

Analysis of preferred teaching styles used by History tutors

Edmund Selorm Sosu

Department of Arts & Social Sciences Education

University of Cape Coast, Ghana.

edmundsosu@gmail.com

Abstract

Teachers' preference to a particular or multiple teaching styles stems from certain inherent and external conditions that influence their choice. Their preference may be from externalities irrepressible to them. Given this background, this paper embarks on an analysis of preferred teaching styles such as the cooperative teaching style, direct style, and inquiry-base style used by history tutors. The descriptive research design was used with a sample size of 32 history tutors. The quantitative approach was used for the analysis of the data. The results revealed that the preferred teaching style used by history tutors falls in the areas of inquiry based approach, the coach based approach, cooperative approach and direct style which have inherent and external conditions underpinning them. The study indicate the major conditions such as the subject rationale, developmental abilities of students, number of students in classroom and lastly, the available teaching resources. Based on these findings, it is suggested that since the motives behind history tutors preferred teaching styles fall in line with the modern day way of choosing teaching styles, appropriate structures should be put in place to heighten the image of history education across countries.

Keywords: Coach teaching style, Cooperative teaching style, Direct style, Inquiry-base teaching style, History tutors.

Introduction

Teaching is regarded as an important skill in any educational sector. This is partly due to the assertion that not all can teach and not all are born teachers (Candal, 2015; Malikow, 2006). Thus, to acquire the act of teaching is a great skill that one needs to cherish. The act of teaching serves as the drive by which the content and objective of any educational curriculum is communicated to its consumers. On one hand, it is the focal point for reinforcing learning, strengthening thinking and reflection while on the other hand, it serves as the medium of de-emphasising a learnt behaviour or action through the help of a teacher. On this, teachers who facilitate these acts of inducing knowledge in students end up adopting differing approaches in

bidding to transmit instructional contents to learners (Blumberg, 2010; Carr, Eireann, Cliath & Runai, 2007; Marble, Finley, & Ferguson, 2000).

Currently, teaching in any subject demands that tutors of instructions channel instructions to meet learners' varied needs of which the teaching of history is no exception. History teaching, according to Opong and Quan-Baffour (2014) demands that tutors employ certain models such as the line of development model, the colligation model, the covering law model and narrative law model in their teaching with the intention of teaching the subject effectively. Aside these models, teachers still go about the complex of way of teaching with issues stemming from their understanding of the subject, availability of resources and lastly, the understanding of their learners. To this, the method in which they introduce a topic and pose questions to their audience informs and reflects their orientations and make-ups (Genc and Organ-Bekiroglu, 2006). Hence, the latter denotes the source of teaching methods or teaching styles used by teachers. Teaching styles are mediums employed to convey knowledge and skills in order to enhance and guide successful learning (Mwathwana, Mungai, Gathumbi, & George, 2014). To Trowbridge and Bybee (1996), teaching styles are the most effective and efficient means of presenting a subject to students in any given classroom. Thus, the aura of understanding for a particular subject and the values relative to a particular subject is provided through the medium of teaching styles. Appropriate teaching to Mwathwana et. al. (2014) is characterized by narration, discussion, reciting, identifying, explaining, role playing, dramatization, audio visual, and modelling.

In the field of history education, Nasibi and Kiio (2005) assert that the teaching styles used in the history classroom are lecture method, discussion, narrating, reciting, identifying, role playing, explaining, audio visual, visiting, modelling, dramatizing, note-making, practicing observation, participating, reading and group projects, brainstorming, debates, panel discussion, educational visits, imaginary educational visit and project method. These styles according to the authors are alternatively employed by history teachers in their classroom discussion. But the issue on board is what really influence history tutors' choice of the teaching styles? Is it solely the pedagogical needs of the students that influence teachers' choice of their instructional method? What are these hidden, uncaptured elements that really necessitate history teachers' choice of teaching styles (Ruff, 2013)? Based on the aforementioned, this paper expounds on an analysis of the preferred teaching styles used by history tutors.

Specifically, the following questions were addressed in the study:

1. What are the preferred teaching styles used by History tutors?
2. What factors underpin History tutors' choice of teaching style?

Review of Literature

This section looks into the available literature on the various issues regarding teaching styles classification and the possible factors that could inform their preference. Though literature on teaching styles and factors that inform their use are not much (Chapman, Hughes, & Williamson, 2001; Grasha, 1996; Onstein & Miller, 1980; Peacock, 2001), it is necessary to consider them in this study so as to help the researcher gain insight into fundamental issues underlying the study and relate the findings to the existing literature related to the study.

Teaching styles models

Though studies on teaching styles occur in many research works, Grasha's (1996) model for teachers teaching style served as the circumference in determining history teachers' preferred teaching styles. To Grasha (1996), the style in teaching can be categorised as expert style, formal authority, personal model, facilitator and delegator.

Expert style is highlighted by teachers who have the knowledge and the know-how in the subject matter. Teachers who demonstrate this model teach into detail alongside their attitude of always encouraging their students to excel in their studies. Teachers who practise this style require their students to always prepare and emphasize the diffusion of information to the maximum. The danger associated with this style are that the overt display of knowledge by teachers to an extent intimidate learners and also the underlying thought process of teachers to a lesser extent is not clear to students.

The formal authority style informs teachers to give negative and positive feedback to students in their course of teaching. With this method, teaching is expected to be in an accurate and standard form alongside with specific goal endorsed by a school. Teachers with this style go about their delivery in a structured form. The flip side of this style is that it leads to rigid, standardized ways of managing students concerns (Audette & Roush, 2013; Shaari et al, 2014).

With the personal model style (Coach style), teachers teach using personal examples that is they 'teach by example. Teachers tend to act as models to students on how to think and behave. They tend to direct and guide the students to observe and imitate the method they show to them. They go about this same style by giving guidance and direction through asking questions, giving options to explore, giving recommendations for alternatives and developing criteria for solving a problem. The overall goal of the style is to develop students' ability to be self-reliant, creative and responsible. Teachers with this style prefer to teach using projects in developing students. The flip side of this style is that teachers are tempted to believe their style is the best way while students may feel inadequate if they are not able to meet teachers' expectation (Audette & Roush, 2013; Shaari et al, 2014).

The delegator style is concerned with students' ability to learn autonomously. Students are encouraged to carry out tasks independently when implementing a project. Teachers assist when the need arise. The approach aims at helping students to become self-reliant and self-supporting. However, the dangers associated to this style is that teachers at times misread students' readiness to work independently and also some students become anxious when given autonomy to work on their own (Audette & Roush, 2013; Shaari et al, 2014).

Aside Grasha's (1996) teaching model, Onstein and Miller (1980) have also classified teaching styles as expressive teaching styles and instrumental teaching styles. Expressive or dramatic teaching style refers to the emotional relationship created by teachers to the students as a whole, including warmth, authority, sympathy, trust and some emotional aspect shown by the teacher. The use of the expressive teaching style works in the area of controlling and managing classroom activities. The style imbues a sense of confidence in students through their understanding on the general purpose of education. Teachers who prefer the use of this style serve as mentors and tolerate their students (Shaari et. al, 2014). With the instrumental style, teachers' roles are seen in the assisting of students, planning of lessons and setting up classroom activities according to an appropriate standard.

Factors influencing teachers' teaching styles

On factors influencing teaching styles usage, a study conducted by Peacock (2001) unearthed that teaching styles used by teachers stem from their ethnicity of which he found out that Chinese teachers avoided auditory style teaching to a more demonstrative style. In a different study conducted by Chapman, Hughes and Williamson (2001), it was revealed that gender, seniority at the workplace and time played major influence on teaching styles used by teachers. To this, they observed that, teachers went about their approach of delivery as result of the factors they were repressed with. To Zhorik (1990) teachers' teaching styles are also influenced their personal ideology and beliefs accrued over years.

In a review conducted by Boz & Aydin (2009), it was highlighted that the motives that prop up teachers style of teaching span across the following, that is, the subject-area taught, the developmental ability of students, teacher relation with colleagues and school principals, teacher current status and available teaching material. With this, teachers were of the opinion that inasmuch the syllabus indicate the type of style to use for a particular content, they were also influenced by other factors.

In a prior study by Shulman (1990), it was also established that teaching styles used by teachers are influenced by their demography (immediate environment). To him new teachers adopt teaching styles used by their training developers or teachers at the expense of the ideal method prescribe from the syllabus. Thus, the orientation and the relationship new teachers guzzled from their trainers affect their preference for a particular teaching style. Rotumoi and Too (2012) also opine that the availability and adequacy of classroom space, teaching/learning facilities and the number of children a teacher handled were also found to have had great influence on the teaching methods the teacher adopted.

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive research design, precisely a self-report survey to elucidate the circumstances supporting the preferred teaching styles used by history tutors during their teaching. The rationale for adopting this approach was that it helps researchers to retrieve personalised statements from respondents after posing a series of questions and statements to them (Hawton, Rodham, Evans, & Weatherall, 2002). By this, the researcher was able to set aside his opinion and experience to retrieve information from respondents objectively (Westerman, 2001; Harwell, 2011). Consequently, the approach enables the researcher to quantify the responses of history tutors on the assumption underpinning the study (Driessnack, Sousa & Mendes, 2007). The population for the study comprised all history tutors in the Central Region of Ghana. The intention behind the choice of the history tutors was that the researcher wanted to ascertain the medium history tutors employed in teaching. Again, the researcher chose the history tutors in the region because they were convenient to him. The purposive sampling technique was employed to reach out to thirty-two (32) history tutors in the region.

Since the study was quantitative in outlook, data was collected by the researcher from respondent who were willing to partake in the study. The data collection instrument was a questionnaire that was designed by the researcher, based on the key issues emerging from the literature. The questionnaire was made up of two sections, section 'A' addressing the preferred teaching style used by history tutors and section 'B' addressing the motives that prompts history

tutors teaching style. The items on the preferred teaching style were ranked from one to five (1-5), with five (5) been the *highly preferred* teaching style and one (1) been the *not preferred* teaching style. The items on the factors underpinning the preferred teaching style used by history tutors were made up of close-ended questions based on a four-point Likert-scale format ranging from strongly disagree (SD), disagree (D), agree (A) and strongly agree (SA). In all, the data were coded and fed into Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) to perform statistical analysis of the data into percentages, means and standard deviations. The findings were presented statistically by merging similar responses and discuss in relation to the theories and studies circumventing the study.

Results

Research Question 1: What are the preferred teaching styles used by History tutors?

The views of history tutors were sought on the preferred style or approached adopted in teaching history and the responses are presented in table 1.

Descriptive statistics

Table 1

Teaching styles	Not-preferred F (%) 1	Less-preferred F(%) 2	Preferred F(%) 3	Higher-preferred F(%) 4	Highly-preferred F(%) 5
Direct style	16(50)	12(37.5)	4(12.5)	-	-
Co-operative style	-	8(25.0)	1(3.1)	5(15.6)	18(56.3)
Inquiry-base style	-	1(3.1)	3(9.4)	13(40.6)	15(46.9)
Lecture style	13(40.6)	15(46.9)	4(12.5)	-	-
Coach style	4(12.5)	-	4(12.5)	24(75.0)	-

Total number of participants was 32. From the table, 12.5% of the respondents stated that they prefer the direct style of teaching whiles 87.5% of the teachers also put forth that they least consider the direct style in their quest of teaching history. Similarly, 12.5% of respondents prefer the use of the lecture style whiles 87.5% least consider the use of the lecture style. This detestation of the lecture method highlights the dwindling fortunes of that method in the teaching of History at the second-cycle level of education.

On the preference of co-operative style of style of teaching, 75% of history tutors prefer to use a community base approach in teaching history students whiles 25% of them least consider that. Also, on whether history tutors prefer the inquiry-base style of teaching in their

quest of teaching history, 96.9% history tutors rank the inquiry approach to teaching as the preferred style while 3.1% mildly prefers it. Finally, on the issue of coach style of teaching, that is history tutors directing students with what they think they should learn, 87.5% history tutors emphasise on preference of the coach style in teaching history while 12.5% least considers it.

In effect, the critical thinking component to historical teaching is gradually shaping and undergirding the preference of teachers in choosing the modern day way of teaching.

In all, the results show that the preference of teaching styles used by history tutors in teaching is in the following order, that is, the inquiry-based style, the coach style, the co-operative style, and finally, the direct and lecture style of teaching respectively.

Research Question 2: There was the use of means and standard deviations to ascertain the summary of factors underpinning history tutors' choice of teaching style. Results are shown in table 2.

Table 2 shows that a considerable number of factors underpin history tutors' choice of teaching style and this is indicated with a mean of means score of 2.82, which indicates that a majority of history tutors agree to the posed statement personalised to them. In detail, it can be gathered that history tutors are in consonance with some of the statements. Statements like 'my personal orientation, beliefs and values influences my style of teaching', 'the purpose and design of the course', 'the norms of the institution I teach', 'class size', 'developmental abilities of students', 'available teaching materials', 'presence of the school principal', 'interaction with fellow teachers', 'duration on timetable and class space' were the factors underpinning history tutors' teaching style. These factors were indicated with mean scores of 2.88, 3.38, 2.38, 3.38, 3.50, 3.38, 2.38, 2.50, 2.80 and 2.88 respectively. On the flip side, the only factor that seems not having any relation to the choice of teaching styles adopted by history tutor was 'the current rank or status of tutor' and this was indicated with a mean score of 1.63.

In all, results from table 2 show that the most emerging issues underpinning history tutors' choice of instructional style are the purpose and design of the various history courses, teacher immediate class size, and developmental abilities of history students and lastly, available teaching materials and these were indicated with mean scores above 3.10.

Table 2: Factors underpinning History tutors' choice teaching style

Statement	Sum(N)	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Agree		Strongly Agree		Mean	SD
		%	1	%	2	%	3	%	4		
My personal orientation, beliefs and values influence my teaching style.	32	25	-	37.5	-	37.5	37.5	2.88	1.18		
The purpose and design of the course influence my teaching style.	32	-	-	62.5	-	37.5	37.5	3.38	0.49		
The norms of the institution I teach in influence my teaching style.	32	12.5	50	25	12.5	2.38	0.87				
The immediate class number/class size influence my teaching style.	32	-	-	62.5	37.5	3.38	0.49				
The developmental abilities of my students influence my teaching style.	32	-	-	50	50	3.50	0.51				
My current rank or status in the school influences my teaching style.	32	37.5	62.5	-	-	1.63	0.49				
The availability of teaching materials influences my teaching style.	32	-	-	62.5	37.5	3.38	0.49				
The presence of the school principal influences my teaching style.	32	25	37.5	12.5	25	2.38	1.13				
My interaction with fellow teachers/head of my department influences my teaching style.	32	12.5	37.5	37.5	12.5	2.50	0.88				
The duration on the time table for teaching influence my teaching style.	32	-	50	25	25	2.80	0.84				
The classroom/ lecture theatre space influence my teaching style.	32	-	37.5	37.5	25	2.88	0.79				

Mean ranges: Strongly Disagree (0.00 – 1.00); Disagree (1.10 – 2.00); Agree (2.10 – 3.00); and Strongly Agree (3.10 – 4.00). Mean of Means = 2.82, Mean of Standard Deviation = 0.74

Discussion

Preferred Teaching Styles Used By History Tutors

The results indicate that history tutors have preferred teaching styles they use during their instructional process. The styles to an extent deviate from the prescribed activity stipulated in the history programme. The results further shows that teachers do not tightly follow already prescribed activity in instructional outline whenever they attempt to bring a change in behaviour in learners. To this, it is obvious that the '*what*' (*preferred teaching style*) and '*why*' (*reasons behind the teaching styles*) aspects of history tutors teaching styles practices should not be left unexamined.

On the '*what*' aspects, history tutors preference for the inquiry based style compared to teacher-centered approach of teaching, shows that history are employing Grashas'(1996) delegator style in teaching history. The rationale behind the style according to Grasha (1996) is to make learners seek and construct knowledge independently so as to become self-reliant and self-supporting. With this, history tutors give students tasks to do independently whiles they act as shadows or coaches or experts behind what they see appropriate for learners to construct. Thus, history tutors do not leave the inquiry approach of teaching learners to chance, but still ensure that they act to students what to think and the approach to use for a problem. In doing this, they provide directions to students by asking questions, giving options to explore, providing recommendations on alternatives and also develop a criteria for selecting an apt method to a problem.

Still on the '*what*' aspect, history tutors aside preference for the inquiry-base and coach style of teaching, give premium to the co-operative style of teaching. With this approach, history tutors create a communal approach in efforts to engage students' emotion and mental faculties through real life experience which to Young (2002) enables learners relate personally to the experiences they receive from classroom discussion.

The focus on the inquiry-based style, coach and co-operative style of teaching indicate that history tutors are coping with a student-centered approach in teaching students than the teacher-centered approach (direct and lecture style). Thus, the direct and lecture style which Goby & Lewis (2000) and Wilson (2011) asserts as making history tutors final authority in classrooms is fading away and premium is now given to the inquiry and coach style of teaching which to Alesandrini and Larson (2002) make learners explore and discover knowledge with or no assistance from tutor.

Factors underpinning History Tutors' choice of Teaching Styles

The teaching styles aspects of history tutors do not just happen in a vacuum. With this, history tutors are influenced by certain personal and external factors that exert pressure on what approach to use in teaching history. The internal factors are what Chapman et. al (2001) and Zhorik (1990) postulates as stemming from tutors gender, ideology and beliefs. With this, history tutors exemplify what they teach from their personal orientation, belief and values.

External factors repressive on history tutors teaching style stem from a micro and macro level perspective. On a micro level, history tutors are influenced by their institutions when it

comes to what teaching style to use in the classroom. This, according to Peacock (2001), has its basis from the immediate environment a tutors teaches which tells that the rules in some institution do not only end at teachers and students conducts but also at the type of teaching styles adopted by a history tutor.

Still on the micro-level, history tutors seemed to be influenced by what Rotumoi and Too (2012) discovered as the exerting influence on the teaching style used by history tutors. To them, it was discovered that the art and style teachers used in class delivery props from the class space available which to a degree is in congruence with the finding of this study. This indicates that class size do not only inform the approach adopted by history tutors on the micro level but also tells that a tutor's teaching style is likely to change when exposed to a larger or small class space.

In relation to the fact that history tutors approach to teaching are susceptible to external micro factors, it can also be established that teacher relation with colleagues, presence of school principal during tutors instructional delivery and available duration for instructional deliver all play roles on the 'why' aspects behind history tutors instructional style. With this, what Goodson (cited in Harris-Hart, 2002) refers to as the middle ground curriculum, that is the subject department and teacher-culture (collegiality) do come to play in the relation to the influence from the history department and fellow colleagues in the same field of teaching.

On a macro-level, in terms of external factors repressive on history tutors teaching style, what Boz and Aydin (2009) stressed as motives that informs teachers' teaching styles also fall under the purview of possible factors influencing history tutors' teaching style. To this end, what the authors hinted as the possible factors, that is the purpose and design of the course, teacher immediate class size, developmental abilities of students and available teaching materials are in congruence with the macro or major possible factors established by history tutors as underpinning their teaching style. Thus, it is obvious that student characteristics, structure of a course coupled with the available teaching materials acts as shadows behind the styles a history tutor employ to teach the subject.

Conclusion

The study gives backing to the assertion that the conditions surrounding individuals influence their choice (De Melo, Denizer, Gelb & Tenev, 2001). Thus people's choices are likely to change based on certain irrepressible situations they face. In effect, teachers' methods of teaching are susceptible to change based on pressing issues they face in and outside their classroom. The preference for the inquiry base approach shifts the focus of transmitting historical contents from a subject base approach to an activity and integrative method in learning. This direction by history tutors would de-emphasis the memorization of facts as demanded by the direct or lecture style but to a modern way that makes learning meaningful to learners.

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Appendix

A. Preferred styles used in teaching history

Kindly rank the following teaching style as often used in teaching of History using the scale of 1-5, with 5-Highly preferred teaching and 1 - not preferred teaching style.

Teaching styles	Rank
1. Direct style: Using a strict styles that give students the knowledge and information they need to succeed.	
2. Inquiry-Based style: Allowing students to explore and actively participate in learning by given assigned tasks through careful support and guidance..	
3. Cooperative style: Teaching students in as in a community and also making them responsible for their own learning and development.	
4. Lecture Style : Acting as sage in teaching students on stage in delivering instructional content without implicit active participation from students.	
5. Coach Style: Demonstrating expertise to showing students what they need to learn.	

B. Factors underpinning History tutors' choice teaching style

Kindly tick [] the factors that influence your choice of the teaching style you preferred above.
NB: SD- Strongly Disagree D- Disagree A- Agree SA- Strongly Agree

Statements	Extent of agreement			
	SD	D	A	SA
7. My personal orientation, beliefs and values influence my teaching style				
8. The purpose and design of the course influence my teaching style				
9. The norms of the institution I teach in influence my teaching style				

10. The class number/class size influence my teaching style				
11. The developmental abilities of my students influence my teaching style				
12. My current rank or status in the school influence my teaching style				
13. The availability of teaching materials influences my teaching style.				
14. The presence of the school principal influences my teaching style.				
15. My interaction with fellow teachers/head of my department influences my teaching style.				
16. The duration on the time table for teaching influence my teaching style.				
17. The classroom/ lecture theatre space influence my teaching style.				