

NEW STRATEGIES AND METHOD FOR TEACHING THE CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL STUDIES AND CIVICS IN JOS NORTH COMMUNITY

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Abstract

The essence of this study is to identify some new methods and pedagogical strategies which Social Studies teachers could adopt in teaching contemporary Social Studies and Civics. The study is necessary because of the failure of some teaching methods used by some Social Studies teachers in the various schools to produce the desired results in learners in the various schools. The study was guided by four research questions. The study was a descriptive survey. The population was all the Social Studies teachers in the 23 government secondary schools in Jos North. Twenty four (24) Social Studies teachers selected from 10 secondary schools in Jos North formed the sample. Data were collected by a self-made questionnaire with a Cronbach-alpha reliability index of 0.71 which shows high reliability. Mean was used for data analysis. Results revealed that lecture and inquiry teaching methods are prevalent among Social Studies teachers in Jos North. Also, the ills associated with these teaching methods are passivity of learners, poor retention of learned facts and boredom. Some of the new strategies and methods identified which could be effective in the teaching and learning of Social Studies are multi-media, ICT tools, cooperative groups among others. These new strategies have the prospects of removing stress and boredom, enhancing longer retention and opening learners' natural gate – ways of learning. The study recommended that Social Studies teachers should embrace the new teaching strategies and do away with the old ones.

Keywords: Contemporary Social Studies, New Teaching methods and strategies, Old teaching methods.

Introduction

Social Studies is one of the subjects approved by the Federal Ministry of Education to be taught at all levels of education in Nigeria. The emergence of Social Studies in the Nigerian school curriculum was part of the responses to the problems in the society emanating from neglect of societal culture and values (Meziobi, 2012). The Board of Directors of National Council for the Social Studies -NCSS (2017) defined Social Studies as the integrated study of the social sciences and humanities to promote civic competence. In the same vein, Adaralegbe (2010) viewed Social Studies as the aggregate of experiences a student goes through having been exposed to a course explaining the problems men and women encounter in their environments.

The teaching of Social Studies is meant to provide coordinated, systematic study which draws upon such disciplines as anthropology,

economics, geography, history, law philosophy, political science religion and sociology, as well as appropriate contents from the humanities, mathematics and natural sciences. The primary purpose of Social Studies is to help young people develop the ability to make informed and reasoned decisions for the problem as good citizens of a culturally diverse and democratic society in an inter- dependent world.

According to National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS)(2017), two main characteristics distinguish Social Studies as a field of study; it is designed to promote civic competence and it is integrative as it incorporates many fields of endeavour. Social Studies programmes help students construct a knowledge base and attitude drawn from academic disciplines in specialized ways of viewing reality. From the premises above, the objectives of Social Studies could be seen to be

three -fold namely: To help learners acquire knowledge, skills and attitudes and values

However for Social Studies to achieve its aims, there is need for a change in the instructional strategies that have been in use for Social Studies education. This is important because Meziobi (2010) lamented that poor instructional strategies have been one of the banes of Social Studies education in Nigeria. Most teachers of Social Studies adopt pedagogical skills that do not promote better understanding of the concept. Mbah (2018) equally argued that if teachers must be effective in their teachings and clear students' confusion then there is need for the use of innovative teaching methods that will open student's natural ways of learning. That is why Danjuma (2010) averred that some teaching methods are not ideal as they may not produce the desired result.

Experts in teaching and learning have advanced some innovative teaching strategies which could enhance effective learning. These include multi-media, use of internet, problem solving strategies, cooperative groups, discrepant event strategy and the use of collaborative learning (Yusuf, 2014; Haruna, 2018,) Multi-media for example appeal to more than one sense organ at a time and can address a large audience simultaneously (Ema & Ajayi, 2008). These innovative teaching methods have been applauded for their capabilities in actively engaging learners during learning which promotes better understanding of the learned concepts.

The theoretical base of the present study is the Constructivism theory by John Dewey in 1946. The theory states that learning is an active, contextualized process of constructing knowledge rather than acquiring it. Knowledge is constructed based on personal experiences and hypotheses of the environment. The learner is not a blank slate as some theorists argue but brings past experiences and cultural factors to a learning situation for meaningful learning. Based on Dewey's theory, learning depends on action, that is knowledge and ideas emerging only from a situation in which learners have to draw out experiences that have meaning and importance to them. Dewey argued that human thought is practical problem solving, which

proceeds by testing rival hypotheses. These problem-solving experiences occur in a social context, such as a classroom, where students join together in manipulating materials and observing outcomes. The teacher's role in the class room setting based on this theory is to act as an expert learner (instructor or facilitator) who can guide students into adopting cognitive strategies such as self testing, articulating understanding, asking probing questions, and reflection. The role of the teacher is also to organize information around big ideas that engage the students' interest, to assist students in developing new insights, and to connect them with their previous learning. The activities are student-centered, and students are encouraged to ask their own questions, carry out their own experiments, make their own analogies, and come to their own conclusions.

The implication of Dewey's theory to Social Studies education include that there is need for a paradigm shift of focus from teacher to learners. Also there is need for willing abandonment of familiar perspectives and practices about learning and the adoption of new ones which focus on engaging students actively in any learning situation. It is based on the premises above that the study is under taken to examine new strategies and methods for teaching the contemporary Social Studies and Civics.

Statement of the Problem

Social Studies is one of the subjects taught in the Nigerian education system at all levels of education. The teaching and learning of Social Studies is meant to help learners acquire knowledge, skills and values and attitudes which enable citizens to make reasoned decisions to promote civic competence. This being the case, it then goes to mean that the teaching of Social Studies is expected to inculcate desired knowledge, skills, values and attitudes in learners.

However, at present, these objectives have not yet been achieved satisfactorily in the students. A lot of students do not possess the right knowledge, skills or values expected of them. The reason may be due to the use of poor instructional strategies by teachers of Social Studies in teaching the concepts of Social

Studies. There seems to be a problem with the teaching methods used by teachers of Social Studies. It seems as if the present teaching methods and strategies used by Social Studies teachers are not plausible enough to achieve the objectives of Social Studies. Now, the problem of this study is embedded in this broad question; what new strategies and methods could be developed for teaching contemporary Social Studies and Civics?

Purpose of the Study

The import of the study is to examine new strategies and methods for teaching the contemporary Social Studies and Civics. Specifically the study will:

1. Identify the prevailing teaching strategies and methods used by Social Studies teachers in teaching Social Studies in secondary schools in Jos North.
2. Find out the deficiencies associated with the identified prevailing teaching methods.
3. Assess new strategies and methods for teaching the contemporary Social Studies and Civics.
4. Examine the prospects of the new strategies and methods for teaching the contemporary Social Studies and Civics.

Research Questions

The study is guided by four basic research questions in tandem with the objectives of the study.

1. What teaching strategies and methods do teachers of Social Studies mostly use in teaching Social Studies and Civics in secondary schools in Jos North LGA?
2. Are there deficiencies emanating from the use of the identified teaching strategies and methods for teaching Social Studies and Civics in secondary schools in Jos North?
3. What new strategies and methods could Social Studies teachers adopt to teach contemporary Social Studies and Civics?

4. What are the prospects in the new strategies and methods for teaching Social Studies?

Methodology

The study adopted the descriptive survey design. The population of the study is all Social Studies teachers in all the 23 government secondary schools in Jos North. The sample consisted of 24 Social Studies teachers' drawn from 10 secondary schools in the study area. The sample consists of 9 males and 15 females. The average age of the sample is 33 years. The purposive sampling technique was used to select the Social Studies teachers. The teachers were selected based on two criteria: namely: they teach Social Studies in a government secondary school and must have taught Social Studies for at least five (5) years. Data for the study were elicited from the sample by means of a researcher- designed questionnaire titled New Strategies and Methods for Social Studies and Civics Education Questionnaire (NESMSSCEQ). The NESMSSCEQ is a structured four- point scale. It was validated with a reliability value of 0.71 indicative of high reliability. Data were analyzed using the mean. The bench mark mean for acceptance or rejection of an opinion was 2.50 which equates the mean of the four-point scale used for the study (Ibanga, 2002). Consequently, all items with mean values below 2.50 were discarded and treated as inconsequential and vice- versa. This criterion is supported by Awotunde and Ugoduluwa (2004).

Results

The results from data analysis are presented in succeeding paragraphs

Research Question I: What teaching strategies and methods do teachers of Social Studies mostly use in their teaching of Social Studies and Civics in Jos North?

Table 1: Prevailing Teaching Strategies and Methods used by Social Studies and Civics Teachers

S/NO	Statement	Mean	Remark
1.	Lecture method	3.86	Accepted
2.	Demonstration	2.96	Accepted
3.	Inquiry method	3.72	Accepted
4.	Brainstorming	2.52	Accepted
5.	Story telling	3.05	Accepted
6.	Questioning method	2.87	Accepted
7.	Discussion	2.65	Accepted

Result in Table 1 shows that the prevailing teaching strategies and methods for Social Studies and Civics are the lecture method (3.87) and inquiry method (3.71). However, the least observed prevailing teaching strategy is brainstorming method (2.52).

Research Question 2: Are there deficiencies emanating from the use of the identified strategies and methods for teaching Social Studies and Civics?

Table 2: Deficiencies Associated with the identified Prevailing Teaching Strategies and Methods for teaching Social Studies and Civics

S/NO	Statement	Mean	Remark
1.	Most times learners are passive	3.93	Accepted
2.	The teaching methods do not appeal to all senses (not multi-sensory)	2.89	Accepted
3.	Retention of learned facts may be short-lived	3.56	Accepted
4.	The methods do not make room for innovations	3.32	Accepted
5.	Creativity is not encouraged in some of them methods	2.56	Accepted

Evidences in Table 2 shows that passivity of learners (3.93) and poor retention of learned facts (3.56) are the lead ills associated with the prevailing strategies and methods used by Social Studies teachers in teaching Social Studies. However, the least observed ill is that creativity is not encouraged by some of the strategies and methods (2.56).

Research Question 3: What new strategies and methods could Social Studies teachers adopt to teach contemporary Social Studies and Civics?

Table 3: New Strategies and Methods for the Teaching of Social Studies and Civics

S/NO	Strategies and methods	Mean	Remark
1.	Use of multi-media	3.92	Accepted
2.	Adoption of information and communication technology tools	3.88	Accepted
3.	Use of cooperative groups	3.63	Accepted
4.	adoption of collaborative groups and learning	2.74	Accepted
5.	Use of discrepant event strategies	3.51	Accepted

Result in Table 3 shows that the use of multi-media rated highest (3.92) followed by adoption of information and communication technology (ICT) tools (3.88). The least observed new strategy according to Table 3 is use of discrepant event strategy with the least mean of 3.51

Research Question 4:What are the prospects in adopting new strategies and methods for Social Studies and Civics education?

Table 4: Prospects of the New Strategies and Methods of Teaching Social Studies and Civics

S/NO	Statement	Mean	Remark
1.	Learners will be actively involved in the lesson	3.83	Accepted
2.	Focus and attention will be on learners	2.93	Accepted
3.	A lot of concepts will be covered in good time	3.84	Accepted
4.	Stress and boredom will be reduced	3.70	Accepted
5.	The new strategies will help open natural gate ways of learning	3.95	Accepted
6.	There will be longer retention of learned facts	3.92	Accepted

Data in table 4 shows that the widely accepted prospects of the new strategies for teaching Social Studies and Civics is the ability to open learners' natural gate ways of learning (3.95) and the fact that learned facts will be retained longer (3.92).The least prospect being that focus and attention will be on the learners.

Discussion

The study is on developing new strategies and methods for teaching contemporary Social Studies and Civic in Jos North LGA of Plateau State. The study was necessitated by the fact that there is dissatisfaction with the type of teaching strategies presently used by social studies teachers in teaching social studies concepts. These teaching strategies have not helped to achieve the cardinal objectives of social studies education in the nation maximally.

Research question one identified the prevailing teaching methods used by Social Studies teachers in teaching. It was discovered that the lecture method and inquiry method are prevalent. This result is not surprising because lecture method is less demanding on the teacher. The reason being that the teacher (lecturer) merely dishes out points or facts to learners (Meziobi, 2012) without making any room for learners' input. In essence, the learners

are non- participatory. The lecture method has been faulted by experts on the ground of it passivity to learners (Mbah, 2018, Haruna, 2018). Any teaching method that does not engage the learner meaningfully may not produce the desired results. This may be one of the reasons why the cardinal objectives of Social Studies have not been fully achieved in Nigeria.

The study identified some of the deficiencies associated with the identified prevailing teaching strategies. Notable among the deficiencies is non-multi-sensory nature of the method learners are multi-sensory beings. Any human being has at least five sense organs. Each of these senses organs needs to be aroused to be able to take up learning. When the learning contents do not appeal to the sense organs of the learners, little or nothing may be achieved. That is why Ema and Ajayi (2008) advocated that teachers should use teaching strategies that will appeal to more than one sense organ at a time for meaningful learning to take place.

In the same manner, the study found out some new strategies and methods which could be adopted by teachers of Social Studies to teach contemporary social studies and civics. Some of them are multi-media, and ICT tools

among others. The use of multi-media and ICT tools has been applauded in literature. Adaralegbe (2010) and Mbah (2018) contended that multi-media and ICT tools appeal to more than one sense organ at a time thereby reduce boredom and increases mental alertness of the learners which correlate highly with academic achievement. This is because most students fail to learn well due to boredom emanating from non- stimulating or dull learning settings. Furthermore, Danjuma (2010) noted that multi-media learning helps to reduce verbalism on the part of the teacher as well open learners' natural gateways to learning.

Finally, some of the prospects of the new strategies include longer retention and removal of boredom and stress. Teaching is a tasking job and as such teachers need a mechanism that will reduce their stress and remove boredom. The use of multi-media and ICT tools in teaching will help in this area. A lot of stress will be overcome via ICT tools because most of the explanations will be made clear via picture sounds and animations when ICT tools are used for lesson presentation (Yusuf, 2014).

Conclusion

The study was on new strategies and methods for teaching contemporary Social Studies and Civics. It was gathered that teachers of social studies use mostly lecture and inquiry methods to teach Social Studies. Also some of the ills associated with these prevailing teaching strategies include poor retention of learned facts and poor creativity among others.

Some of the new strategies and methods for teaching Social Studies identified include multi-media ICT tools, cooperative groups and collaborative learning. Finally the study identified some of the prospects in the use of the new strategies and methods to include removal of stress and boredom, opening learners' natural gateway of learning in addition to longer retention of learned facts.

Recommendations

Based on the findings from the study the following are recommended:

1. Social Studies teachers should do away with the old strategies of lecture, inquiry and others in their teaching of social studies and embrace the new strategies.
2. Social Studies curriculum designers should design or proffer means of ameliorating some ills associated with some of the identified teaching methods for better results.
3. Teachers of Social Studies should embrace the new strategies and methods of teaching, social studies for better results.
4. Social Studies curriculum experts should design training packages for the new strategies and method to enable teachers gets acquainted with them for better results.
5. Government should provide schools with the multi-media and ICT tools to enable social studies teachers adopt them in their teaching of contemporary social studies and civics.

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