Abstract

Issues and controversies are part of student variables and characteristics in science learning. Not many teachers are prepared for the kinds of challenges that are capable of engendering new ideas and innovations when they occur in the science classroom. This study investigated the nature of conflicts that are generated in the science classroom. One hundred and four lessons taught by 15 pre-service science teachers in a few Nigerian secondary schools were analyzed. Fifteen negative conflicts were documented. The analysis of the responses to the questionnaire administered to another sample of 220 in-service science teachers not only confirmed the extent and gave the frequency of occurrences of these negative conflicts, but ranked students’ poor home background the highest cause of them. Good methods of teaching, adequately equipped laboratories, provision of an appropriate stimulating environment and training were ranked highest among the remedial strategies suggested by the respondents in tackling conflicts and controversies in the classrooms. Those useful but predictable findings are part of teachers’ customary narratives. For that reason, this study sought to constitute those surface experiences afresh and at deep level perceptions and resolve the conflicts through engaging students in out-of-school activities like visits to a science museum and community exposure.

Keywords: science classroom, nature of conflicts, classroom management, conflict resolution