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**USING ADAPTIVE TEACHING AS AN INDISPENSABLE  
PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICE IN SOCIAL STUDIES  
EDUCATION**

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***Abstract***

*From the perspectives of Social Studies, each learner is born with the capacity to think, feel, and behave in both their own right and as a part of a group in their interactions and relationships. A person's abilities give them the means to accomplish their goals in life. This study examined the topic of learner/teacher centering in Social Studies education and concluded that the unique characteristics of each student should guide the decision on the person who would be the focal point of Social Studies instruction. The definition of adaptive teaching was given as a strategy to meet a shared learning objective while respecting each learner's unique characteristics. A diagram was used to contrast personalised training and differentiated education with adaptive teaching. The application of adaptive teaching and its challenges were covered in more detail in the study. The emotional component of Social Studies, which involves imparting socially acceptable attitudes, values, beliefs, and goals, was determined to exist. Individual differences play a major role in how well these emotional concerns are ingrained in learners. Because of this, the adaptive teaching approach is essential to Social Studies pedagogy.*

**Keywords:** Adaptive-teaching, Pedagogic practice, Social Studies Education, Differentiated Teaching, Individual Instruction.

### **Introduction**

Effective Social Studies instruction involves more than just setting up the classroom and the students' workstations. The human aspect of a teacher is crucial to the subject matter they teach, but the resourcefulness of a compassionate teacher is what makes them stand out. The ability of the teacher to recognise and choose the best presentation approach for the material he has determined to teach will impact how well his students learn. The most important thing is what the teacher can accomplish with their interactions, personalities, and own efforts.

Social Studies instruction is the result of intricate, collaborative planning and decision-making. For this reason, it is said that teaching is an intentional, purposeful, and conscious act. That is to say, the teacher of Social Studies must have made a number of judgements before entering the classroom. The purpose of teaching, the subject matter to cover, the method to be used, the tools to be used (instructional resources), and the means of evaluating the effectiveness of his instruction must all have been planned and decided upon by the instructor. One unresolved question in teaching-learning activities is who would be the centre of the learning process—the learner or the teacher. Differentiating pedagogical practises into “teacher-centered” and “learner-centered” categories is a prevalent practise (Mkpa, 2009). The latter, teacher-centeredness, is labelled as antiquated or obsolete practise, whilst the former, learner-centeredness, is seen as contemporary and generally accepted practise. Due to conflicting research findings, the “contrarians” and “modernizers” are still at odds over this issue. Sadly, there are no heroes in the “middle-path” between learner/teacher centeredness. As a problem-solving field, Social Studies focuses on the issues that students face and how to solve them in order to enhance or completely alter the interaction between humans and their environment. Thus, learner-centeredness continues to be the

preferred pedagogical approach in Social Studies education while acknowledging the benefits of teacher-centeredness as well.

According to D'Amiko and Gallaway's (2008) proposal, teacher-centered lectures raise the accomplishment of low-anxiety students by allowing for a faster pace, while student-centered conversations improve the achievement of highly nervous students by offering a more informal setting. Ikwumelu, Oyibe, and Keta (2015) assert that the learner is at the centre of all educational issues, from curriculum development and implementation to pedagogical approaches and tactics. The psychological makeup, socioeconomic standing, degree of physiological wholesomeness, and educational background of the learner all affect and occasionally even define what an educational practise is or need to be. As a result, the learner is viewed as an essential component of the teaching-learning process in this setting. But the fundamental factors in determining which approach to use while teaching Social Studies are the individual differences among the students and the teacher's capacity to recognise, value, and adapt his teaching strategies and resources accordingly. While some learners are predisposed to study effectively and effortlessly using specific methods, others learn less anxiously when using alternative approaches. Because of this, using adaptive teaching techniques is both essential and crucial. This study aims to provide advice on the necessity of this pedagogical practise in Social Studies teaching, as well as some tips on how to make the use of adaptable methods in Social Studies instruction flourish.

### **Concept of Teaching**

Prior to exploring the idea of teaching, it is necessary to have a basic understanding of the person who is responsible for the teaching activities. It takes a committed, well-trained somebody with sufficient skills to carry out the duty of teaching effectively in order to alter the conduct of students. This kind of person is known as a TEACHER. It makes sense that someone whose job it is to teach is a teacher. A teacher is somebody who has a solid grasp of both what his students or pupils need to learn and their capacity for learning, according to Oyekan (2005). Teaching is defined by Akanbi, Owoade, and Alabi

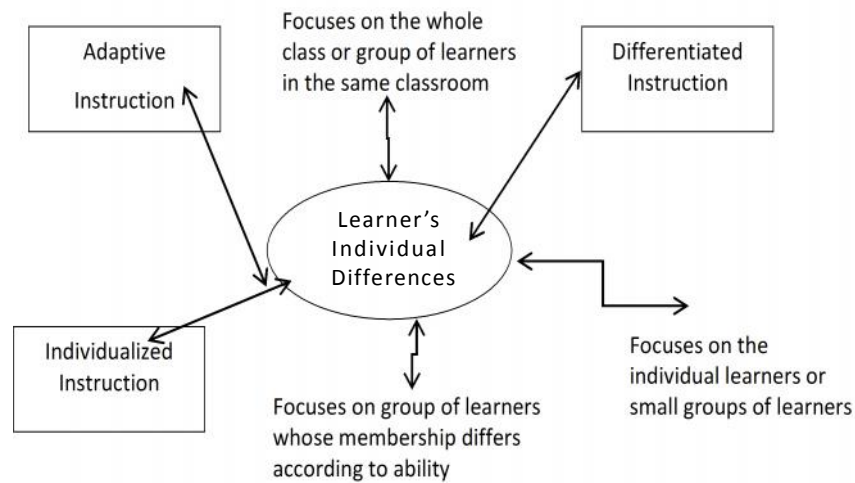
(2001) as the culmination of a group of recognised teacher-performed tasks, including explaining, inferring, probing, inspiring, recording attendance, monitoring students' progress, and learning background information. To emphasise even more, teaching is viewed as a series of deliberate, rational actions that indicate a dialogue between instructors and students as they go through various topic matters. Intimate interaction between a more experienced individual and a less experienced one is called teaching, and it is intended to advance the latter's education. It is customary to refer to an act as teaching when someone transfers knowledge or abilities to another. Giving a lecture is one example of imparting; it can also refer to sharing experiences or information. People view teaching as both a science and an art. It emphasises the creative and inventive skills of the instructor in setting up a valuable learning environment for the students, treating it as an artistic endeavour. It clarifies the logical, technical, or procedural processes that must be taken in order to obtain an effective teaching outcome because it is a science. Teaching, according to Oyekan (2005), is any planned interpersonal relationship in which one party (the teacher) intentionally tries to persuade the other party (the learner) to alter his behaviour. One way to look at teaching is as an interactive process wherein the teacher and students converse in the classroom during particular activities that can be defined. Yes, a good teaching technique improves pupils' learning. Modification, improvement, and development are always possible.

### **Adaptive Teaching: An Approach**

Children vary in two ways: they differ in their interests and talents, as well as in the same ability and among the different sorts of abilities they possess. Adaptive teaching is one strategy that can be utilised to successfully meet the needs of individual students. It involves accepting varying amounts and qualities of work based on student interest and aptitude. The goal of adaptive teaching is to accomplish a shared learning objective with students who have unique characteristics, such as different learning styles, aptitudes, or past accomplishments. According to Ikwumelu, Oyibe, and Oketa's

(2015) submission, “adaptive teaching” refers to using various instructional strategies with various learner groups such that the inherent diversity in the classroom does not impede any student’s success. The remedial method and the compensation approach are the two main strategies that can be used in adaptive education. The remediation approach is proactive, whereas the compensatory approach is reactive. In the former, the learner receives the basic or prerequisite knowledge or skills required for him to benefit from the planned instruction, such as a question-and-answer period and student-centered discussion. In the latter case, the instructional method chosen is determined by how well it will compensate for the learners’ lack of basic knowledge or skill. This could entail presenting the material with additional educational tools and exercises. Differentiating or individualising instruction involves identifying the varied backgrounds, levels of readiness, languages, learning preferences, and interests of each student and responding appropriately. By meeting each student where they are and supporting them throughout the learning process, the goal of individualising instruction is to maximise each student’s growth and success. It gives students the chance to succeed at their own pace and in their own way. Individual or small group student academic attainment is the focus of differentiated instruction. When using differentiated instruction, a teacher must have a thorough understanding of each student’s learning style, interests, and past academic experiences. The instructor then selects instructional strategies or tactics that are pertinent and best fit for each student. A significant portion of individualised instruction occurs in group settings, however being a member of a learning group affects placement over time. Students are transferred between groups as needed to support their optimal learning. Avoiding uniform expectations and assignments for the entire class (Ikwumelu, 2012).

The diagram below indicates that a common factor in the three instructional strategies enunciated that they are all approaches to responding to learner’s individual differences.



**Figure 1:** Approaches to responding to learner's individual differences

Source: Adapted from Ikwumelu, Oyibe and Oketa (2015).

### Applying Adaptive Teaching in Social Studies Education

The goal of Social Studies as a subject is to give young people the chance to cultivate the qualities of self-realization, improved interpersonal connections, self- and national unity, advancement in society and politics, and advancement in science and technology (FGN, 2004).

It encourages fresh and comprehensive methods for addressing societal and environmental problems (Osakwe, 2009). Another change is that the discipline of Social Studies now emphasises the issues that humans have with their surroundings. This suggests that the discipline's four main duties are to identify man as a product of his environment, recognise man as a determinant of his environment, investigate the problems that arise from the interaction between man and environment, and take action to address the issues. Ikwumelu, Oyibo, and Oketa (2015) state that the result of this interaction leads to variations in each person's physiological,

psychological, and emotional makeup. In reaction to this circumstance, Social Studies instruction is structured to accommodate individual variances using an adaptive teaching methodology. The process of imparting knowledge from teachers to students is referred to as teaching.

When using an adaptive teaching strategy in Social Studies, the curriculum's components—including content, process, and product—are taken into account. For instance, the content's structure and presentation may differ; the process considers learners' interests and group affiliations; and with regard to the products, the assessment techniques are adaptable based on the learners' comprehension level. After deciding on the material to teach and the goals to be fulfilled, the instructor must prepare and select the pertinent teaching strategy. This choice is not made in a vacuum; rather, it is made after giving due consideration to the learner's history, the course materials, and the learning objectives. Adaptive teaching incorporates several instructional strategies that are applicable to Social Studies education, such as student-centered presentation, cooperative grouping, inquiry, and self-directed learning.

Any of these approaches could produce positive outcomes, depending on the students' learning styles and backgrounds as well as the Social Studies teacher's ability to make the right decisions about when and how to use compensatory or remedial techniques. A procedure that includes investigations or searches that ultimately result in knowledge acquisition is referred to as an inquiry-based teaching technique. Using this method, students research topics on their own and come to their own conclusions. This suggests that the student is actively involved in the process of discovering ideas, concepts, and generalisations. He approaches concepts, topics, or difficulties analytically, comes up with solutions, and forms his own judgements (Ikwuemelu, 2012). These are the fundamental components of adaptive education. The emphasis of instruction is shifted from the teacher to the students in a student-centered presentation. In order to meet the unique needs, interests, aspirations, or cultural backgrounds of individual students and

groups of students, it is intended for the student to acquire a wide variety of educational programmes, learning experiences, instructional approaches, and academic-support strategies. In order to be considered student-centered, content must be based on the interests and issues of the students, and they must actively choose the format and subject matter of the lessons. Additionally, individualised feedback mechanisms must be offered. When instruction is student-centered, adaptive teaching flourishes with ease.

When students are placed in cooperative groups, they are forced to communicate with one another in order to solve problems, deal with values, and acquire new information. The child has to learn social skills so that they can work in a small group. It offers an environment in which several points of view can be coordinated, from which a single learner develops attitudes and values. Cooperative grouping encourages adaptive teaching, particularly when each student tries to help the other members of the group do their tasks more easily. Put differently, group dynamics impact individual members' behaviour, and group dynamics influence individual members' activities. Self-directed learning supports students in developing their own meaning and comprehension as well as their ability to reason and think critically about the material (Burke, 2006). Self-directed learning involves students going beyond what the teacher has taught them by reorganising it using their own ideas and prior knowledge. The instructor transfers the burden of learning to the students by using practise problems, group discussions, and question-and-answer sessions (Borich, 2011). This component of adaptive teaching is pertinent to Social Studies instruction because it empowers students to recognise an issue in the real world and take action to resolve it.

### **Impediments to Adaptive Teaching**

Social Studies instruction is the result of intricate, collaborative planning and decision-making. For this reason, it is said that teaching is an intentional, purposeful, and conscious act. That is to say, the teacher of Social Studies must have made a number of



judgements before to entering the classroom. The purpose of teaching, the content to teach, the technique to teach it, the materials to utilise, the instructional resources, and the evaluation process—all need to have been prepared and decided upon by the instructor. In Social Studies education, adaptive teaching is seen as an important strategy and pedagogical practise that cannot be ignored. Nevertheless, there are several challenges in putting this idea into practise. A manageable student population is necessary for adaptive teaching to be implemented successfully. This allows the teacher to provide each student with the necessary attention during teaching and learning activities. According to Osam (2013), who backed up this assertion, the number of pupils in our classrooms has increased, which makes it difficult to teach in large classes since it may be impossible to maintain effective control over the kids. It is important to provide classroom infrastructure, furniture, and instructional resources. Adaptive instruction would be practically impossible to maintain in a circumstance where these facilities are installed in a permanent form that does not permit any rearranging. This is the case because the approach emphasises how each learner is unique, necessitating ongoing equipment modifications for teaching and learning. in light of the learners' diverse educational requirements and skill levels.

For adaptive teaching to be implemented, there must be an abundance of teaching and learning resources available for students to use whenever they need them. Sadly, schools lack proper facilities for this purpose. Through its educational policies, which are frequently more political than instructional, the government meddles in educational practises. The creation, development, and implementation of educational curriculum frequently exhibit political undertones, with little to no consideration given to the society's current and future educational needs. For this reason, the educational system "has been subjected to power play by the leadership and the various administrators over the years," according to Omoniyi and Owolabi (2013). Without a doubt, teachers are the ones who translate, convey, and carry out educational plans and programmes (Bozimo and Ikwumelu, 2013). It was observed aptly

by the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004) that “no education system may rise above the quality of its teachers.” Therefore, if teachers lack the necessary skills and preparation for their position on the teaching-learning continuum, they have the power to either make or break the entire educational system. Classroom teachers that are highly motivated, diligent, and productive are essential for adaptive teaching. They must also receive ongoing, relevant training through seminars, workshops, and inservice courses on modern pedagogical practises. Rather than thriving on predetermined assessment methodologies and uniform evaluation modes, adaptive teaching embraces a variety of assessment techniques and tools that enable each learner’s assessment to be based on their understanding level while also giving them the option to select from a variety of evaluation/assessment methods. On the other hand, many educators struggle to implement differentiated assessment strategies that take into account the unique learning styles of their students in order to achieve the objectives of adaptive teaching approaches.

### **Conclusion**

The desire to prepare citizens for a useful existence wherever they find themselves and to make education relevant to the requirements of society gave rise to the concern for Social Studies education. In addition to focusing on the cognitive side of learning, Social Studies aims to imbue the student with the values and abilities necessary to contribute to society efficiently. As a curriculum offering, Social Studies has certain qualities that allow for ongoing modifications to its teaching and conceptualization. For instance, the discipline’s main topics, which include man, his surroundings, how he interacts with them, and the issues that result from those interactions, are all subject to frequent change. Because of this, it is anticipated that every aspect of the Social Studies curriculum and instruction will adapt to reflect the shifting priorities of the field.

### **Suggestions**

Students studying Social Studies are given factual and practical knowledge on societal issues. Its “feeling” or “emotional” aspect

entails imparting socially acceptable attitudes, values, beliefs, and concepts. Since these affective concerns are subjective, the individual variances of each learner have a significant impact on both the assimilation of these difficulties and the effectiveness of instilling them. Because of this, the adaptive teaching approach is essential to Social Studies pedagogy. The primary duty of a Social Studies teacher is to give experiences that will foster students' innate curiosity and desire to learn. The skill of the teacher has a major role in determining how well kids learn. To ensure that approaches are used effectively in teaching and learning activities, a Social Studies teacher must have the necessary training in addition to a wealth of experiences, practises, and knowledge in creating and implementing effective lesson plans.

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