



# Effect of Li-Rap Learning Strategy on Academic Achievement of Secondary School Economics Students in Sapele Local Government Area of Delta State Nigeria

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## Abstract

This study investigated the effect of Li-RAP model in fostering learning of Economics in secondary schools. A pre-test post-test control group quasi experimental design was adopted in the study. The population of the study comprised senior secondary (SS) II Economics students in Sapele Local Government Area (LGA) of Delta State Nigeria. Four secondary schools were randomly selected from the fourteen public secondary schools in the LGA. Two of the sampled schools were randomly assigned to the experiment, while the other two schools served as the control group. The Study had two hundred (103 male and 97 female) participants. A stimulant instrument, one validated Economics Achievement Test (EAT), with reliability coefficient of .81 using KR<sub>20</sub> formula and concurrent validity coefficient of 0.69 and a modified Likert-type scale with reliability coefficient of .78 using the Cronbach Alpha, and content validity of 0.76 obtained was used to determine the students' perception of the model were used for data collection. Data collected were analysed using the descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation as well as a two-way between-subject ANCOVA. Findings showed that the experimental group had a remarkable achievement gain (51%) while the control group had a marginal increase of 18% improvement in their achievement. Results also showed that participants had a positive perception of the model. Given these results, it was recommended that the Li-RAP model be used in teaching Economics.

**Keywords:** Learning, Listen-Read-Ask-Paraphrase, Academic Achievement.

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## INTRODUCTION

The ultimate goal of teaching is to effect behavioural transformation of a learner in a desired direction (Tebabal & Kahssay, 2011). No learner is un-teachable! The onus rests on the teacher to discover the attributes of his/her learner(s) and apply the appropriate teaching strategies in order to stimulate learning. Giving credence to this, Francis (2016) noted that students in their preferences take in and process information in different ways by seeing, hearing, reflecting and acting, reasoning logically, analysing and visualizing. Among others, ways of discovering and engaging the attributes of learner(s) in the teaching-learning process may include discussion, role-play, assessment for learning, assessment as learning, and assessment of learning (Onuka, 2017).

Economics is reasonably dynamic as the discipline changes with the demands of evolving times and circumstances in any society. The importance of having a basic but sound knowledge of economic principles cannot be over-flogged. It is obvious that irrespective of variances in which professions, business firms and/or governments find themselves daily, taking decisions that bother on a most effective and most efficient use of resources. All such decisions are guided by economic principles which make it expedient that teaching economics at the secondary school is done appropriately. In teaching the subject, various methods which are often teacher-centred have been employed. However, there have been calls for a shift from teacher-centred to more student-involving strategies in the teaching-learning process. Dewey and Dewey (1915) canvassed the idea that in the learning process, the teacher and textbook are respectively the starter and the tester and cannot act as a substitute for personal experience in the journey of learning.

Bolton and Eison in Hettler (2015) submitted that learning will only be actively promoted when students are involved in more than passive listening and engaged in activities like reading, discussing and writing while developing their skills and exploring their attitudes and values. One method through which this could be done is the use of a novel model called Listen-Read-Ask and Paraphrase (Li-RAP). The Li-RAP model is meant to develop and utilise a convergence of four principal skills (listening skill, reading skill, asking skill and paraphrasing skill) in students in order to promote learning and assessment. To listen implies hearing with the intention to comprehend and apply. Imhof (2010) described listening as a cognitive process where one evaluates and responds to the spoken messages. Effective listening comprehension skills are essential for students' academic success as they facilitate understanding of utterances, conversation or communication (Vandergrift, 2004; Olaoye, 2009; Palani, 2012).

Listening is often more effective when stressed before speaking because it gives room for better comprehension (Abdulhamid, 2012; Akpulu, 2014). From these views, it is clear that possession and utilisation of good listening skills by economics students will promote comprehension skills. However, literature has shown that students often find it difficult to listen and simultaneously decode the meaning of spoken messages (Mendelsohn, 2002). Listening therefore needs to be complemented by other skills one of which is reading skills. To read implies interpreting something written, printed or heard. Reading consists of identification of the symbols, comprehension and acquisition of knowledge which is an essential process that supports the conception of thoughts and knowledge (Onovughe, 2012; Palani, 2012; Oriogu et al., 2017).

Reading works with listening as Okebukola (2004) averred that the former does allow one to listen to the wisdom and people of the ages. That is, as an individual reads a material, his/her inner mind is listening to what someone is saying in writing. Reading is a habit identified by Shen (2006) as how often, how much, and what a reader reads. Scholars insist that reading habits are positively correlated to students' academic performance (Singh, 2011; Bashir & Mattoo, 2012; Hacettepe et al., 2016). In the Nigeria, however, poor reading skills or habits (Nssien, 2007) has been noted as contributory to poor academic performance by secondary school students in various subjects including economics. Effort must thus be made to reinforce those who have reading skills, develop such in students who have not (Camp, 2007) and support these skills with questioning skills.

To ask is an instance of questioning in the quest for knowledge. Questioning is an integral part of meaningful learning and historical inquiry (Musingafi & Muranda, 2014). Although the how and when to use questioning are important considerations by a teacher in assessing and promoting students' learning, most teachers and scholars often dwell on crafting questions to be posed to students to the detriment of exploiting the power of student-generated questions (Bowker, 2010). In this Study, we intend explore the benefits of student-generated questions. Student-generated questioning as the term connotes, is a process in which the learner in an attempt to close a knowledge gap or fix a puzzle construct and asks a question (Shakurnia et al., 2018).

Scholars hold the view that in a typical lesson, student questioning is of far-reaching importance (Yu & Wu, 2012; Larsen et al., 2013; Biddulph & Osborne in Musingafi & Muranda, 2014), emphasising that it allows them to articulate their current understanding of a topic, make connections with other ideas, and also to become aware of what they do or do not know. Some researchers although found in their Studies that student-questions do not affect their learning status (Bottomley & Denny, 2011; Bekkink et al., 2015). Nevertheless, a good economics teacher should be conscious of the functions and benefits of student-generated questions as well as possible lacklustre questioning attitude of some students and take necessary steps to promote the application of student-questioning to facilitate learning.

Paraphrasing is a restatement of an idea into one's own words. It goes beyond mere substitution of words used by the original author to an entirely rewritten, and often a short, version of an original text (Davis, 2013). For paraphrasing to be effective and meaningful, Sedhu et al. (2013) argued that learners need to have a good macro and micro comprehension of the text. Paraphrasing is a valuable meta-cognitive learning strategy. It is evidence of having understood a relevant idea. As it promotes active engagement with the material, it causes the learner to think about the idea and facilitates his/her understanding. Additionally, paraphrasing helps students to improve on some important literacy skills like repeated reading, ability to reduce content taught to outlines and thus helps to improve student learning.

There is, however, the challenge of students finding it difficult to identify what constitutes the main points in a text (McNamara, 2007; Hood, 2008; Ismail & Maasum, 2009; Latrobe University, 2010). A teacher of economics that wants to promote students' learning need to develop in the students a culture of proportionate combination of listening, reading, asking and paraphrasing skills in learning activities. Literature has shown that with secondary school students in Nigeria, there has been a declining trend in their performance in external examinations in economics (WAEC, 2012; Onuoha, 2015). This has become a source of worry for stakeholders (Idika et al., 2018) hence the relentless calls for improved methods of teaching and learning the subject.

Various recommended teaching strategies applied by teachers of economics in public secondary schools appear largely limited by some challenges. The need arises therefore to explore other strategies to improve learning achievement. The potential of Li-RAP learning strategy in facilitating students' achievement in economics provides an alternative. However, it appears no study has been undertaken in this regard in Sapele local government area of Delta State, Nigeria. This was a gap filled in this study by investigating the effect of using Li-RAP to improve student learning achievement as well as the moderating effect of gender on students' achievement in Economics in Sapele LGA.

## **HYPOTHESES**

The following hypotheses were tested in at the 0.05 level of significance:

- HO<sub>1</sub>: There is no significant effect of Li-RAP learning strategy on students' academic achievement in Economics in Sapele local government area.
- HO<sub>2</sub>: There is no significant effect of gender on students' academic achievement in Economics using Li-RAP learning strategy in Sapele local government area.
- HO<sub>3</sub>: There is no significant interaction effect of Li-RAP learning strategy and gender on students' academic achievement in Economics in Sapele local government area.
- HO<sub>4</sub>: There is no significant difference in the perception of Li-RAP learning strategy by students based on gender.

The procedure in this study makes the teacher the lead-guide. In the first lesson, the teacher introduces the students to the Li-RAP learning and assessment strategy. He/she drills them on the principles and steps involved in listening, reading, asking and paraphrasing separately and jointly. In subsequent lessons, the teacher pairs up the students using some criteria. He/she delivers the lesson content orally while encouraging the students to listen. Intermittently, students are encouraged to make notes of what they learnt while listening. He/she then distributes to the students copies of prepared content taught. Students are then asked to read and reread the materials given while noting the keywords and their meanings. As students read, they tend to match what they heard while listening, the notes they had made and what is being read.

Students are to individually think and figure out the overall meaning of the idea contained in the content taught them. They are encouraged to ask a few questions and then individually paraphrase the content taught by the teacher without losing meaning. Paired students now exchange their work for peer review, assessment and submission of marked work to the teacher for correction and continuous assessment. Some suggested guidelines in the peer assessment are: (a) peer assessment scores should be independently done and kept secret from the fellow student assessed; (b) the change of words used in original document should be more than 70%; (c) change of sentence structure should be more than 50%; (d) the extent to which meaning is retained in the paraphrase should be considered. The teacher also gives the marking guide (using a number of acceptable words before the marking commences) each time. Teacher is to set maximum marks obtainable for each peer assessment exercise.

The Li-RAP model promotes and utilises an aggregate assessment value for each student in the format below:

- An average of peer assessment scores over a period, say a term.
- An average of the teacher's assessment of the particular student during the period
- Summative tests score for that student for the term.
- The addition of these gives the overall assessment of the student for the period.

Before the summative test, the teacher monitors progress of each student by placing scores from the series of assessment side by side overtime. In Delta-State of Nigeria, the policy in secondary schools is that continuous assessment for the term is 30 marks while summative assessment is 70 marks. In this study, the researchers planned all assessments in line with the state-government policy. Thus, an index of each student's achievement in economics was derived as an aggregate value from these two sets of scores during the period of the study.

## METHODS

A pre-test, post-test control group quasi-experimental design was employed in the Study. The design is shown below:

$O_1X_1O_2$  Experimental Group  
 $O_1X_2O_2$  Control Group

Where:

$O_1$ – represents pre-test measure  
 $O_2$ – represents post-test measure  
 $X_1$ – (Li-RAP learning strategy)  
 $X_2$ – (Learning without Li-RAP learning strategy)

The independent variables for the study were Learning with Li-RAP strategy and Learning without Li-RAP learning strategy while students' academic achievement was the dependent variable. Gender was considered a moderator variable. The population for the study comprised all senior secondary two (2) students in public secondary schools in Sapele LGA. The sample for the study consisted of (103 males and 97 females) giving a total of two hundred participants. The simple random sampling technique was used to select four secondary schools from the fourteen public secondary schools in the local government area. Two of the sampled schools were randomly assigned as experimental groups while the other two served as the control groups. An intact class was used in each of the schools selected for the Study.

The researchers developed a Li-RAP model package to guide the teachers in the use of the strategy while the response instrument was a Multiple-Choice test named Economics Achievement Test (EAT) constructed and validated by the researchers. The  $KR_{20}$  formula was used to derive a reliability coefficient of 0.81 for the EAT while the concurrent validity index obtained was 0.69. The EAT instrument consisted of 35 items covering such areas like Simple linear equations, Theory of demand, Theory of supply and Money. The research assistants earlier trained and used in the study were Economics teachers in the respective schools selected. The final draft of the EAT was first administered as pre-test on the participant students a week before treatment.

Responses by participants to these instruments were collected at the end of each exercise. A modified Likert-type questionnaire was used to collect data on the students' perception of the model. The questionnaire had a reliability coefficient of .78 using the Cronbach Alpha, and content validity of 0.76. The questionnaire was scaled as 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Agree and 4=Strongly Agree for positively stated items while negatively stated items were reverse scored. An average score of 2.5 and above indicates a positive perception of the model while an average score below 2.5 indicates the contrary. The research was carried out in nine weeks in which the first week was for training of research assistants and familiarisation with relevant stakeholders. The second week was used for pre-test while the post-test was reserved for the last week. Actual treatment took place in six weeks.

During the experiment, the researchers coordinated while the trained research assistants carried out instructional delivery and assessment activities. All through the research exercise pre-test, experimental treatment and post-test diffusion among the schools were reasonably prevented. Methods of data analysis involved the use of descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) in the pre-test and post-test EAT. A two-way between-subject Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) was used to test all stated hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance. With ANCOVA, any lack of initial equivalence in the groups possibly arising from the use of intact classes, was taken care of.

## RESULTS

**HO<sub>1</sub>:** There is no significant effect of Li-RAP learning strategy on students' academic achievement in Economics in Sapele LGA.

Table 1: Mean Performance of students in the Pre- and Post-Economics Achievement Test in Control and Experimental groups respectively

GROUP	N	Pre-test		Post-test		% Increase/Decrease in mean performance
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Experimental	112	17.33	2.94	26.13	2.72	51% increase
Control	88	15.63	2.51	18.44	3.02	18% increase
Total	200	16.58	2.88	22.75	4.77	37% increase

Table 1 reveals that students in the experimental group (that is, those treated to Li-RAP learning strategy) had a mean score of 17.33 in the pre-Economics Achievement Test with a standard deviation of 2.94 while in the Post-Economics Achievement Test the mean score was 26.13 with a standard deviation of 2.72. This shows a 51% improvement of the experimental group in the post-test over the performance in the pre-test. The control group (that is, those taught without the Li-RAP learning strategy) had a mean score of 15.63 in the pre-Economics Achievement Test with a standard deviation of 2.51 while in the Post-Economics Achievement Test the mean score was 18.44 with a standard deviation of 3.02. This shows an 18% improvement of the control group in the post-test over the performance in the pre-test. From the analysis, the experimental group gained more (51%) than the control group (18%).

A significant test was then conducted and the results obtained are displayed in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) of the Control and Experimental Group Students on Economic Achievement Post-Test

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	3640.528 <sup>a</sup>	4	910.132	199.642	.000
Intercept	640.700	1	640.700	140.540	.000
Pre-test	714.153	1	714.153	156.653	.000
Gender	4.246	1	4.246	.931	.336
Group	1897.413	1	1897.413	416.206	.000
Gender * Group	6.201	1	6.201	1.360	.245
Error	888.972	195	4.559		
Total	108042.000	200			
Corrected Total	4529.500	199			

A One-way between-subject ANCOVA was calculated to determine the effect of Li-RAP learning strategy on students' academic achievement in Economics in Sapele LGA of Delta State, Nigeria, controlling for the effects of pre-test. Result in Table 2 indicate that Pre-test was significantly related to Post-test ( $F(1, 195) = 156.653, p < .05$ ). The main effect for group was significant ( $F(1, 195) = 416.206, p < .05$ ). It can be inferred that the null hypothesis of no significant effect of Li-RAP learning strategy on students' academic achievement in Economics in Sapele local government area of Delta State, Nigeria was rejected. The experimental group significantly improved on learning economics concepts than the control group in the contents taught and assessed.

HO<sub>2</sub>: There is no significant effect of gender on students' academic achievement in Economics using Li-RAP learning strategy in Sapele local government area.

Table 3: Mean Performance of students in the Experimental group in Post-Economics Achievement Test based on gender

Gender	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Male	59	26.42	2.57
Female	53	25.81	2.87
Total	112	26.13	2.72

Results in Table 4 show that in promoting learning achievement in Economics in Sapele LGA of Delta State, male students exposed to Li-RAP learning strategy had a mean score of 26.42 in the post-EAT while their female counterparts had a mean of 25.81. This shows that the male students performed better. However, analysis in Table 2 indicates that the difference in mean performance between the two categories of students is not significant, ( $F(1, 195) = .931, p > .05$ ).

HO<sub>3</sub>: There is no significant interaction effect of Li-RAP learning strategy and gender on students' academic achievement in Economics in Sapele local government area.

A close look at Table 2 above also shows no significant interaction effect of Li-RAP learning strategy and gender on student learning achievement in economics as measured by post-test scores ( $F(1,195) = 1.360, p > .05$ ). The probability value of .245 is greater than the 0.05 level of

significance hence the null hypothesis of no significant interaction effect of Li-RAP learning strategy and gender is not rejected.

HO<sub>4</sub>: There is no significant difference in the perception of Li-RAP learning strategy by students, based on gender.

Table 4a: Students Mean perception of Li-RAP learning strategy by students based on gender

Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Mean	Male	102	2.61	.45
Perception	Female	98	2.65	.46

Table 4b: Independent Samples Test on students Mean perception of Li-RAP learning strategy by students based on gender

	Levene's Test for Equality of Var.		t-test for equality of means				
	F	Sig.	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std Error Difference
Mean Perception Equal Var. assumed	.114	.737	.605	198	.546	-.03910	.06457
Equal Var. not assumed			.605	197.286	.546	-.03910	.06459

An independent samples t-test was calculated to compare the mean perception of Li-RAP learning strategy by male and female students. Results as shown in Table 4b indicate no significant difference ( $t(198) = .605, p > 0.05$ ). The mean perception of the male students ( $m = 2.61, SD = .45$ ) was not significantly different from the mean perception of female students ( $m = 2.65, SD = .46$ ). Both categories of students had a positive perception of the model.

## DISCUSSION

Results of data analysis in the study have shown that the use of Li-RAP learning strategy obviously promoted the learning achievement of secondary school economics students in Sapele LGA of Delta-State, Nigeria. There was evidence that both experimental and control groups recorded an improved post-test scores over pre-tests. However, experimental group recorded an improvement rate of about 51% while the control group had an 18% gain. Even after adjusting post-test scores for pre-test the experimental group also made a significant gain over the control group. This implies that the Li-RAP learning strategy contributed more to learning achievement when compared with learning without Li-RAP. This finding supports the view that when students take greater control of their learning activities, it makes for better and deeper understanding of concepts and content (Doyle, 2008; Ekpuyama, 2017).

The positive perception the students had of the model must have motivated active individual participation and contribution. The in-built assessment approach which was continuous in nature was also considered by the students to be commensurate with individual involvement. This further spurred their interest in active engagement with tasks. This view was also held by Seale, Chapman and Davey (2000) who asserted that assessments have the inherent power to motivate students, and in the process facilitate their learning in different ways. Another finding of the study was that, of the students exposed to Li-RAP learning strategy no significant



difference in learning achievement obtained between male and female economics students. This was also the position of Umar, Yagana, Ali and Bularafa (2015) who found no significant gender difference in students' academic performance in Colleges of Education in Borno State, Nigeria.

## CONCLUSION

The study investigated the effect of a novel instructional model (Li-RAP learning strategy) in the teaching and learning of secondary school economics in Sapele Local Government Area of Delta-State, Nigeria. The model was found to facilitate the students' learning of the subject and was considered acceptable to them given their positive perception of it. The study also showed no significant differences between male and female students in their perception of the Li-RAP learning strategy. The model is therefore suitable in teaching and assessing secondary school economics students irrespective of gender.

## Recommendations

Arising from the findings of the study, it was recommended as follows:

- It is needful that the Li-RAP model be included in the school curriculum.
- Teachers, School proprietors and policy-makers should promote a greater use of assessment for the purpose of facilitating learning in the secondary schools.
- Also, scholars should consider embarking on further researches on the use of this model in teaching and assessing other subjects.

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