

## Classroom Management and Teaching of Social Studies

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### Introduction

To deliberate on classroom management and the teaching of social studies, this chapter intends to focus: classroom management, strategies of encouraging good behaviour in social studies classroom, in addition, concept of teaching, conditions for effective teaching of social studies, features of effective social studies teaching, future of effective social studies teaching and teaching students with diverse interest will be discussed.

### Classroom Management

Social studies instruction is flexible, in that teaching-learning can take place inside and outside rigid fixed social studies classrooms. The essence of classroom is to have a credible guide who directs, co-ordinates and manages instruction in relation to stated objectives. It is against this background that Ezeocha (1990:13) described the classroom as the “power house in which the success... of the learning process is generated”. Without the social studies teacher, learning can take place, however, the teacher ensures that the activities of the classroom is not haphazard, students are collectively directed and oriented to desirable learning objectives.

The social studies teacher ensures that the learning environment is peaceful, by engaging the students in meaningful teaching-learning rewarding activities, which are motivating, interest focused to arouse reflecting thinking and prompt learners contributions to the teaching learning process. Ideally, a social studies classroom is expected to be teacher-learner centred. This symbiotic teaching relationship provides quality feedback for improving social studies instruction.

Social studies instruction (classroom management) encapsulates the arrangement of contents, determination of set objectives, organizing learners activities and materials, evaluating and providing satisfactory learning experiences to stimulating learning and teaching processes for the realization of desirable changes in learners behavior (Mezieobi, 2009). The teacher arranges and manages classroom environment so that persons in the environment can learn (Imogie, 1998:1), Mezieobi, Bozimo and Amadi (2007:57) said:

The social studies classroom pervasive communication practice is dyadic (cyclical) which is an inter process of mutual interaction informally designated social studies classroom between teacher and learners and among learners who exchange and share meanings, thought and experiences on a given content which is supposed to be understood for the functional benefit of the learner. Learning in the dyadic social studies communicative process is not the preserve of the student. The teacher may also enhance knowledge of what he already knows or he may in the communicative exchange with the students acquire new knowledge. The classroom dyadic communication cannot be complete without feedback.

The social studies classroom is expected to be highly interactive in nature, this is because students learn effectively through active participation in instruction. It assists the social studies teacher in determining how to provide materials, methods and the entire management of the classroom. The effective classroom has to be maintained through co-ordinated managed instruction. To buttress this fact, Ihebereme (2013:32) remarked:

... when a teacher teaches his pupils/students in the (social studies) classroom without involving them in activity, it encourages the pupils/student to be less attentive to their studies. The conscious efforts of pupils/students to answer questions or participate in class discussion endorses the extent of learning experiences the students have received. Equally, the (social studies) teacher can assess his/her pedagogical competence through the learners responsiveness to his/her lesson. Furthermore, interactive teaching method widens the intellectual horizon of both the teacher and the student.

### **Strategies of encouraging good behavior in social studies classroom.**

Good behaviour or control can be achieved in a social studies classroom through the following strategies:

- The teacher has to exhibit good attitudes and conducts in terms of committed attitude to work, cordial relationship with students, such that students can mirror the social studies teachers human relations, work attitude and disciplinary conducts.
- Social studies topics and concepts should be meant to focus value education. Affective learning derived from social studies instruction induces good behavior conduct application.
- The teacher ought to have perfect control of the classroom by organizing his lessons, actively engaging the learners and instruction should be filled with rewarding learning experiences.
- Teacher's use of diverse instructional pedagogies provides opportunities for multiple learning experiences which arouses absolute interest in the classroom.
- Teachers and students should amply be involved in a classroom interactive relationship, as this strategy improves teaching learning process, fertilization of ideas and clarification of complex topics and misunderstood concepts. Ideally, interactive classroom instruction (is one of) the best pedagogic practice for effective teaching (of social studies) in Nigerian secondary schools (Ihebereme, 2013).
- Instructional materials and community resources utilized must be meaningful to lesson objectives. Practical application of knowledge facilitates teaching of social studies, improves retention and challenges the mental and decision making skills of learners.
- The use of cooperative group assignments and projects increases team spirit and participation in social studies classroom among students. Students develop cooperation skills and collectives work habits towards a solution to problematic tasks. Sharing of ideas and tolerating of one another facilitates good conducts and sharpens positive attitudes.

### **Concept of Teaching**

According to Nnachi (2010:3) "... the main (social studies) teacher is the one that is (professionally) trained. In most cases, a trained (social studies) teacher is skilled". He further expressed that every teacher is not trained and every teacher is not skilled. In the assemblage of social studies content, resource persons, community resources and community members amongst others may be relevant, but professionally they are not formal teachers of social studies. The teaching of social studies is currently designated to professionally trained and skilled teachers. Simply put, teaching may be informal as values, knowledge and skills acquired through parents, the community, peer groups and other social interaction form. Formal teaching takes place in the classrooms or outside it, with structured contents and patterns of pedagogical principles (Mezieobi, 2004).

Uwakwe and Duru (2010:191) said " Teaching ... involves the exhibition of characteristics and performance that show special skills possession as well as the application of relevant skills and knowledge according to laid down principles in bringing about changes in the behavior of the learners". The social studies teacher is strategic in the implementation of social studies curriculum because he or she is trained to inculcate some specialized values and skills through appropriate techniques and procedures.

Teaching in the concept of social studies education in Nigeria, is the utilization of a professionally trained personnel grounded in orientation of social studies pedagogies, contents, materials, philosophies and objectives in the implementation of social studies curricula at all levels of our education experience, spanning from pre-nursery to the university level. The social studies teacher is expected to inculcate appropriate values, attitudes, skills and knowledge in the learners. Non-professionally trained social studies teachers/lecturers may teach social studies, but are not likely to achieve a dequate effectiveness in the implementation of social studies because of limitations in the application of integrated approach and orientation required in the effective teaching of social studies. Okam (2012) applauds that effective teaching of social studies can only be achieved in the classroom with professionally trained social studies teachers.

### **Conditions for effective teaching of social studies**

The following conditions will be ideal for effective teaching of social studies:

**Provision of professionally trained social studies teachers:** social studies scholars as Okam (1998), Mezieobi (2004), Nwaubani (2007), have condemned the obvious use of non-professionally trained social studies teachers in the implementation of social studies curricula at various level of our education experience in Nigeria. These teachers lack the skills for effective management of pedagogies directed at achieving social studies objectives. By the extensive use of non-professionally trained social studies teachers and lecturers, some principal elements of desirable values, skills attitudes and knowledge are not comprehensively delivered with professional touch. Professionally delivered social studies instruction, sharpens reflective thinking, involves the learner actively, assists the learner in the transfer and application of knowledge, values and skills for societal transformation.

**Continuous professional development:** Social studies instruction in terms of contents, materials and methods

are dynamic with flow of contemporary events in the local, national and international communities. A non-resourceful social studies teacher will not organize, present and excite learning to achieve contemporary relevance. This is because some obsolete information may not appropriately aid current learning and effective teaching of social studies. The following comments of Mezieobi (2012:13) are instructive:

After the teaching practice field exercise, the certificated social studies teacher is professionally empowered to implement the social studies curriculum, however, the nature of social studies as a revolving and continuously expanding curriculum in terms of content enrichment in integration with contemporary emerging issues/information communication technologies and pedagogies calls for continuous development of both professionally trained and non-professionally trained social studies teachers in the reorientation of social studies teachers is for effective instruction and functional implementation of the social studies curriculum.

#### **Revolutionizing social studies teacher preparation strategies:**

Social studies teaching programmes of colleges of education and universities have to be enriched in content with innovative pedagogies in order to produce functional teachers capable of implementing social studies at all levels of our education with appropriate methods (Mezieobi, Ojobo, Onyeansi & Monday, 2013). In addition, they have to be educated on effective use of community resources, information communication technologies, so as to aid research and functional teaching of social studies. Serving teachers should be encouraged to enlarge their skills through professional development, the embrace of workshops, conferences and seminars to enlarge, refine their teaching skills and update their information bank.

**Supervision of social studies teachers:** Teaching practice field experience should not be made the terminal exercise of appraising social studies teachers' instructional quality. Akubue (2003) argued that (social studies) teachers cannot be effective in teaching until they are exposed to dynamics of teaching and supervision by extension. Therefore, (adequate and continuous) supervision is meant to appraise the quality of (social studies) teacher education in respect to dependable educational decisions and steps to improving the (instructional) quality of social studies curriculum can be put in place (Mezieobi, 2012).

**Effective use of community resources:** The skillful use of instructional materials and community resources would help in making the teaching of social studies pragmatic, realistic, motivating and interesting. Against this background, social studies is expected to provide resources which can be used to furnish students into the skills of critical thinking, feelings and actions that will help them not only to live more effectively in a greater dignity and satisfaction, but also to participate and contribute positively to development of the society (Mbikwe & Ibeh, 2012).

**Sound evaluation processes:** The teaching of social studies should be focused on the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domain. However, Mpka (1999) and Ezegbe (2003) have identified incompetence and negligence of evaluation of behavioural outcomes. Social studies teachers have to be exposed to the processes of evaluating learners' activities in the affective domain. This is because value education is a major focus of social studies instruction.

**Extensive publication in social studies education:** Social studies education would improve greatly, when publication in the area is pronounced and contemporary. The promotion of conferences, seminars and workshops on continuous basis assist professional development of teachers and facilitate publications. Publications further assist teachers development of contents, methods and materials. Students are likely to benefit from quality instruction arising from the availability of books, journals, instructional materials and resources.

**Use of information communication technologies:** Social studies teachers should be trained to be ICT Complaint. This is a veritable process of enlarging their research scope and exposing learners to acquire contemporary information, through their personal search skills. In corroboration with the essence of information communication technologies (ICTs) in the teaching of social studies, Orugbemi (2008:162) said "social studies is expected in the long term to affect the social values of young learners through exposure to realities about life". Current information acquisition updates teaching and learning of social studies in a most dynamic and international comparative terms.

#### **Features of effective teaching of social studies**

The following instructional processes entail positive conditions for effective teaching of social studies.

- Cross fertilization of the knowledge is to be encouraged in social studies class room. This encourages students to learn from one another. According to Okpara (1997:153) "the classroom teacher needs to perform activities that would enhance team spirit in classroom activities".
- The learner should be at the centre of instruction. This implies that learners are to be actively involved in the teaching learning process, this is to ensure that the objectives of social studies in

training potentials for independent survival and acquisition of skills for national development are realized.

- Student centered instruction does not mean absolute extrication of the social studies teacher from the teaching learning situation. The teacher has a central role in the implementation of social studies curricula at various stages of our education experience. Instead, for effective teaching of social studies, a combination of student centred approach and teacher centred approach will be utilized. It is the place of the teacher to pilot and manage the affairs of the social studies classroom in order to realize fruitful desirable learning outcome.
- Effective teaching of social studies entail qualitative teacher training and recruitment. Professionally trained social studies lecturers should be substantially prepared and recruited to teaching social studies at Nigeria's colleges of education and universities. This is because their products will effectively teach social studies when the translation of appropriate values and skills in the learners. Okam (2012) has persistently argued that effective teaching of social studies can only be realized by professionally trained social studies teachers, who have adequate instructional orientation to inculcate appropriate values, skills, knowledge and attitudes in the learner for transformative nation building.
- Innovative instructional methods/strategies are instructive in the implementation of social studies curriculum. This is to create multiple learning experiences, opportunities and situations for the learner to be practically involved in the learning teaching process.
- To make the teaching of social studies less cumbersome and realistic, instructional materials and community resources ought to be employed to clarify abstract concepts and difficult topics. It simplifies teaching and learning for teachers and students. The use of resources adds value to learning, it motivates learning and saves the teacher the excruciating pain of extreme explanations and analysis.

#### **Future of effective social studies teaching**

The future for effective teaching of social studies contains visualized information for and constraints against effective stabilization of social studies at all levels of our education experience in Nigeria.

Mezieobi, Ogaugwu, Ossai and Young (2013: 103) identified the continued constraints against effective teaching of social studies at present, in the near and distant future as follows.

- The possibility of urgent review, revision and expansion of social studies curriculum is not insight.
- Funding of research in social studies education may receive cold support as there is robust interest in funding science and technology.
- Faulty pedagogical implementation of social studies curriculum in Nigerian Universities (Schools and Colleges) and Inadequate use of Information Communication technology will edure because most social studies lecturers and teachers are not ICT compliant.
- The significant number of non-professionally trained social studies education lecturers (and teachers) in Nigerian Universities (schools and Colleges) is a threat to effective implementation of social studies curriculum.
- Social studies Association of Nigerian (SOSAN) is yet to give social studies identity and recognition it deserves to attract policy makers interest for instance, the extension of social studies to the certificate level as evident in Ghana among other countries in West Africa. The recent introduced "Civic education" is to be examined at the certificate level 2014 in Nigeria.

However, there is obvious perception that the teaching of social studies will improve with the expansion of post graduate programme in social studies education in Nigerian Universities. This step is expected to produce professionally trained lecturers and teachers who are correspondingly expected to teach social studies effectively. In addition, the evident publications of contents, materials and pedagogies about social studies in Journals and text books written and edited by professionally trained social studies professionals, portends hope for effective teaching of social studies in Nigerian schools.

In all, it is important that teacher training institutions of Universities in Nigeria's Universities and Colleges of education should update their social studies teacher education programme in area of pedagogy. Effective teaching of social studies cannot be realized without sound trained teachers in methods. In addition, social studies teachers and lecturers should be resourceful to integrate contemporary issues in their conduct and adopt innovative instructional techniques in the dispensation of irregular supervision of (social studies) classroom may relax the commitment of most (social studies) teachers in improving their classroom instruction. regular supervision helps in substantial mathenance of academic standard and improvement of quality instruction. In other words, irregular supervision creates room for poor management of classroom instruction. This is because most teachers are likely to relax their quality of teaching without constant supervision (Mezieobi, 2009). Esu (2012) highlighted social studies teachers' contribution and quality for effective teaching as follows:

1. “The teacher is a vital element in any educational programme, hence the needed changes can occur through improving the quality of the instructional processes and productive competences of the learners.
  2. Sufficient knowledge and clear understanding of the subject matter.
  3. Acquisition of various principles and practices of classroom testing.
  4. Ability to plan and manage learning activities towards attaining specified curriculum objectives”.
- Competent social studies teachers and lecturers are indispensable in the effective teaching of social studies in the classrooms.

### **Teaching students with diverse interest**

To ensure effective teaching of social studies in the classroom, Mezieobi, Ojobo, Onyeanusi and Sampson (2013:42) said “There is therefore an urgent compelling need for comprehensive Overhauling of social studies teacher education process as condition for viable effective implementation of social studies curricula”, such conditions are to put in place substantial professionally trained social studies lecturers in colleges of education and universities in Nigeria to take over active preparation of social studies teachers, these crop of teacher trainers should ensure that requisite innovative instructional pedagogies are inculcated in student teachers and that content and materials connect valuable contemporary instruction. Social studies instruction is not teacher dominated in nature. Effective social studies instruction incorporates students learning experiences, challenges, tasks encountered, confronting difficulties in assimilating topics and concepts, which consequently guides the teacher on how to present instruction to the cognitive level of learners. Mbakwem (2005:102) remarked “the improvement of teaching and learning centres on teacher student “interaction”. This is because it helps in resolving difficult topics and concepts to be learned in social studies classroom.

### **Teaching students with diverse interest**

The social studies teachers should be compelled to do the following:

- Provide opportunities for multiple learning experiences. Mkpa (1987) acclaim that students active participation in (social studies) classroom instruction improves their rate of learning, conceptualization of values and concepts. While Nosiri (1999:65) reiterates “a successful (social studies) teacher should involve his students in teaching-learning encounter”. Similarly, Okpara (1997) said “students learning outcomes depends to a large extent on their participation in the lesson”.
- The utilization of diverse pedagogies to attract diverse interest.
- Evaluation should be comprehensive to cover cognitive, affective and psychomotor skills.
- Value clarification teaching strategy should be used to achieve concrete collective value position by students on specific controversial issues. Example sexuality education, religious matters, Elections, Revenue allocation among others.
- Social studies teacher should be able to organize contents, materials and pedagogies to articulate learners interest towards specific learning objectives. The teacher should control the class effectively and guide the students patiently to realize social studies objectives. Social studies instruction can be effectively delivered through teachers sequential presentation of materials, contents and method to stimulate, simplify and clarify instructional phenomena. Against this background, Ayuh (2008) argues that proper organization of materials (in social studies) classroom stimulates retention and by extension motivates learning.
- The content of instruction has to be motivating to arouse interest.
- Exposure to community resources is instructive to accommodate variation in learning interest.
- Utilize group projects to achieve team spirit, collaborative work interest and ethics.
- Guide individualized instruction may be utilized.
- The classroom atmosphere should be teacher-student centred, interactive and democratic to attract various learners’ opinions.

### **Summary**

The teacher is at the helm of social studies classroom management. This is because the teacher guides and directs instruction in the realization of social studies objectives. Social studies classroom can be flexible, meaning that instruction can be formal, informal or acquired through interactive living or teaching by community members. Ideally, a social studies classroom is expected to be teacher –learner centred in order to facilitate cross fertilization of ideas and knowledge. Classroom management are those teacher behavioural organizational abilities in terms of preparation of content, materials, pedagogies, general disciplinary control among others, which are intended to guide social studies teaching-learning process.

Strategies of encouraging good behavior in social studies classroom revolves around the teacher’s

competencies, they are: teachers exhibition of good conducts, instruction should be value laden, perfect control of the classroom, use of diverse instructional pedagogies among others. The teacher of social studies is expected to be professionally trained to ensure effective inculcation of values, attitudes, skills and knowledge. Teaching is the skilled dispensation of right attitudes and values through appropriate techniques and procedures. Some of the conditions for effective teaching of social studies are highlighted as: provision of professionally trained social studies teachers, continuous professional development, supervision of social studies teachers, effective use of community resources, including extensive publication in social studies and use of information technologies. The study further addressed the feature and future of social studies in respect to effective teaching.

### Revision Questions

1. What is classroom in the context of social studies education?
2. Define teaching in relation to social studies.
3. Identify and discuss five strategies of encouraging good behaviour from social studies instruction.
4. Explain with concrete examples at least 5 conditions for effective teaching of social studies.
5. Highlight 5 feature characteristic classroom instructional behaviour for effective teaching of social studies.
6. Discuss with 5 points of references, the future of effective social studies teaching in Nigeria.

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