

The Relevance of Educational Television Episodes in Teaching Science As Viewed by Teachers in Infanta District



Education

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ABSTRACT

This study looks into the relevance of Sineskwela, a series of Educational Television Episodes used to facilitate the teaching of Science in Grade III. A total of twelve volumes of Sineskwela episodes are analyzed in terms of their relevance to the subject matter, ability to facilitate student understanding of Science concepts and learning skills, and ability to improve Science process skills. This research also examines the challenges that the 3rd Grade Science teachers encounter in the use of these Educational Television Episodes and how they manage these challenges. This study utilizes a mixed-method approach, using descriptive survey, interviews, and observation as its triangulated data gathering techniques. Having 32 respondents, this study finds the Educational Television Episodes as useful and relevant educational tools for teaching Science Grade III as they facilitate the students' understanding of Science, improve their learning skills, and generally improved the students' Science process skills.

Introduction

Educational media in their many forms can provide the learner with experience about his environment. The bulk of the learners' experience in school tends to be vicarious in nature, except in some laboratory situations. Much of learning has become representations of real life.

Years of research on student learning has made clear that teachers need to know a great deal about each learner's capabilities and levels of competence. The hypothesis has been suggested that lack of readiness on the part of the learner might actually be due to the lack of prior relevant learning experience arising from the absence of necessary prerequisite competencies or maturation. The use of media or the various avenues of instruction may therefore help accelerate learning compared with the plain use of language symbols.

The attention-getting factor associated with instructional media keeps learners alert during the learning process.

Among the forms of media on the rise, television has certainly become a window through which children can view themselves, others, and the world around them. It has then become a potential academic tool that has been used in the classroom to augment learning since the 1970's. The television programs are used to assist children in various subject areas, and are used alongside other teaching materials, to give a well-rounded approach to learning materials. This has proved successful as children prefer learning visually at a young age. Another point to consider is that television is a visually stimulating medium. It can be successful in assisting reluctant learners by creating interest and removing pressure that may come along the traditional learning techniques.

Oftentimes, television is used to supplement and enrich a specific course of study. It serves as a supplementary instruction where there is lack of audio-visual materials or experience in a particular field. Special TV series are occasionally designed to teach learning concepts in certain curricular areas. Concepts which, in the judgment of teachers, are most difficult to teach and comprehend are given priority. Series of varying lengths are presented for classroom viewing and are utilized as an additive to regular classroom instruction.

The Educational Television (ETV) is a project launched by the ABS-CBN Foundation, Inc. in partnership with the Philippine Department of Education. ETV is promoted as television that people watch "on purpose" with the intent on selecting programs based on their educational content. ETV is television that expects participation, just as a teacher would. It encourages viewers to reflect and act on what they have learned – to apply the lessons by reading, discussing, drawing and the like.

In 2007, schools in Infanta, Quezon, where this study was done, received the ETV packages and teachers who were assigned to

be the ETV Coordinators underwent a teacher training in 2008.

ETV has several titles in its series, each with a different subject area focus. Sineskwela is the series that is focused on teaching and learning Science.

Several years into its incorporation in the pool of instructional materials, it is timely that the relevance of these media be analyzed as perceived by the teachers who are directly using them.

Central Research Question

The purpose of this study is to determine and analyze the relevance of Educational Television Episodes in the teaching of grade III Science in Infanta District according to the teachers using them.

Thus, the central question that this study attempted to answer is:

How may the use of the Educational Television episodes in teaching Grade III Science be described and analyzed in terms of relevance of the episodes to the subject matter, ability to facilitate students' understanding of the Science concepts, ability to enhance learning skills, and ability to improve students' Science process skills as perceived by the teachers?

Another important aspect in the use of the ETV that this study looked into are the challenges that the teachers encountered in its utilization.

Research Design

This study utilized a mixed-method approach, using descriptive survey, interviews, and observation as its triangulated data gathering techniques.

The chosen triangulation method for this study is affirmed by researchers who give their stand that "the rationale for this strategy is that the flaws of one method are often the strengths of another, and by combining methods, observers can achieve the best of each, while overcoming their unique deficiencies" (Denzin, 2007, p. 308).

Creswell (2006) also conveyed that "the use of quantitative and qualitative approaches in combination provides a better understanding of research problems than either approach alone" (p. 5).

As it is a program-based evaluation, using mixed methodology, this study is an integration of the collection and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data. Qualitative data sources are appropriate to ascertain meaning as declared by Denzin (2007). "Qualitative research tries to establish an emphatic understanding for the reader through description, sometimes thick description, conveying to the reader what the experience itself, would convey" (Denzin, 2007, p.45).

Qualitative studies investigate a contemporary social phenomenon such as the use of Educational Television in within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are clearly evident (Creswell, 2007).

The quantitative aspect of this study involves the socio-demographic data and perceptions of the participating teachers gathered through a researcher-made questionnaire.

This study involved 32 respondents who are the project beneficiaries themselves. All 32 respondents are teachers of Grade III Science in 14 elementary schools in Infanta District. Of the 32 respondents, 75% or 24 of them belong to Teacher I level; 12.5% or 4 belong to Teacher II level; 6.25% or 3 belong to Teacher III level. There are two respondents who have the Master Teacher status.

It is also good to note that the respondent teachers of this study, since they teach in the Elementary level, are handling all subjects of the level in a self-contained class. None of the respondents have Science as specialization. Hence, determining the relevance of the ETV as instructional media and supplementary educational tool for Science is timely and significant.

Findings

Twelve volumes of Sineskwela episodes were used in the study to see the general relevance of the tool as perceived that by the Grade III Science teachers who used them as an aid in their teaching of Science.

A significant finding of the study reveals that the Sineskwela volume on The Sense Organs were rated very relevant by the respondent teachers. This volume is considered useful by the teachers as they are deemed attractive, interesting, and able to challenge the students to study even more. This was best expressed by one of the respondents who said:

Pupils learn more when they view the pictures on TV and they can easily identify the parts (of sense organs) after viewing. Also they can explain their functions. Before, I use only books in explaining this subject matter and I observed that the MPS or mean percentage score of my pupils is not good so I have to repeat the lesson the next day. But when ABS-CBN donated the TV set and DVDs and our school started to use these episodes, I noticed that it helped in improving the MPS of my pupils.

It is revealing to note that the same rating of very relevant was given to all the other volumes that deal with various lessons in Science, such as Growth and Development, Plants and Animals, States of Matter, Colors, and Sound, Magnet and Gravity, Soil and Gardening, Water and Conservation of Water Resources, and Weather, Rain and Sun.

It is worthwhile to note that interviews with the teachers revealed that they acknowledge the importance of the teachers' ability to use the ETV correctly by giving proper guidance to the students. So long as this condition is present, the ETV episodes can be maximized in terms of augmenting student learning as well as help in their social and emotional development.

Another significant finding of the study is that the Sineskwela episodes are perceived to be catering to the special needs of the pupils, especially needs that pertain to the understanding of higher scientific concepts. The respondents attribute this facility to the fact that the ETV episodes are made to be interactive and thus able to capture the interest and retention, and encourage better performance from the students. This valuable effect of the instructional media is best captured in the statement of one respondent:

When we review lessons, we discover that there are some skills that cannot be mastered by the pupils easily. But when we use the ETV they can understand the lessons better and more easily. ETV puts the school on a better teaching-learning environment and invites the interest of the community particularly the parents to help develop and support the projects of the school for the benefit of the pupils.

With this feedback, the teachers are highly convinced that the ETV is a relevant educational tool in helping teachers teach and students learn better.

The study also looked at the contribution of Sineskwelato the improvement of students' Science process skills, specifically observing, comparing, ordering, explaining, inferring, and interpreting skills. As gathered from the respondents' data, the overwhelming perception is that ETV augments the inculcation of the process skills. Again, this perception is captured best by one of the respondents who observed:

Before, when we go out of our classroom to do some experimentation, some of my pupils would just be standing, playing or simply do not focus on what we are doing. But after viewing some episodes wherein the characters are exploring to learn about certain phenomena, my pupils were motivated to do the same and discover the lesson on their own effort. These experiences help them become more observant and focused on our activities.

With regard to the overall learning skills of the pupils with the help of the ETV episodes, the respondents have also expressed positive feedback. The study respondents have claimed that many factors hinder the learning process of the students. But the incorporation of the Sineskwelavideos have helped the students learning and understanding because the videos first and foremost helped the teachers in teaching. The respondents acknowledge that the ETV indeed improved their teaching strategies and aided their otherwise limited ability to make the students understand.

Part of the study was to also consider the challenges and problems that the teachers encountered in the use of ETV. Through the questionnaire and interviews with the respondents, this study has revealed that the problems in the use of the ETV were more in the logistical and technical aspect of the program. As commonly expressed, the lack of TV units and DVD players led to problems in scheduling which consequently posed to be a hampering factor.

The study has also revealed that this hindering factor turned out to be not as strong as the teachers' desire to use the ETV as they were able to come up with a system to overcome the logistical challenges. Tapping the stakeholders, especially the parents, was another way for the teachers to rise above the problem. The parents' generosity to provide TV sets was considered as their equally positive response to the use of ETV as an instructional media.

Conclusion

On the whole, this study finds that all twelve volumes of Sineskwelavideos are considered to be very relevant to the teaching of Science Grade III. ETV gives students the educational experiences which are oftentimes beyond the capabilities of conventional means of instruction. As this specific intervention has technical and logistical aspects involved, there are expected challenges to be encountered. However, the value of the aid outweighs these challenges so that they can eventually be overcome and promote the maximum utilization of the instructional media.

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