
STUDYING APPROACHES AMONG FEMALE AND MALE STUDENTS IN GRAPHIC ARTS TECHNICAL TRAINING INSTITUTIONS IN NAIROBI, KENYA

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Research has revealed that studying approaches contrasts (surface, strategic and deep) impact on the learning strategies adopted by male and female students in higher education. According to that research those students who adopted the 'deep' contrast, interpreted as transformative learning, were more successful learners than those who adopted the 'surface', interpreted as passive, rote learning. The rapid global, technological, economic and social changes occurring in the 21st century, makes it urgent to identify the orientations of students in Technical Education (TE) for a productive life after training. This is especially so as TE is critical to socio-economic development and global competitiveness. An exploratory research study established the studying approaches that students of both sexes adopted in TE Graphic Arts (GA), in Kenya. The study involved 120 Technical Education GA students (90 male and 30 female) at Kenya Polytechnic University College and Buru Buru Institute of Fine Arts, which offers government GA, developed courses in Nairobi County. A closed-ended questionnaire and an observation schedule adapted from the Approaches to Study Skills Inventory for Students (ASSIST) were used to collect data. Cronbach alpha was .552 for the surface category, .641 for the deep category, and .597 for the strategic category. Data were analyzed using independent sample t test and statistical difference set at $p < .10$. The study found that both female and male students exhibited mixed combinations of studying approaches. Significant statistical differences were found in the making sense of information to be remembered ($p < .009$) and trying to be innovative ($p < .019$) responses. While female students more strongly agreed with the questions, the statistical differences were relatively few. The study recommends encouraging networking to advance best practices among both male and female students.

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