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When, where, how and why does learners' autonomy increase unemployment among school graduates?

A peer tutor's perspective

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Abstract

Ordinarily, peer tutoring, which is the ability of a class or school mate to assess and respond by explanation and application to the difficulty of another class or school mate or mates over a given subject matter vis –a –vis an implicit job situation could be seen a solution to unemployment. There has also been incidence of unemployment arising from, the explicability and generalizability of the peer-tutors access, equity, improvement in attitude, skill, and knowledge quality, relevance and diversification of delivery methods. The paper is a discussion of resolution and causes of graduate unemployment that could emanate from peer tutoring.

Keywords: Unemployment, Learner's autonomy, Peer-tutor and School Graduates

1. Introduction

There are many fundamental modes by which a learner attains autonomy from the teacher. One is that whose attainment advocates the close imitation of the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor processes of one learner open to one or more fellow learners. This is an attainment of a merely secondary, imitative and acquisitive nature (Chamberioin, 1944). Approaches to its exhibition include peer tutoring, cooperative learning, collaborative learning (Yetter, Gutkin, Saunders, Galloway, Sobanskoy & song, 2006), role modeling, nurturing, supervision, demonstration lessons, support meetings, observations, feedbacks and assessment (Standing, 1999; Field, 1999). These approaches are internationalized today by closed email systems, project mail, audio-graphic conferencing, face to face computer enhanced learning, complete online course delivery, consortia TML delivery, a combination of face-to-face and TML course deliveries, opened online web sites which advertise courses and deliver programmes on the internet, multi-user object oriented technology (MOOS) etc, (Siddigui, 2007).

This attainment is explained by three learning theories. One of them is the cognitive elaboration theory. This marries learner's autonomy from the teacher to the explanation of a material or job situation to a learner's by one or more of his class mates. This helps him to remember new pieces of information contained in it, or relate it to his already existing knowledge, attitude, or skill. It according to Dansereau (1988), Slavin (1992) and Webb (1985) and (1992) features activities like thinking aloud, accepting errors and omissions corrections from class mates, and accepting or seeking detailed and elaborate explanations or representation of such information in alternative forms such as diagrams or drawings from class mates.

Another theory is the constructivist theory. This theory holds peer interaction among class or school mates of similar developmental level to be critical to autonomy attainment, especially where they emphasis concept acquisition and complex reasoning. Consequently, activities like soliciting a class mate's opinion, identifying differences in such opinion, and interrelating divergent view points thereto remain fundamentally evident as attainment of autonomy from the teacher (Vygotsky, 1978, Yetter, Gutkin, Saunders, Galloway, Sotransky & Song, 2006).

The third theory is the social interaction theory. This associates the learners' attainment of autonomy from the teacher to working together under conditions of positive goal and reward interdependence. The goal interdependence Johnson and Johnson (1990) and Slavin (1996) identify as each learner's contributions necessary for the group to attain a job situation or subject matter performance designatory as its goals. The reward independence they see as specific group contingencies established to reward the group for attaining the stated or designated performance. Both goal and reward interdependence account for higher learners' autonomy attainment across subject areas, ability levels, ethnic backgrounds and grade levels (lew, Msesh, Johnson & Johnson, 1936, Yueh & Alessi, 1988, Barron, 2003; Cokoom & Fuchs, 2003, Fuchs & Fuchs, 2001).

Attainment of autonomy is to this end, better done by the learner through the critical incident technique. It involves the recipient learner's analysis of the peer-tutor's performance through

a study of the total performance rather than investigation of separate parts of the performance. In practice it involves the learner being a competent learner who watches the peer-tutor on the said performance and observes the outcome of his work. When the outcome seems especially satisfactory, or unsatisfactory in terms of the aims of the performance, a report is made of the actual behavior of the peer tutor which led to that result. From a large number of such reports, it is possible to isolate the acts which seem to have the most influence on the effectiveness of the performance. Such acts are known as the critical elements of the performance. The reports on the behaviours which led to the especially satisfactory or unsatisfactory outcomes are known as reports of critical incidents (Corbally, 1969). The identification of critical elements is valuable in that it indicates behaviours in which peer-tutors strive to reach effectiveness due to the significant effect of the manner in which these elements are performed. Those acts which do not become classified as critical elements of the performance are so done for two reasons. Either their result varies a little from one peer-tutor to another peer-tutor, or such results bear little relation to the final outcomes of the performance. However, the first alternative makes it imperative to realize that not all non-critical elements are inconsequential (Corbally, 1969).

In the early days of the learner's autonomy from the teacher, the learner's learning process is limited and brought much more within the compass of a single individual, the peer-tutor. Those who in a group or class assume to be peer-tutors or aspire to be thought so, feel the need of performance, or at least the seeming to perform all that is to be performed, as a justification of their status. As a natural counterpart, there grows up an expectancy on the part of the multitude of tutored learners that the peer-tutor would explain whatever new event, circumstance, situation, or course of action presents itself a challenge or problem in a job situation or subject matter (Chamberin, 1944).

The learners' autonomy is to this end as expressed by group work, and group work is in its very broadest sense almost any event, situation, circumstance, or course of action that a peer-tutor to a group, may engage in order to influence the values, ideas, attitudes, relationships, or behaviour of his school or class mates for better performance in either a given job situation or subject matter. The peer-tutor is thus, the teacher since out of his being usually a brighter member of the peer group, who experiences little difficulty in perceiving the details in job situation or its appropriate subject matter (Uche, 2001), he does that kind of work whole-time or part time, paid or unpaid (Batten & Batten, 1978).

This in Nigeria today has even resulted in examination malpractices. It is common for such peer-tutors to substitute work scripts during or after the examination, steal, convert, misappropriate scripts, collude or engage in irregular activities pertaining to examination before, during and after examinations, impersonate; leak; insult or assault a supervisor or invigilator in the lawful performance of his or her duties inside or outside the examination hall; disturb the conduct of the examination; forge results; conspire; and aid to the advantage and at the expense of their tutored-peers (Joint Admission and matriculation Board (2006/2007).

By implication the peer-tutor decides more or less specifically whatever he thinks the

tutored-peer needs, or ought to value, or ought to do for his own good and attainment of a required level of performance in a job situation or subject matter, and sometimes even how he ought to behave relative to the level of performance. However, the peer-tutor does all he does inferential of whatever staff, equipment, premises and programme his school or classroom or subject teacher provides. He does this also in the light of what he thinks are needed for the tutored peer to meet their needs or interest in the hope that they will avail themselves of the job situation the taught subject matter offers.

This brings the tutored peer into contact with employment opportunities open to graduates of such subject matter, which try to influence the tutored peer relative to the peer-tutor's ideas of betterment performance. It is the essence of this job conditions that the peer-tutor thinks decides, plans, organizes, administered and provides indirectly for the tutored-peer. Always, the main initiative and the final say on this direction, remains with him (Batten & Batten, 1979). Therefore, the job situation or subject matter performance is often such that even though it is single peer-tutor enforced, it is multiple tutored-peers attained. The peer-tutor has the prior condition of having it attained by ability of attracting tutored-peers to its programme and keeping them attracted for a period long enough to have the choice of exerting his influence on or over them. Hence, in Nigeria, today, through (i) opening of one's self (the peer-tutor allow tutored-peers to observe and question him). (ii) leading incrementally (peer-tutors ensure the pace of progress is appropriate); (iii) expressing care and concern (humane interests in the well-being of tutored-peers); (iv) teaching (modeling, information, confirmation, disconfirmation, presumption, questioning); (v) encouragement (affirming, inspiring, challenging); (vi) counseling (listening, probing, clarifying, and advising), (vii) befriending (accepting and relating); (viii) Challenging (stretching the abilities of tutored-peers) and (ix) reflection (facilitating reflective practice in the tutored-peer) (Standing, 1999), attempts are made by peer-tutors to improve the skills, knowledge and attitudes of tutored-peers as potential worker to a job situations.

Over the years, for instance, statistics show an increase in total learner enrollment in respective subject areas and an out run of a multi-replicated labour force from Nigerian tertiary institution. This is better expressed in table 1.

Table 1

Nigeria: Trend in learner enrolment by disciplines in universities 1974 – 75 1977-78

S/N	Disciplines	1974 - 75		1975 - 76		1976 - 77		1977 - 78	
		No	% share	No	% share	No	% share	No	% share
1	Arts	3,980	14.7	5,132	16.3	6,485	16.7	6,936	16.7
2	Science	4,269	15.8	5,00	15.9	6,101	15.7	6,336	15.3
3	Medicine and related subjects	3,251	12.0	4,045	12.8	4,469	11.5	6,123	14.8
4	Engineering and technology	2,414	8.9	2,426	7.7	2,768	7.1	3,381	8.2
5	Environmental studies	657	2.8	826	2.6	962	2.5	993	2.4
6	Agriculture	1,997	7.4	1,625	5.1	1990	5.1	2,321	5.6
7	Vertinary medicine	-	-	459	1.4	520	1.3	515	1.2
8	Social source	2,788	10.3	2,595	11.4	4,539	11.7	4,887	4.5
9	Administration	1,485	5.5	1,703	5.4	2,112	5.4	1,845	4.5
10	Education	4,094	15.1	5,126	16.3	7,023	18.1	6,239	15.1
11	Law and other	2090	7.7	1,574	5.0	1,906	4.9	1,843	4.4
	Total	27,025	100.0	31,511	100.0	38,877	100.0	41.411	100.0

Source: National Universities commission 1980.

When tutored peers' enrolment figures per course are analyzed, it becomes clear that the peer-tutors do not only replicate either their knowledge, attitude or skills in large proportions of tutored-peers, but also record a percentage (%) share of their job opportunities with them. In view of the low numbers of such rather peculiar job opportunities being in existence and the teaming population of tutored peers the peer-tutors share these with, there arises

unemployment. The result of this replication has always been over filling of posts in every crucial sectors of the economy despite differences in peers' mentality, family background, achievement motivation, aptitude, physique, social skills, emotional state and vocational interests and goals (Arowolo, 1983, Uche, 2004).

From table 1, the rates even exceed 40% among librarians, architects, civil structural engineers and builders, dentists, medical laboratory technologists and techniques in architecture and civil engineering, which because of mathematics and scientific implications often attract little of peers' interest. In 1997, for instance, Adeyemo conducted "study on the demand for higher education and job opportunities in Nigeria. The sample of the study was from the Department of Economics, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ibadan. The members of the sample were admitted at different sessions and constituted different proportion of the same. Those admitted in 1992/93 academic session made up 69.8% of the sample, those admitted 1990/91, 1991/92, and 1993/94 made up its 2.3%, 20.9% and 2.3% respectively. The main focus of the study was to elicit information on sample members' desired career and whether there has been a change and why.

The findings showed 25.6% of sample members to have under taken higher education, because of a professional qualification, 65.1% to make a career out of higher education, 2.3% to satisfy the yearning of their parents and towns men, 4.7% just for the sake of it; of these, 83.7% reported to have information on job opportunities available in their field of study, while only 16.3% reported not to have. However, 46.2% indicated to have received such information, either from parents, relatives or friends or peer tutors, 16:3% from books, newspapers, televisions and radio, respectively, and 2.3% from either University staff, guidance counselors, other students, and student union members.

In all, 65.1% were reported to still be ready to obtain more information about their career: 7.0% in the natural sciences, 37.2% in the social sciences, 2.3% in humanities and arts, 25.6% in health, 20.9% in business, 2.3% in law and 4.9% in other disciplines. The findings of the study also showed 48.8% of sample members to have shown a shift from their previous discipline of interest, 44.2% not to have done so, and 7.0% yet to discover if there is any. Out of the former, 14.0% reported to have crossed from natural sciences, 2.3% from engineering, 16.3% from health and medical sciences and 2.3% from education to social sciences, fourteen percent (14.0%) attributed such change to the receipt of more information about job opportunities akin to the succeeding discipline, 11.6% to admission regulations, and 16.3% other reasons. Consequently, in 1977, as in other years, estimated requirements for selection of categories of manpower showed discrepancies between estimated stock reported vacancy rates and estimated staff vacancies. Details are bellow shown in table 2.

TABLE 2

Nigeria: Estimated requirement for selected categories of manpower at 1st April, 1977.

S/N	Manpower category	Estimated stock (2)	Reported vacancy Rate %(3)R	Estimated Staff vacancies(man-power requirement) (2) Xr / 1-r
1	Administrative officer (public sector)	20,000	34.5	10,500
2	Accountants and Auditors	5,000	30.5	2,200
3	Executive officers (General duties)	24,500	23.9	7,700
4	Librarians	750	45.3	900
5	Executive officer (Accounts)	15,000	28.8	6,000
6	Statistic officer (accounts)	-	-	-
7	Confidential secretaries/stenographers	13,500	33.1	6,700
8	Architects	850	49.4	800
9	Civil/structural engineers and builders	6,500	54.3	7,700
10	Electrical/electronic engineering	3,000	37.2	700
11	Land surveys	1,200	36.7	700
12	Quantity surveys	700	35.8	400
13	Architectural assistant/technicians	800	53.1	900
14	Civil engineering assistants/technicians	10,00	37.8	6,400
15	Electrical engineering	15,00	43.2	11,400

	assistants/technicians			
16	Refrigeration/Air conditionally technicians	5,500	14.2	800
17	Agriculture (including veterinary, forestry, livestock and fisheries) assistant	11,500	24.5	3,700
18	Medical doctors (all specialists and non-specialists)	9,700	29.0	3,900
19	Pharmacists	2,400	36.1	1,300
20	Dentists	210	42.0	150
21	Nurses	22,500	29.9	9,600
22	Midwives	23,600	30.0	10,100
23	Medical laboratory technologists	600	43.6	300
24	Auto-mechanic	14,200	14.0	2,300
25	Auto-electricians	4,000	12.3	560

Source: National Manpower Board, study of Nigeria's manpower Requirements (survey of National Manpower Resources) (SNMR) 1977, Federal Ministry of National Planning, Lagos, 1980, p.65.

The habit of precipitate subject matter explanation by a peer-tutor leads rapidly to the birth of not only general knowledge, attitude and skills, but job opportunities. There is better control and more circumspect habit of the mind. The explanation or special theory affixed by the peer tutor for the given subject matter prompts self consistency in the tutored-peer to offer the same explanation to like or same subject matter when it presents itself to him. Thus both in class and in the job place, there soon develops a general explanation reminiscent in the latitude of the peer-tutors original one. This repetition, though of the same kind, leads the mind of the tutored-peer into insidiously believing that its information, skill and attitude on the reflected subject matter vis-à-vis the apparery job situation have been strengthened by facts and figures added to by the peer-tutor (Chamberlin, 1944).

For a time, the job opportunities and their inherent subject matter remain tentatively held and even performed with some measure of candor, or at least some self illusion of candor, by the tutored-peer. The mind of the tutored-peer satisfies it moral sense on the replicated subject

matter, methods, and result of the peer-tutor. It does this with the thought that: (i) its owner is proceeding consciously and impartially towards attainment of the goal, services and needs of the ultimate job opportunity, (ii) its owner relates with the peer-tutor to either pursue a hobby, or interest under his guidance as a Para-qualified teacher or meet with other tutored-peers with similar interest; or avert loneliness by extending his circle of friends, or avoid a classroom and feeling by spending lesson time in a comparatively warm and comforting environment, or engage in reasonable social interaction; (iii) its owner is freed from all real reading responsibility, and even when he does not like it, he accepts it and conforms to it as long as the advantage the peer-tutor offers outweighs the disadvantage of not having to conform. The fact that he conforms, therefore, does not necessarily mean that he has accepted, or will accept the peer-tutors ideas, attitude, or skill. While he stays with the peer-tutor's programme, he has the continuing opportunities of being influenced in academic and job situations or opportunities of his own contriving (Batten & Batten. 1978). It fails to realize that no amount of provisional explanation and application given to a subject matter justifies an ultimate performance conviction in a job place situation so far as it lacks incisiveness, exhaustiveness, precision, completeness, and impartiality of investigation (Chamberlin, 1994).

Consequently, there is a growing science by analogy. The conclusion of many an excellent subject matter explanation and application based on peer-tutoring is couched in the form of a universal generalization of job situations and there are otherwise well conceived subject matter explanations of job place productivity conducted on volunteer tutored by a peer-tutor in a classroom. While it is desirable to eliminate difficulty in subject matter explanation and application vis-à-vis a job situation, it is

questionable whether it is legitimate to generate the explanation and application of a subject matter about a job situation where there is no motive to produce. The trouble is not that the peer-tutor's explanation and application of a subject matter is of a method and result not applicable to the tutored-peer's job situation, but that a conclusion about one set of circumstances cannot be applied, as it stands, to the relation between the same two individuals under other circumstances.

2. Implications

Peer-tutors should endeavour to spread the tutorial load among their tutored-peers by allowing them make on-the-spot decisions. When tutored-peers have great latitude in making decisions, replicating overall abilities of the peer-tutor is difficult. Since, the tutored-peer enjoys some degree of autonomy, there emerges a greater danger of his duplicating the activities of the peer-tutor. The tutorial levels tutored-peer with a lot of decision-making latitude may tend to overlook the peer-tutor's expertise. Decision-making attains tutorial levels by tutored-peers strains replication to produce competent tutored-peers at all levels.

In dealing with replicability and its inherent unemployment problem, therefore, instructions or tutorials by the peer-tutor should feature decentralization, flexibility, initiative, and development. These will not only help tutored-peers have authority to make decisions of their own, but (i) ability to cope with changing job situation and to adjust towards unexpected job

circumstances; (ii) encouragement to show-case their own abilities vis-à-vis those of the peer-tutors; and (iii) challenges and motivation to tackle problems and solutions in the abilities.

3. Summary

In this paper attempt has been made to examine the concepts of peer-tutoring replicability, generalizability and the problem of graduate unemployment. It reveals that peer-tutors who have good teaching strategies, good comprehension of a given subject matter and who posses the auxiliary of their professional classroom teachers suffer unemployment like the peers they tutor, because of replicability and generalizability of exceptional abilities.

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