

INNOVATIONS IN TEACHING SOCIAL STUDIES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

Nigeria as a multicultural nation is blessed with both human and material resources which require harnessing for sustainable development. Social studies, being an interdisciplinary and integrated subject that deal with society mirage with numerous problems, entails that its teaching could enhance sustainability of nation's development. The teaching of social studies has been in abstract, didactic, expository and theoretical. These methods cannot promote critical thinking among students and functional social studies for life which could encourage self reliance. This paper tries to bring forward strategies for teaching functional social studies that can provide for sustainable development, and identify the problems that are inherent in the strategies. The paper discussed the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), concept mapping, constructivist instructional strategy involving the students in the lesson etc. while some of the problems inherent in the strategies are found to be lack of instructional materials, lack of motivation for the teachers, low funding etc, and finally the paper makes some recommendations that can assist in the implementation of the strategies of teaching social studies for sustainable development.

Keywords: *Innovation, Sustainable Development, Strategies,
Implementation Social Studies.*

Background to the Study

Nigeria is endowed with human and material resources, if well utilized, can effectively be used in communicating science and technology. According to Achimugu (1988) cited in Apochi (2010), material resources are infrastructural facilities that are used to ensure effective teaching and learning while human resources are those human beings who directly or indirectly contribute to the achievement of social studies objectives.

The national policy on education emphasize that the national philosophy of education integrating the individual into a sound and effective citizen is to be actualized by gearing efforts towards developing a responsible citizen. With this, the policy identifies as a national objective of education, “the acquisition of appropriate skills, abilities and competencies, both mental and physical to live to contribute to the development of the society (Federal Republic of Nigeria 2004).

According to Iyang-Abia and Esu (2004) asserted that teaching of Social Studies in respect of its scope and nature, which is multidimensional, integrative and dynamic, cannot effectively take effects without the use of instructional materials, the teaching of social studies contents must focus not only on making teachers competent at using such instructional materials, but at the same time, promote strategies that enables the integration of instructional materials that enhances teaching and learning of social studies goals and objectives (Kochar 1988). However, the use of instructional materials in the teaching and learning of social studies according to Muodumogu (2003), is not only the issue, but also the appropriateness of the selected materials by the teacher to the topic at hand which sometimes make the lesson less effective and thereby render the material useless. Orakwe (2000) states that social studies classroom teaching without any use of teaching aids is not worth consideration at all. Because, the primary need of social studies teacher have to affect post behavioural changes with minimal effect that would have been a sweating effects that would have aided in increasing students boredom most turns out a very interesting and successful lesson.

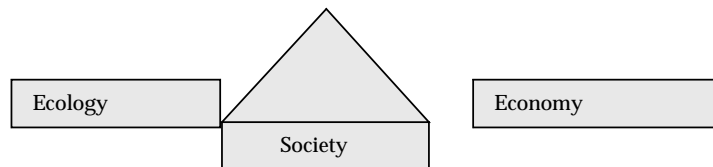
Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to:

- a. Determine the performance of teachers of social studies education in the use of instructional materials to teach for innovative purposes.
- b. Provide examples of classroom practice to guide teachers in designing instruction to help students meet performance expectations.
- c. Serve as a guide for curriculum decisions by providing performance expectations regarding knowledge, processes, and attitude essential for all students.

Importance of Social Studies Education in Sustainable Development.

Sustainable development is a priority task for societies in the 21st century. Social studies has been thought of as the main instrument for solving environmental problems and also as a precursor of education for sustainable development. Sustainable development according to Apochi (2010) means considering environmental, social and economic aspects for the solution of problems. Social studies as a problem solving and a societal subject or issue based subject which is a kind of discipline that gives future generations opportunities as the present generations to meet their needs. The concepts sustainability according to Apochi (2010) is a triangle with three corners standing for ecology, society and economy.



Source: Apochi (2010).

The three components according to Apochi (2010) are relevant for meeting human needs and they are interdependents to solve societal problems through social studies education. Social studies according to Oganwu (2010) serves as a veritable tool and catalytic agent for attending national goals and sharpening society for sustainable development. Specifically, through the teaching of social studies, students will engage in independent thinking, weight evidence, and evaluate facts and ideas to form sound judgment. Also, social studies students would be guided to shun social vices as cultism, examination malpractice, indecent dressing, corruption through emphasis on core components of civic and value education. These vices if not well taken care of may serve as hindrance to sustainable development in any nation of the world.

In order to ensure a sustainable development in the society devoid of social vices, social studies education must be a course of study at levels of our educational system. Social studies, through its civic education programmes can bring out the best in Nigerians. The truth is that with the right leadership, values and altitude, Nigerians will easily imbibe the culture of discipline as the product of a pragmatic civic education will demonstrate patriotism and reject bad leadership for sustainable development (Oganwu 2010). Social studies education contents are value laden which promote the inculcation of virtues such as honesty, integration, hardwork, contentment, discipline, cooperation, integrity, trustworthiness, open-mindedness or core values, certainly inculcation of such values will promote social, physical, economic and spiritual development aimed at sustainable development in

a society. Social studies according to Oganwu (2010) would create an understanding of our evoking social and physical environment as a whole in its natural, man-made, cultural and spiritual state. Social studies is vital in all round development of an individual. An individual exposed to social studies content is given a positive orientation which will ultimately prepare him or her to function effectively in the society. Social studies is an indispensable veritable tool in achieving sustainable development in Nigeria. According to Regula (2000). Teachers of social studies should consider themselves to have the main responsibility for environmental questions to deal with open-ended reflective educational processes. If they, therefore, impact their knowledge on the students through social studies lessons, it will create a development which will give the future generation the same opportunities as the present generation to meet their needs.

Instructional Materials for Innovations in Teaching Social Studies for Sustainable Development

Adekunle (2008) summarized instructional materials available for teaching social studies for innovations into four categories:

- a. Visual aid: These include pictures, maps, charts, graphs, diagrams, chalkboard, sketches, atlas and painting.
- b. Audio visual aids: Television, computer programmes, Film trips, Video recording and projectors.
- c. Auditory aids: Audio recordings, radios, records or cassette tapes, music.
- d. Printed materials: Encyclopedias, textbooks, magazines, journals, news papers, pamphlets, novels, poems, simulation games, government records and publications, almanacs, biographic, editorial cartons, and case studies. Bozimo (2002) asserts that "generally instructional materials available for use in social studies education can be categorized into three, namely, reading materials, audio-visual materials and commonly resources, she further expressed that the materials can simply be reduced to two groups namely reading materials and non-reading materials.

Notable criteria abound in literature on the taxonomical basis of instructional media. As in Vikoo (2003), such criteria for classifying instructional materials include the degree of experience/technical skills needed for production, nature of materials, physiological parameter or sensory modality. In terms of degree of experience, there is high technology materials such as computers, TV, internet, etc. and low technology materials, (such a as textbooks) and non-printed materials such as radio (Alaezi, 1990). On the basis of physiological parameters, there is sensory modality of the learner, and thus classify instructional materials into auditory, audio-visual, tactile of factory, gustatory, and kinesthetic materials (Romiszowski 1995). Visual materials appeal to the sense of vision (the eye), such as still pictures.

Auditory materials appeal to the sense of hearing (the ears), such as radio, while audio-visual materials appeal to both senses of hearing and vision, such as television, Tactile materials appeal to the sense of touching (the skin), such as the Braille, which olfactory materials appeal to the sense of smell (the nose), such as some chemical specimen.

Gustatory materials involve the sense of taste (the tongue), such as sample foods, while kinesthetic materials involve sense of muscular coordination (the muscles) with game materials such as a football as the media example. If all these instructional materials are well utilized, they can promote innovative in the teaching of social studies, thereby making the teachers to teach, guides and studies the students closely to discover their interest, strength, weakness, needs and abilities. Some of the instructional materials are discussed as follows:

Computer Assisted Instruction: This is a situation where instructions are programmed into the computer system. The learner sees and listens to the programmed instruction. He/she follows the instruction as being directed. The advantage of this innovative method is repetition. The learner can reply the instruction until he/she understands it.

1. Video Tapes: Piwuna (2003) observed that in teaching, teachers can carefully video tape, the same areas of interest, specific animals, physical environment such as mountains, waterfall and other interesting areas. These will facilitate discussing on the vegetation belt based on what has been seen.

2. Films/Film Projectors: Ajayi (2004) described Films/Film projectors as being designed to help teach facts and exact steps of procedure. They are effective in developing understanding of complex in societal historical problems and for influencing attitudes. Projecting this film will enhance the effective use of it to portray the ideas of the content of the lessons or topics in hand and the teacher process of using it might be something else that the students would not be able to comprehend the factual information of the lesson taught, using the materials.

3. Radio: This is a media for communication and it is used in the process of delivering lesson, such topic as communication in social studies as instructional materials for the students to perceive the concept in a practical manner. This is perhaps the most prominent audio teaching aid that is used in social studies for innovative purpose. Through radio broadcast, educational, cultural and social knowledge can readily be communicated social re-orientation, political convictions and education, the effectiveness of radio towards attaining these ends has been confirmed in its ability to cover events appropriately and enable information. Communicated to a wide audience at the same time, and where necessary

repeatedly.

4. Slide projector: A slide is a single positive image or transparent materials (a slide transparency) held in a mount and designed for projection (Ajayi 2004). She further expressed that, if properly designed, slide can be of great assistance to a teacher in providing visual reinforcement for what he is saying, are particularly useful for showing photocopies, diagrams and other graphic materials. An educational or social studies slide should be cleared, simple, and capable of being seen and understood from all parts of the classroom in which it is being projected.

5. Television: Neil (1979), in Hepburn (1988) described television and school as two competing learning systems, estimating that educators were exhorted to make sure that students study television's effects, its biases, and its relationship to learning. Television as sense of hearing and of sight at the same time which allows for wide coverage of audience at the same time and capable of reducing equivocation. Hepburn (1998) recommended that "time has come for social studies teachers to update long established views of learning to incorporate the effects of electronic media among the youth. "Social scientists, she continued, should" study socialization as a process where young people develop their activities towards society, the government, and public affairs for sustainable development.

Instructional Strategies for Innovations in Teaching Social Studies for Sustainable Development

The Innovative strategies focus on the learner (his/her nature and interest). His or her development towards social, emotional and mental maturity, he/she is able to accept othesr and capable of dealing successfully with his own life situation.

He should be excited about his work and takes responsibility for his action. In teaching social studies for sustainable development, the roles of the teacher in the innovative methods are derived from the education, science, social sciences and art of teaching. If a student is familiar with teaching strategies, the knowledge acquired, will be permanent and can be used at any time in the child's life and will also encourage transfer of knowledge. Some of the innovative strategies that have been found to be effective in the teaching of social studies for sustainable development include the following:

1. Field Trips (FT): This strategy provides an opportunity for an outdoor visit where learning experiences are acquired. According to Tijani (2003), field trip can be used as an approach for effective teaching of social studies. Fieldtrip is used to observe and study something which cannot be brought into the classroom or social studies resource room as opposed to the traditional system, of education where the

teachers use of resources are limited to things that are available in the classroom or in the school compound. Places where social studies students can go for field trips include, streams, waterfalls, mountainous areas, game reserves, forests, industries, museums all these places serve as outdoor resource room. The benefits of fieldtrip according to Apochi (2010) includes broadening students experiences, bridging the gap between social studies inside and outside the classroom, advances cognitive abilities of both students and teachers, improves students attitude towards learning social studies, developing process, skills in students and their application to solving problems, promotes socialization among students and people outside the school reinforces classroom lessons.

2. Constructivism: Constructivist teaching fosters critical thinking and creates active and motivated learners; Zemelman, Daniel and Hyde (1993) opined that learning in all subject areas involve inventing and constructing new ideas. They suggested that constructivist theory be incorporated into the curriculum, and advocated that teachers create environments in which children can construct their own understanding. Twomey (1989) recommended that a constructivist approach be used to create learners who are autonomous, inquisitive thinkers who can question, investigate and reason. Indeed a constructivist approach frees teachers to make decisions that will enhance and enrich student's development in these areas (Aoki 1984). Social studies teachers therefore need to recognize how students use their own experiences, prior knowledge and perceptions, as well as their physical and interpersonal environment to construct knowledge and meaning.

3. Service Learning: Service learning according to Ajitoni and Gbadamosi (2011) cited in Hecht (2002) is an experiential teaching and learning method that provides students with the opportunity to apply both academic and non academic skills in real life situations towards a common cause and identifiable goal in the community. Moreover, service learning is a teaching method that engages young people in solving problems within their schools and communities as part of their academic studies or other type of international learning activity. Billing, Root and Jesse (2005) as well as Billing (2000) reported that service learning had impact on student's social development, civic responsibility, career interest and solving environmental problems. Social studies teachers therefore need to intensify their effort by taking their students outside the classroom for the purpose of service engagement in their environment, this will integrate meaningful community service with instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience, teach civic responsibility, encourages lifelong civic engagement and strengthen communities for the common good (Melaville, Berg and Blank 2006).

4. Questioning Technique: For social studies lesson to be effective, there should be question coming from teacher to the students and vice versa. This opposes the traditional system where students were passive learners only answering questions. If the lesson involves only the students, the questioning should then be from students to students. The critical thing about this strategy is the way the social studies teacher controls the questions. Questions from the teacher to the students should give direction, stimulates interests and ensures that the students are being carried along. Questioning should take place before the lesson, during and before rounding up the lesson. Questions asked could be of various levels and the teacher needs a proper technique to ask the appropriate questions. Low cognitive order questions are those for recall while higher cognitive order questions are those that allow students to apply, analyze, synthesize and even question which is being asked. To teach social studies for sustainability, social studies teacher should ask more of the higher order questions. He should therefore, state his/her behavioural objective using action verbs such as list, design, distinguish, analyze etc.

To teach social studies for sustainability, social studies teachers should ask more of the higher order questions. He should therefore, state his/her behavioural objective using action verbs such as list, design, distinguish, analyze, etc. questioning technique can be used to teach any social studies concept effectively if the teacher plans his/her lesson well. Learning process is most facilitated and meaningful when students study in classroom of suitable sizes, well ventilated and adequately equipped with furniture and teaching resources.

Conclusion

Social studies teaching for sustainable development is an enormous task. Social studies teachers have to be innovative and creative to apply varieties and utilize various teaching resources in order to make teaching and learning of social studies effective. The strategies and resources for teaching in this paper are innovation in the teaching social studies. These innovative strategies focus on the learner as the centre of learning activities as opposed to the traditional system of education. The innovative strategies presented in this paper are menu for social studies teachers to select from and use in teaching social studies to enhance acquisition of skill necessary for sustainable development.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made based on the discussion of this paper.

1. Government of various levels should intensify the funding of schools, show more commitment by marching policy with implementation.
2. Motivation of teachers: Motivation and satisfaction are prerequisites for commitment, interest, dedication and self actualization.
3. Teachers should improve available resource materials for effective teaching and learning of social studies.
4. Teachers should be attending seminars, workshops, conferences in order to be familiarized themselves with new trend in teaching. ICT should be an integral part of teacher training.
5. More classrooms should be built and more qualified social studies teachers be employed.
6. Social studies resource room should be equipped with modern instrument materials that march with ICT teaching technique.
7. PTA, old students association, etc should be enlightened on the importance of instruction materials so that they can become more involved in the provision of funds for the purchase of instructional materials.
8. Teachers should improve instructional materials to compliment government effort, this will solve the problem of lack of teaching resources. More so, improvisation brings about availability of varieties of materials for the teaching and learning of social studies for innovation and to enhance sustainable development.

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