are several approaches of collaborative learning which may differ slightly in certain aspects of learning and instructional design such as group structure and teacher's role but all of them have common attributes or characteristics. There are:

- a) Group learning task design based on shared learning goals and outcomes.
- b) Small group learning takes place in groups of between 3-5 students
- c) Co-operative behaviour involves trust building activities, joint planning and an understanding of team support conduct

- d) Positive interdependence is developed through setting mutual goals; and
- e) Individual accountability, role fulfilment and task commitment are expected of students.

Common examples of collaborative learning approaches as listed by Becker *et al.* (2004) include:

1. Peer tutoring in which students quickly learn and teach each other simple concept.
2. Jigsaw: separate groups of students learn various concepts and then all groups are reassembles so that each member is an 'expert' of a different concept which he or she will teach the others.
3. Information gap method: one student swap the information he has to another student and take the one the other students have which he does not but need it.
4. Co-operative projects: students decide and design a group project.
5. Paired interviews: students interview each other and share with the class.
6. Conversation cards: students interact according to cues on their cards.
7. Role-plays: students act out situations either spontaneously or pre-planned.
8. Open-ended free conversations: students discuss topics of interest.

Caberera (2002) identified peer-mediated instruction and intervention as another form of collaborative learning. Peer mediated instruction and intervention is an alternative classroom arrangement in which students take an instructional role with classmates or other students. Hall noted that there are many configurations of peer mediated instruction and intervention namely reverse-role tutoring, class wide peer tutoring and cross age tutoring. The collaborative learning model according to FME (2000) has five instructional phases namely engagement, exploration, transformation, presentation and reflection. FME concluded that collaborative

learning is aimed at preparing learners for the kind of team work and critical interchange they will need to be effective participants in their communities and workplace in the future. Moreover, it has been shown that collaborative learning enhances students critical thinking skills and hence, academic achievement (Avvolua-efebo, 2002). In this study, collaborative work skill is used to facilitate learning of Building Technology in social context where students work in group to provide solution to problem and test ideas and approaches based on their prior knowledge and experience.

Authentic/Situated learning Instructional Strategy

There has been a great deal written about authentic activities in recent times as the influences of constructivist philosophy. The influence of a constructivist philosophy, of problem-based and case-based learning, and the use of immersive scenarios and role-play have placed the activity students complete as they study firmly at the heart of the curriculum. Under the influence of more teacher-centred, approaches, activities were seen as a vehicle for practice. For example, in systems approach to learning the activity or task that students do is described in a list of nine events of instruction as: 'Eliciting the performance', and is an opportunity for the student to show that he or she has mastered the skill and is able to demonstrate it to the teachers' satisfaction. The systems model is based on a behaviourist approach and on the assumption that if skills and sub-skills are taught in the right order, in a systematic and comprehensive manner, then effective learning will occur.

An authentic learning experience per se is defined as those situated in certain appropriate social context and inevitably relevant to learner's perspective (FME, 2001). Authentic learning has been growing in importance and popularity as a learning approach for

last decade Boyaci (2006) reported that one of the critical reasons of this growing importance depends on the fact that traditional approach to teaching do not result in appropriate learning outcomes. He explained further that increasing popularity and influence of constructivist as a philosophical approach to learning have accelerated the research studies and papers investigating alternative models of teaching and learning, which has resulted in authentic learning, emerged as a challenge to existing learning environment.

A wide-ranging literatures, principally in the areas of constructivist approaches, have identified 10 characteristics commonly found in learning environments described as 'authentic' These characteristics according to Becker (2004) include;

1. Authentic activities have real-world relevance
2. Activities match as nearly as possible the real-world tasks of professionals in practice rather than de-contextualized or classroom-based tasks.
3. Authentic activities are ill-defined, requiring students to define the tasks and sub-tasks needed to complete the activity
4. Problems inherent in the activities are ill-defined and open to multiple interpretations rather than easily solved by the application of existing algorithms. Learners must identify their own unique tasks and sub-tasks in order to complete the major task.
5. Authentic activities comprise complex tasks to be investigated by students over a sustained period of time.
6. Activities are completed in days, weeks and months rather than minutes or hours they require significant investment of time and intellectual resources.
7. Authentic activities provide the opportunity for students to examine the task from different perspectives, using a variety of resources.

8. Authentic activities allow competing solutions and diversity of outcome
9. Activities allow a range and diversity of outcomes open to multiple solutions of an original nature, rather than a single correct response obtained by the application of rules and procedures.

In a nutshell, a constructivist environment involves developing learning communities comprised of students and teachers who are engaged in authentic tasks in authentic contexts closely related to work done in the real world. A constructivist learning environment also provides opportunities for learners to experience multiple perspectives. Through discussion or debate, learners are able to see issues and problems from different points of view, to negotiate meaning, and develop shared understandings with others. Hence, authentic task is used in this study to provide real-world activities in social context to enhance the learning of Building Technology and cater for readiness principle of constructivist.

Learning Frames Instructional Strategy

The family of spatial learning strategies includes framing (frame construction) and concept mapping (drawing of concept maps). This study will not be concerned with concept mapping. Therefore, attention will be shifted to and concentrated on framing. This is because in existing vocational and technical education literature, studies dealing specifically with the use of frames are not found. The product of framing (frame construction) is a frame. Briefly, a frame is a matrix or grid. On the grid names of concepts, categories or relationships will be used as heading for columns and rows. It may be constructed from texts or during class discussions. A frame is a schematic representation that graphically shows relationship between different

concepts. Such relationship will be seen without much effort. Framing, as a strategy, engenders meaningful learning through helping students organize incoming information and building mental bridges between prior knowledge and new knowledge (Boyle *et al.* 2003). While constructing a frame, students are required to supply information in the slots under the guidance of a teacher during instruction.

Before their introduction into cognitive science, frames were used by psychologists (Jiallak, 2000) in programmed instruction. In this context, a frame refers to a unit of instruction which consists of presenting a short and simple item of information, a question and a place for an answer to the question. A learner is required to supply the answer, which can be in form of short answer or multiple choice formats. In this study, frame was used in a context that is quite different from its usage in programmed instruction. Frame was employed as conceptualized by cognitive scientists.

Building Technology in the Technical Colleges

Building technology is one of the trades course offered as Building technology trade in the technical colleges in Nigeria. The goal of Building technology trade in Nigeria technical colleges is to produce competent Builders with sound theoretical knowledge who should be able to diagnose and carryout building construction on all types of structures (FRN, 2004) thus, the programmes for Building technology in Nigeria technical colleges is designed to produce competent structural craftsmen for all types of buildings. According to NBTE (2001) these crafts-men may also wish to take the opportunity for further technical education.

A national curriculum is adopted in all the technical colleges accredited by the National

Board for Technical Education (NBTE). The programme is offered at two levels leading to the award) National Technical Certificate (NTC) for craftsmen and Advance National Technical Certificate (ANTC) for Master craftsmen. The trainee on completion of the programme for Building technology like any other vocational courses in the technical colleges, according to FRN (2004) shall have three options:

- i. Secure employment either at the end of the whole course or after completing one or more modules of employable skills;
- ii. Set up their own businesses and become self-employed and be able to employ others;
- iii. Pursue further education in Advance Craft/Technical institutions such as Polytechnics, or Colleges of education (Technical) and Universities.

In the pursuance of the goals of Technical colleges, FRN (2004) pointed out that the main feature of the curricular activities for Technical colleges shall be structured in foundation and trade modules. The curriculum for each trade shall consist of five components

- General education
- Theory and related courses
- Workshop practice
- Industrial Training/Production work
- Small business management and entrepreneurial training

Methods of Teaching in the Technical Colleges in Nigeria

Teaching according to Becker (2004), is a deliberate effort by a mature or experienced person to impart information, knowledge, skills and so on to an immature or less experienced person through a process that is morally and pedagogically acceptable. Similarly, Demmert, (2001) defined teaching as the action of a person imparting skills or knowledge or giving instruction. In the same vein Epstein and Ryan (2002) maintained that teaching is an attempt to assist students in acquiring or changing some skills, knowledge ideal, attitude or appreciation. Therefore, teaching involves the setting 'up of activities to enable somebody learn something which can improve the person's knowledge, skills, attitudes and values. Thus, the aim of teaching is to facilitate learning. For teaching to facilitate learning, Becker emphasized that the content to be taught has to be worthwhile and the procedure has to be educationally acceptable for activity to be classified as teaching. In this context, teaching can therefore be defined as a systematic activity deliberately engaged in by somebody to facilitate the learning of the intended worthwhile knowledge, skills and values by another person and getting necessary feedback.

Central to the process of teaching is the concept of effective teaching. Effective teaching is one that produces demonstrable result in terms of cognitive, affective and psychomotor development of the students. Effective teaching depends on the teacher's use of appropriate instructional methods and techniques (Caberera and La Nasa, 2002). In vocational .and technical education, teaching methods and techniques are aimed at developing in the learners, the ability to acquire the knowledge and skills useful for work. These methods and techniques can vary in depth and time, depending on the level of students and the materials

available for instruction.

According to Rojevski (2002) the task of organizing for effective teaching is crucial in any educational setting. The crucial decisions at all instructional levels of the organization will be centered on such factors as what to teach, when to teach and how to teach it. These decisions are made by the teacher himself and a good insight and understanding of their decisions will assist the teacher greatly in developing a good plan for teaching.

At the classroom level Rojevski (2002) maintained that how to teach the selected elements depends on the teacher. In vocational and technical education, Rojevski pointed out that teaching methods and techniques aim at developing in the learner the ability to acquire the knowledge and skills useful for work. Teaching methods are used by all teachers to present skills, knowledge and appreciations to the learners in the classroom and to engage learners in the tasks involved while teaching techniques are processes adopted by veteran teachers to inject variety, in their teaching, stimulate it) and maintain the learners' interest in it (Riding, Grimley, Dahrael & Banner, 2003). They maintained that instructional techniques are subsumed in teaching methods as adjuncts to ensure the effectiveness of the method.

A comprehensive study of available literature in vocational and technical education reveal extensive listings of teaching methods as conceived and classified by various authors. However, Lecture methods, Project method (FME, 2003) and Demonstration method are mostly used in implementing the curriculum in the technical colleges.

Technological Development and Changes in Building.

Over the years there have been a lot of technological developments in Building technology. This singular development marked the dawn of a new technological era in the Building industry. Bonwell (19%) stated that there is nothing "new" about the idea of "new technology". He noted that recent journalists, government, academics and industrial commentators have viewed the latest developments in Building technology as sufficiently distinctive, dramatic and far-reaching to warrant the title "new technology"

Commenting on the introduction of computers into the Building technology, Sony Electronic Company (1982) observed that the application of Building technology is both for techno-economic advantages as well as for need imperative. The techno-economic implications they explained, range from the direct substitution of AutoCAD for old technologies with benefits being that new structures are typically more powerful, more reliable, very often better designed and cheaper than the predecessors. The need imperative, they further explained, applies where the general evolution of the society has placed additional demands upon product performance.

The Need for Change in Methodology in the Technical Colleges

Most of the methods, namely; demonstration method, lecture method, discussion method, project method and field trip method, predominately used by the technical teachers are based on behavioural learning theories. According to Boyle, Duffy and Boyle (2003) these method emphasize knowledge transmission from the teacher to passive students, encourage rote memorization of facts (Avvolua, 1996). In the same vein,

FRN (2002) observed that in the traditional teacher-centred approach to learning, the teacher is the expert and the dispenser of 'broadcast' model of learning where the teacher serves as the repository and transmitter of knowledge to the students. The traditional paradigm according to FRN is often characterized by the following view of learning;

- Learning is hard. Many view learning as a difficult and often tedious process. According to this view, if students are having fun or enjoying what they are doing in a learning activity, they probably are not learning.
- Learning is based on a deficit model of the student. The system strives to identify deficiencies and weaknesses of the student. Based on noted deficiencies, students are tracked, categorized, remediate or failed. The impact of the deficit model of student learning is most obvious in compensatory education programmes. As implied by the term, compensatory education is designed to make up or remediate learning that some children, particularly poor minority children, do not have, but which the curriculum and structure of schooling assume are common to all children.
- Learning is a process of information transfer and reception. Much of our present learning enterprise remains "information-oriented," emphasizing students reproducing knowledge rather than producing their own knowledge. It also remains teacher-centred. Many still see the role of the teacher as a dispenser of information and the role of the student as a passive receiver, the slower and repeater of the transmitted information. The prevalence of this view is supported by observations that teachers continue to rely on old standbys such as lectures,

textbook reading, and fill-in-the-worksheets practices that reduce students to passive recipients of information and fail to develop their thinking skills.

- Learning is an individual/solitary process. In a study of schools in the United States, the National Assessment of Educational Progress noted that most students spend long hours working alone at their desks completing worksheets or repetitive tasks. A London Times survey of English school children indicated that students almost unanimously rejected this daily ordeal of dull and ritualistically solitary classroom activity and called for a broader and more exciting curriculum. Above all, they wanted more work allowing them to think for themselves. They wanted to design and make things, to experiment and to engage in first-hand observation. The Times reported, however, that there was little evidence of changes in the curriculum that would respond to the students' wishes.
- Learning is facilitated by breaking content instruction into small isolated units. The educational system is often geared more to categorizing and analyzing patches of knowledge than to sewing them together.
- Learning is a linear process. Frequently, the textbook or teacher provides only one linear path through a narrowly bounded content area or sequence of standardized instructional units.

The consequences of the traditional methods of teaching are that students are unable to retain their learning and to apply it to new situation (Cleminson, 2000). However the world of work nowadays is a world of technology (Demmert, 2001). With respect to

changes in the world of work, Bonwell, (2003) observed that not only has technology imparted extensively upon the knowledge and skills needed for employment, but, even more significantly, the precarious nature of employment, and the extent of unemployment with no available work; these have profound effect on the type of technical and vocational education programme that need to be offered, and the teaching/learning strategies that need to be employed. FME (2001) commenting on the implication of technological advancement in work places and demands of manpower noted that employers nowadays are seeking employees who are able to flexibly acquire, adapt, apply and transfer their knowledge to different conditions and to respond independently and creatively.

The increasing effect of globalization and the rapid rate of technological changes on work places have informed the recommendation by FME (2000) that all technical and vocational education system in the 21st century should be geared towards life long learning. Supporting this view FME (2001) asserted that as technology has created change in all aspects of society, it is also changing our expectation of what students must learn in order to function in new world economy . Students will have to learn to navigate through large amounts of information, to analyze and make decision, and to master new knowledge domains in an increasingly technology society. They will need to be lifelong learners, collaborating with others in accomplishing complex task, and effectively using different systems for representing and communicating knowledge to others.

Summary of Review of Related Literature

Constructivist is a theory of learning based on the idea that knowledge is confirmed by the knower based on mental activities. Its central idea is that human learning is constructed. Learners build new knowledge upon the foundation of previous learning. Constructivist is also seen as a teaching strategy, which holds the view that scientific knowledge are personally ' constructed and reconstructed by the learner based on his prior knowledge or experience. A constructivist framework challenges teachers to create environments in which the teacher and student are encouraged to think and explore. In this context a constructivist classroom then, consists of learner centred, active instruction. In such a classroom, the teacher provides students with experiences that allow them to hypothesize, predict, and manipulate object, pose questions, research, investigate, imagine, and invent.

CHAPTER III

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This chapter presents the procedure used to carry out this study under the following sub headings; Design of the study; Area of the study, Population for the study; sample and sampling technique for the study; Instrument for Data Collection; Validation of the Instrument; Reliability of the Instrument; Experimental Procedures and Condition and Method of Data analysis.

Design of the Study

A quasi-experimental design was used for this study. Specifically, the pretest, post-test, non-equivalent control group design was adopted for the study. Hence, the study involved the use of intact classes because in a quasi-experimental design, the researcher does not randomly assign subject to the treatment or control group, completely controlled when the treatment is applied or completely controlled when the observations are conducted as in a true experimental design (Becker and Maunsaayat, 2004) The use of intact classes in a quasi-experimental design is supported by Caberera (2002) who believes that learners in a secondary school class in most cases, form natural clusters having similar age, height and other attributes. Besides, true experimental design would require assigning learners randomly to classes and also learners to different treatments which will disrupt or disorganize the normal school programme. The research design is illustrated using symbols as shown below

Experimental Group: $O_1 \times O_2$,

Control Group: $O_1 \times O_2$,

Where; O_1 represents pre-tests

O_2 represents post- tests

X. Stands for the treatment using constructivist instructional approach, -
stands for the use of the conventional method

Area of the Study

This study was conducted in Niger State. Niger state has some distribution of industries such as Building work industries which need the services of well-trained craftsmen produced in Technical colleges. In addition, Niger state has many NRTR accredited Technical colleges offering Building Technology whose students were used as subjects for this study. These Technical Colleges include: Government Technical College, Eyagi, Bida; Government Technical College, Minna; Government Technical College, Kontagora; Government Technical College, Monmoh Kontagora Pandogari, Suleiman Barrau Technical College, Suleja, Government Technical College New Bussa, and Federal science and Technical College, Shiroro.

Population of the Study

The population for this study comprised all 100 second year students of Building Technology in all the seven Technical colleges in Niger State. The data was obtained for 2010/2011 session from the register in the principal's office of each of the Technical College.

Sample and Sampling Techniques

In the quasi-experimental design of this study, simple random sampling technique was used to select four out of the seven Technical Colleges in Niger state, G.T.C Minna, S.BT.C Suleja 25 each from both School making 50 for Experimental group. G.T.C Kontagora 25, and G.T.C N/Bussa also 25, resulting to 50 for control group. 100 sample frame and population of study.

Instruments for Data Collection

The instruments used for data collection in this study are Cognitive Achievement Test (CAT); and Psychomotor Achievement Test (PAT). The CAT was used to test the students' cognitive achievement of learning in Building Technology while the PAT was test students' psychomotor achievement in Building Technology Both CAT and PAT were developed by the researcher. The CAT contained multiple choice items and was developed based on the content of Block laying and Concreting hand tool technical college syllabus-module BLCHT 11. The PAT contained a list of specific practical tasks students carried out. The practical tasks were based on Block laying and Concreting hand tool.

Validation of the Instruments

A table of specifications was built for the CAT in order to ensure its content validity. Based on the table of specification, a total of 40 multiple choice items were drawn for the CAT, after which the cognitive achievement test, psychomotor achievement test and the lesson plans was subjected to face validation by three experts from

Industrial and Technology Education, Federal University of Technology, Minna. The face validation involved checking the items of the instruments for arrangement and logical sequence. Based on the experts' suggestions, a revision was carried out on the instruments. Also a trial test was also conducted on the CAT for determining the psychometric indices of the test. The CAT was administered on a random sample of equivalent Building Technology students in the Government Technical College, Orozo FCT. A total of 20 items of the CAT was found to have good difficulty, discrimination and distracter indices and was finally used for the study.

Reliability of the instruments

The reliability coefficient of the Cognitive Achievement Test (CAT) was established using test-retest reliability. The CAT was administered on a random sample of 16 equivalent Building Technology students in Government technical college, Orozo FCT. After two weeks the test was re-administered to the same group. Pearson Product Moment Correlation coefficient was used to compute the reliability coefficient of the instrument. The Kuder-Richardson's estimate was also used to establish the internal consistency of the CAT. Meanwhile, scorer reliability technique was used to establish their liability coefficient of the psychomotor achievement test (PAT).

Control of Extraneous Variables

Experimental Bias

- To reduce experimental bias, the regular class teachers in the participating schools teach their own students. Hence, the researcher was directly involved in

administering the research instruments.

Lesson Plan Development

- To control invalidity that could be caused by teachers' variability in the development of the lesson plan and to ensure uniform standard in the conduct of the research, the researcher personally prepared the lesson plans for both groups Training of Teachers for the Experimental Groups

Two week intensive training programme was organized for the teachers. The teachers were given detailed explanations on the use of the constructivist instructional approach which will involve the use of the following instructional strategies (thinking skill, oral discourse, collaborative work skill, Authentic/situated learning and framing).

- Other Experimental condition that was controlled
- The students in the experimental and control groups were not informed that they were being involved in any research process

Experimental Procedure

- The pre-test was first conducted before the commencement of the treatment. The pre-test will feature the administration of the cognitive achievement test and psychomotor achievement test on the students in both experimental and control groups. The results obtained from the pre-test provide baseline data on each of the dependent variables (cognitive and psychomotor achievement) before treatment.

Method of Data Collection

The teachers that teach each of the two groups subjected the students to pre-

testing before treatment. In the pre-test the Cognitive Achievement Test (CAT) and Psychomotor Achievement Test (PAT) was administered on the students. Answer scripts will be provided for the students to fill in the correct answers for CAT while the teachers used the scoring guide of PAT for scoring the psychomotor achievement of the students. The researcher marks the answer scripts of the CAT to obtain the students' scores on cognitive achievement before the treatment. These provide baseline data on each of the dependent variables (cognitive and psychomotor Achievement of the students) before the treatment.

During the post-test the CAT and PAT that contained the same test items used in the pre-test was also administered by the teachers that teach each of the two groups. Answer scripts was provided for the students to fill in the correct answers for CAT while the teachers used the scoring guide of PAT for scoring the psychomotor achievement of the students after treatment. The researcher marks the answer scripts of the CAT to obtain the students' scores on cognitive achievement after the treatment.

After the two weeks, the same CAT was re-administered (as test of learning) on the students by respective teachers that taught each of the experimental and control groups. Answer scripts were provided for the students to fill in the correct answer for CAT.

Method of Data Analysis

The data collected from the pre-test and post-test of learning was analyzed using mean to answer the research questions. The pre-test, - post-test mean of each group (Control and Experimental groups) were compared to determine the group that performed better to answer research questions 1-3. The null and void hypothesis was tested using T-test at

0.05 level of significance.

CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

This chapter presents the result and discussion of the data analysis for the study. The presentation was organized according to the research question and null hypothesis that guided the study.

Research Question 1

What are the mean cognitive achievement scores of students taught Building technology with constructivist instructional approach and those taught using the conventional teaching methods.

Table 1

Mean of pre test and post-test scores of Experimental and Control groups in the cognitive achievement test.

Group	N	Pre-test \bar{X}	Post-test \bar{X}	Mean
Experimental	50	3.85	35.60	31.75
Control	50	3.77	19.71	15.94

The data presented in table 1 shows that the experimental group had a mean score of 3.85 in the pre-test and a mean score of 35.60 in the post-test making a pre-test, post-test gain in experimental group to be 31.75. The control group had a mean score of 3.77 in the pre-test and a post-test mean of 19.71 with a pre-test, post test gain of 15.94. With this result, the students in the experimental group will perform better in the cognitive achievement test than

the students in the control group.

Research Question 2

What are the mean psychomotor achievement scores of students taught Building technology with constructivist instructional approach and those taught using the conventional teaching methods?

Table 2

Mean of Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores of Experimental and Control Groups in the Psychomotor achievement test.

Group	N	Pre-test \bar{X}	Post-test \bar{X}	Mean
Experimental	50	2.92	45.84	42.92
Control	50	2.94	24.00	21.06

The data presented in table 2 shows that students in experimental group had a mean score of 2.92 in the pre-test and mean score of 45.84 in the post test. This shows a pre-test, post-test gain of 42.92. Also, the control group had a mean score of 2.94 in the pre-test and had a mean score of 24.00 in the post test giving a pre test, post test gain of 21.06. Therefore, this result indicates that students in the experimental group performed better than the students in the control group in psychomotor achievement test.

Research Question 3

What are the mean cognitive achievement scores of boys and girls taught Building technology with the constructivist instructional approach?

Table 3

Mean of Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores of Boys and Girls Taught Building Technology with the Constructivist instructional approach achievement

Mean of Boys and Girls Taught Building Technology with the Constructivist instructional approach in the cognitive achievement Post-Test and test of learning.

Group	N	Pre-test	Test for Learning
		\bar{X}	
Male	70	35.67	34.33
Female	30	35.48	34.98

The data presentation above shows that boys had a mean score of 35.67 in the post-test and mean score of 34.33 in the test for learning. The girls also had a mean score of 35.48 in post-test and a mean score of 34.98 in the test for learning. The girls also had a mean score of 35.48 in post test and a mean score of 34.98 in the test for academic achievement. The result indicates that the girls performed better than male students in the test for achievement of learning.

Hypothesis

HO: There is no significant difference between the mean cognitive achievement scores of students taught Building technology with the constructivist instructional approach and those taught using conventional teaching methods

HO1: There is significant difference between the mean cognitive achievement scores of students taught Building technology with the constructivist instructional approach and those taught using conventional teaching methods

Table 4

Summary of T-Test of Significance between the Mean Scores of Experimental and Control Groups in Cognitive Achievement Test

Group	N	\bar{X}	SD	Df	t-value calculated	t-value critical	P
Experimental	50	64.24	9.59	49	28.45	1.68	0.00
Control	50	21.70	5.76				

Highly significant at the 0.05 level

From the result in the table above, the calculated t-value 28.45 is greater than the critical t-value 1.68 at 0.05 level of significance. Thus, there was a significant difference between the performances of students taught building technology with the constructivist instructional approach and those taught using conventional teaching methods. This indicates that constructivist instructional approach enhanced students' academic achievement in building technology. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected and the alternative hypothesis accepted.

Findings

The following findings emerged from the study based on the data collected and analyzed:

1. Students taught Building technology with constructivist instructional approach had a higher mean cognitive achievement score than those students taught using the conventional teaching methods.
2. Students taught Building technology with the constructivist instructional approach had a higher mean psychomotor achievement score than those taught using the conventional teaching methods
3. Boys taught Building technology with the constructivist instructional approach had a higher mean cognitive achievement score than girls taught with the same constructivist instructional approach.

Discussion of Findings

The data presented in table 1 provided answer to research question one, finding revealed that students taught with constructivist instructional approach had a higher mean score than those students taught using the conventional teaching method in cognitive achievement test. In the same vein, the t-test presented in Table 4 confirmed that the difference between the mean scores of students taught with constructivist instructional approach and conventional teaching method was significant. The significant difference is attributed to the treatment given to the experimental group. This finding indicated that the constructivist instructional approach has a positive effect on students cognitive achievement in Building technology. This implies that the constructivist instructional approach (collaborative learning, oral discourse, thinking skill, authentic task and learning frame) is more effective than the conventional teaching method in enhancing students' cognitive achievement in

Building technology. The findings that constructivist instructional approach has positive effect on students achievement is similar to the finding of Becker and Maunsaiyat (2004), who in (heir study found out that the adoption of constructivist instructional approach in the teaching of Thailand vocational Building Technology students improved the students' achievement in Building Technology than the students taught with traditional instructional method.

The analysis of the result of the psychomotor achievement test presented in Table 3 which provided answer to research question three showed that students taught with constructivist instructional approach had a higher mean score than those students taught using the conventional teaching method in psychomotor achievement test, The t-test presented in Table 4 confirmed that the difference between mean score of the students in both groups was significant. These findings indicated that the constructivist instructional approach has a positive effect on technical college student's psychomotor achievement in Building technology. This finding may be attributed to the fact that those students taught with constructivist instructional approach engaged in an authentic task in an authentic environment using real objects such as tools and machines. There has been a great deal written about authentic activities in recent times as the influences of constructivist philosophy. According to Boyaci (2006) authentic activities is anything students are expected to do, beyond getting input through reading or listening, in order to learn, practice, apply, evaluate, or in any other way respond to curricular content' Similarly, Caberera (2002) staled that authentic activities 'encourage and affirm learning but essentially, they encourage the learner to respond to the classroom teaching and learning rather than remain passive.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

SUMMARY

The challenge for preparing students for the 21st century, workplace basic skills coupled with the increasing need of individuals in the work force with strong problem solving, creative thinking, collaborative work, and independent decision making skills occasioned by the effects of globalization and the rapid rate of technological changes on workplaces therefore have necessitated a shift from instructional approaches based on the behavioural learning theories to those rooted in cognitive psychological learning theories for which constructivist instructional approach is one (Becker *et al*, 2004). This situation therefore prompted one to research into effects of constructivist instructional approach on the academic achievement of Building technology students in Technical Colleges.

Conclusions

This study set out to determine the effects of the constructivist instructional approach on academic achievement of Building technology students in Technical Colleges. The constructivist instructional approach (collaborative learning, oral discourse, thinking skill, authentic task and Framing) used in this study greatly affected the students learning of Building technology. This was reflected in the students' cognitive and psychomotor achievement of learning. In other words, students learnt Building technology and acquired psychomotor skills better when they were allowed to participate actively in the classroom teaching and learning by interacting with teacher,

learning environment and their colleagues, work and learn together in groups. Also, students retained their learning for a longer time when they were allowed to think on possible solutions to a problem while engaging in practical activities with real objects, tools and machines collaboratively. It is hoped therefore, that if the constructivist instructional approach is taken into consideration in the teaching of Building technology in the Technical Colleges, craftsmen trained will graduate from the Technical Colleges with knowledge, psychomotor skills, strong problem solving, creative thinking, collaborative work, and independent decision making skills which will make them adaptable to the present and envisaged changes in the Building industries occasioned by technological advancement. Consequently, the craftsmen will be able to improve on their learning and pass their NABTEB examinations with better grades, contribute their own quota to industrial development of this nation, and become employers of labour instead of hoping solely on paid employment.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made;

1. Technical College teachers should adopt the use of the constructivist Instructional approach to the teaching of Building technology.
2. National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) should consider review of curriculum for Building Technology work programme with a view to incorporating the constructivist instructional approach into the teaching of Building technology.
3. Government should provide tools and equipment needed to teach the slate- of- the

art of Building technology in the Technical Colleges.

4. Ministry of education and administrators of Technical Colleges should always organize seminar, conferences and workshops to sensitize technical teachers on the use of the Constructivist instructional approach.

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