

THE IMPACT OF THE TEACHING STRATEGY BASED ON LEARNING THROUGH ACTIVITIES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE STUDENTS' ATTITUDES TOWARD VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IN JORDAN

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ABSTRACT: *This study aimed at teaching the household mechanical installations unit by means of the teaching strategy based on learning through activities as well as identifying the teaching strategy based on learning through activities, and highlighting the applied importance of the vocational education subject in the students' daily life. The study produced a cluster of results and recommendations most prominently: There is an impact of the teaching strategy based on learning through activities in the development of students' attitudes toward vocational education in Jordan. The researcher also recommends the necessity of encouraging the students to enroll in vocational training centers in order to learn a profession that enables them to join the Jordanian labour market and fulfill its needs.*

KEYWORDS: Learning Through Activities, Vocational Education, Household Mechanical Installations.

INTRODUCTION

The economic and social growth of any country depends on the quality of its educational system and the mechanism of human resources development and its efficiency in meeting the labour market needs. The gradual transformation to basically knowledge – based economies and societies shows us clearly the great significance of providing the needs of the labour market of skillful and trained labour in both the theoretical (cognitive) and applied (practical) aspects. This justifies the need for vocational training centers and schools which adopt the process of early preparation of the next generation.

It is commonly known at the vocational training centers and schools in Jordan that the movement of the student to the vocational education begins after having accomplished the basic studies which extend to the tenth basic grade. Thus, the students of the basic and preparatory stages do not have any knowledge about the important role of the vocational training centers and schools as a substitute for the university study especially for those who failed to pass the general secondary exams, as it is widely known that the future of students in Jordan is closely connected to this type of exams, and as an alternative solution that guarantees the lagging students to get a professional certificate which will allow them to work as skillful handicraftsmen in the Jordanian labour market. Students should join the vocational training centers which are of the human resources development strategy tools approved by the Jordanian cabinet in 1988. (Jordanian cabinet resolutions of 1988).

Thus, confronting economic challenges in Jordan lies in providing trained, knowledgeable and experienced labour which can be prepared through the vocational education and training system. Therefore, we have to develop the students' attitudes in the basic stage toward

vocational education through one of the appropriate strategies. (Jordanian vocational training corporation, 2016).

The Study Problem

In order to enhance the employment strategy – The vocational and technical education and training, it is necessary to develop and highlight the vocational aspects among the basic stage students as one of the practical solutions for the academically lagging students to be able to merge in the Jordanian labour market as knowledgeable and skillful labour able to achieve different handicrafts. To make this possible, we have to clarify the importance of vocational education to students through identifying a recommended strategy to develop the students' attitudes toward vocational education at the vocational training centers and schools.

The Study Questions

Is there an impact of the teaching strategy based on learning through activities in the development of the students' attitudes toward vocational education in Jordan?

The Study Hypotheses

1. There is no statistically significant effect at ($\alpha=0.05$) of the teaching strategy based on learning through activities in the development of the students' attitudes toward vocational education in Jordan.

The Study Importance

The importance of this study stems from the significance of its subject which is vocational training and the mechanism of providing skillful, knowledgeable and experienced labour to accomplish the needed craft works for an available profession and to satisfy the needs of the Jordanian labour market of local craftsmen instead of depending on foreign workers who deplete the country's resources and weaken its economy through the great amount of the outgoing money transfers. Vocational training also helps to terminate the widespread unemployment which will move the youth from consumption to production and raise the level of economy in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

The Study Objectives

The present study is aiming at:

- 1- Identifying the concept of vocational training and employment in Jordan.
- 2- Identifying the teaching strategy based on learning through activities.
- 3- Identifying the impact of the teaching strategy based on learning through activities in the development of students' attitudes toward vocational education in Jordan.
- 4- Identifying the employment strategy – Technical and vocational education and training in Jordan (T. V. E. T).

Procedural Definitions and Terminology

Vocational training: An organized process which aims at giving the individual the necessary skills, knowledge and trends to attain a job opportunity. (Annual report of the Jordanian vocational training corporation, 2014).

Training Program: Total training activities and methods that lead to achieve a set of training objectives which are organized in logical sequence and implemented in a specific period of time. (Annual report of the Jordanian vocational training corporation, 2014).

Basic Labour Standards: The first three levels in the technical scale of skills (professional, skilled, specific skills) according to the Arab standard classification of occupations. (Annual report of the Jordanian vocational training corporation, 2014).

Professional: This includes the professional worker level category and the works the achievement of which requires practical skills and professional information that completely cover the framework of the career to enable its occupants to practice the tasks and duties of the work / career with high workmanship pursuant to the requirements of the labour market. (Annual report of the Jordanian vocational training corporation, 2014).

Skilled: This includes the skillful worker level category and the works the achievement of which requires practical skills and professional information related to part of the career and not to the complete framework of the career to enable the occupants of the career to perform the tasks and duties of the job with high workmanship pursuant to the requirements of the labour market. (Annual report of the Jordanian vocational training corporation, 2014).

Specific Skills: This category includes the works the achievement of which requires a specific proportion of practical skills for the occupants of those jobs, and which can be acquired through a short training at a training institute or the work location where the training period is just one training semester or less (Annual report of the Jordanian vocational training corporation, 2014).

The theoretical framework of the study

Teaching strategy based on learning through activities

The teaching and learning strategies based on activity encourage students to learn through working and providing them with real opportunities to contribute in self – directed learning. This strategy can be used to examine an unfamiliar situation or to explore any subject thoroughly.

Examples of the teaching strategy based on activities are the following acts:

- 1- debate 2- field visits 3- games 4- oral presentations
- 5- group discussion 6- training 7- learning through survey projects
- 8- carousel (Assar, 2006).

Concept of learning through activities

Activities are of the main elements of the curriculum and represent a teaching strategy no less important than any other modern teaching strategies. It means: "The mental or physical efforts exerted by the learner (or the teacher) to reach at a certain result". This strategy is defined as:

"The type of learning which is based on the student's execution to an intended, purposive and planned activity". (Al-Masri, 2007).

An activity is defined as: "The tool used by the learner or learners to achieve a planned and purposive task according to the teacher's request or the learners' desire inside or outside the classroom. This could be in the form of a gesture, utterance or writing according to the behavioral source adopted to control the activity. (Mohammad, 2009).

From the aforementioned, we notice that the activity has content, plan and product to achieve, and that it needs evaluation to identify the extent of its success in realizing the desirable outcome. Thus, the activity is educational when performed by the teacher while it becomes learning activity if practiced by the learner. Teaching activity is the means of learning activity and we cannot deal with the teaching activities or the learning activities separately but as joint teaching and learning activities that form the total steps of the learning strategy based on activities.

Activity Components

After its preparation and planning, the activity consists of six components namely:

1. instructions
2. Time
3. Purpose: the outcome it seeks to achieve
4. acceptance standard
5. Evaluation
6. Task (the tenor of the activity). (Bsharah, Al-Ghazu, 2008).

Benefits and Merits of Learning through Activities

The learning achieved by the student through practicing the learning based on activities has great importance as such being an educational domain through which many targets, benefits and advantages can be realized such as:

- 1- It stimulates the interest of learners to learn and prepares them to confront the educational situations.
- 2- It leads to the development of the learners' trends, as well as saturating their needs, refining their talents and guiding them to the correct educational direction.
- 3- Providing the learners with real life opportunities for self – learning as they utilize the teaching – learning situations in their future life.
- 4- It enhances independency.
- 5- It enhances cooperative learning.
- 6- It encourages the learners to hold the responsibility of their education.
- 7- It accustoms the learner to self – control and manual work respect. (Abu Riash et al., 2009).

The Role of the Learner in Developing and Using the Teaching Strategy Based on Learning through Activities

The learner's role is represented in performing several issues of which:

- 1- Identifies the personal interests.
- 2- Participates in appointing educational targets.
- 3- Develops good organizational skills to keep the work organized.
- 4- Adheres to a chronological program.
- 5- Shows enthusiasm to search for new knowledge.
- 6- Works cooperatively with others.

(Jaber, 2008).

The Role of the Teacher in Developing and Using the Teaching Strategy Based on Learning through Activities

The teacher has a great role in developing the teaching strategy based on learning through activities. Of the most important issues the teacher should consider to develop the teaching strategy based on learning through activities are the following:

- 1- Prior planning and preparation.
- 2- Specifies learning outcomes.
- 3- Observes learning results by using proper evaluation strategies such as: checklists or verbal rating scales.
- 4- Chooses suitable and stimulating activities for the students.
- 5- Recognizes the work mechanisms in the group.
- 6- Encourages collaboration during the execution of activities. (oxford, 1996).

Employment Strategy – Technical and Vocational Education and Training

This strategy mainly deals with the technical and vocational education and training system (T. V. E. T) in addition to employment. Hence, this strategy is regarded as a complement and addendum to the more inclusive strategy of human resources development which was approved by the Jordanian cabinet in 1988. This strategy covers the issues of employment – technical and vocational education and training which were classified in nine fields:

- 1- Employment
- 2- technical and vocational education and training planning
- 3- finance
- 4- information systems
- 5- vocational classification and professional standards
- 6- vocational education and training situation
- 7- status of the non – formal technical and vocational education and training
- 8- the role of the private sector and the non – governmental sector in the technical and vocational education and training
- 9- the regional and international dimension. (Jordanian vocational training corporation).

A joint approach was adopted to discuss all the nine fields starting with highlighting the most significant issues and the relevant power and weakness points of each field as well as identifying the special objectives of development and the general policies and measures needed to realize those objectives.

The Vocational Training Corporation in Jordan

It is a governmental corporation the board of directors of which is headed by the Minister of Labour. The vocational training corporation was founded under the temporary law No. (35) of 1976 and currently working under the vocational training corporation act No. (11) of 1985, the amended law No. (50) of 2001 and the organization of professional labour law No. (27) of 1999.

The corporation presents its services to all citizens irrespective of their educational level according to the principle of continuous lifelong education whether through the professional preparation programs of all levels or efficiency raising programs to raise the practitioner work efficiency in the labour market. The corporation also provides training and consulting services in the field of occupational and health safety to reduce the accidents at work sites and train trainers and supervisors in the disciplinary and administrative aspects and develop the work of small and medium enterprises and the organization of the Jordanian labour market. (Jordanian vocational training corporation).

METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES

The study population and sample: The study population consisted of the basic ninth grade students of the academic year (2016/2017) at the schools of Jerash directorate of education who counted (1580) students while the study sample consisted of (116) basic ninth grade students who were chosen following the random cluster method representing (0.07) of the local population. The sample was embodied in three sections of one of the randomly selected schools (Al-Fadle Bin Abbas basic school for boys) whereupon they were taught the vocational education subject by means of the teaching strategy based on learning through activities.

The Study Tools:

The research taught the household mechanical installations unit of the vocational education subject according to the teaching strategy based on learning through activities utilizing the theoretical literature and the previous studies which discussed the teaching strategy based on learning through activities with the help of the vocational education teachers at Jerash directorate of education. Thereafter, the researcher prepared one measurement tool for the purposes of this study, and which was represented in a questionnaire which consisted of (10) items. (Assar, 2006; Jaber, 2009; Al-Masri, 2009; Bsharah Al-Ghazu, 2008).

Statistical Treatment:

The data of this study was treated according to the following approaches:

- 1- Using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient to verify the tool's reliability.
- 2- Arithmetic means and standard deviations.
- 3- (T – test) One – Sample statistics.

Reliability of the Study Tool:

The researcher used the internal consistency reliability equation (split – half) to find and correct the reliability of the tool through Spearman Brown equation. The following table shows the values of the split – half reliability and the corrected reliability.

The split – half reliability coefficient of the tool of this study reached at (0.83) while the corrected reliability coefficient was (0.90) which is an acceptable rate in this Kind of humanistic studies. See table No. (1).

Table No. (1) The study tool reliability coefficient

Split – half reliability coefficient	Corrected reliability coefficient
0.83	0.90

Corrected reliability equation = $2 \times \text{split – half reliability coefficient} / 1 + \text{split – half reliability coefficient}$

Analyzing Data and Testing Hypotheses:

First main hypothesis: There is no statistically significant effect at $(\alpha = 0.05)$ of the teaching strategy based on learning through activities in the development of the students' attitudes toward vocational education in Jordan.

Table No. (2) The arithmetic means, standard deviations and T – value of the sample members responses to the study tool

No.	Arithmetic mean	Standard deviation	T	df	sig
40	38.15	2.57	93.610	39	0.00

The former table indicates that there is a statistically significant effect at the significance level alpha (0.05) of the study sample members responses in the development of the students' attitudes toward vocational education in Jordan due to the teaching strategy based on learning through activities where the calculated value of the significance level was less than the value of the significance level alpha (0.05) and consequently the acceptance of the alternative hypothesis and the rejection of the null hypothesis. The arithmetic mean of the sample members' responses which was (38.15) points out the efficiency and positivity of the teaching strategy based on learning through activities.

The Study Results

- 1- There is an effect of the teaching strategy based on learning through activities in the development of the students' attitudes toward vocational education in Jordan.
- 2- There is desire among the students to learn through the teaching strategy based on learning through activities as there was great interest by the students to follow up and utilize this strategy.
- 3- The turnout of the vocational education teachers at the chosen school to use the teaching strategy based on learning through activities.

- 4- The increasing turnout of the lagging students to move to the vocational training centers in Jordan.

Recommendation:

- 1- Generalizing this study over the different educational establishments in Jordan to urge teachers to apply the teaching strategy based on learning through activities while teaching different subject.
- 2- Encouraging students to join vocational training centers to learn a profession that would enable them to work in the Jordanian labour market and to fulfill its needs.
- 3- Enlightening people about the importance of vocational training centers to be adopted as a solution for their children to complete their professional studies at the vocational training centers or vocational schools.

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