

INTRODUCTION TO THE TEACHING OF SOCIAL STUDIES IN JUNIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL

BELLO MUHINAT B.

School of Education
Federal College of Education (Tech), Gusau
Zamfara State

ABSTRACT

An interdisciplinary approach to solving societal problems is the root of subject social studies. It is a subject that borrow its ideas (content) from the original social sciences, but with the view of integrating them as one whole in order to serve the aim for which it was set. In order to achieve its aims, general objectives and teaching methods have been discussed. Teachers need not to teach or handle the subject as any of the single social sciences. But to teach or handle it using integrated approach. That is the focal point of this work. The paper tries to define the concept social studies and identify some methods that can be adopted in the teaching of the subject in our junior secondary schools in order to achieve it aims. The objectives of social studies were identified, along side with some qualities which a social studies teacher must possess in order to be able to handle the subject effectively.

INTRODUCTION

What is Social Studies?

Social studies may be defined generally as the social sciences – history, geography, sociology, economic, political science, and psychology functionally organized to facilitated meaningful presentation to students (Krug and Anderson, 2000). The time is long past when any person- even a brilliant and studious adults could master the whole content of all, or even any one of the social sciences. Consequently, for the young especially, a selection and organization of materials to be studies becomes imperative. Materials are selected from history because the story of a man's past gives better understanding of the present; from geography because it reveals the

influence of physical environments upon human progress; from political science because it reveals method or order; from economics because of its relationship to the livelihood of the individual and the community; from sociology and social psychology because they help to explain social relationships and human behavior; and from contemporary life because it is the perennial source of all problems which necessitate and justify the inclusion of social studies in the curriculum of our schools.

The Central Objectives of Social Studies Instruction

Stated in briefest fashion, the central objectives of Social Studies instruction according to Wesley, 1987 are:

1. **The promotion of better citizenship:** The pursuit of this objective begins in elementary school Social Studies with special attention to the home, the school, and the local communities. In the secondary schools this emphasis upon better citizenship in home, school, and community must be continued in order that it may be extended to promote a higher quality of citizenship in the province, the nation and the community of nations. The end objective is *good world citizenship*. Obviously this objective is not achieved without patient study and active, thoughtful participation in a social environment. It cannot be stressed too frequently that the central objective of Social Studies teaching is the development of worthy citizens. The insistence upon this objective, however, should not add converts to the illusory and socially dangerous notion that teachers, especially Social Studies teachers, are solely, or even mainly, responsible for the quality of the citizenship of our oncoming generations. Nevertheless Social Studies teachers must, it is thought, pay special attention to the development of better citizens, even though the business of building citizens of quality is a responsibility which they share with other teachers, the home, and many other social agents and agencies. Other general objectives of Social Studies are as follows.
2. **Knowledge:** Knowledge is ranked here among Social Studies objectives as the first because, it provide the only sure basis to understanding. It is intended to draw attention to the study aspect of Social Studies, to the substantial content of meaningful facts, well-documented generalizations, and even significant dates. These must not be neglected. Nor is it thought that they need to be neglected to achieve the social objectives of the course. All this is not to suggest, however, that the rote learning of unrelated facts, meaningless dates and foundationless generalizations may pass as good Social Studies teaching. Indeed, such teaching only counterfeits Social Studies instruction and is truly

- a travesty on education. This objective is thus, believed to be an important one, though knowledge is not the only important objective of Social Studies instruction as pointed out by "Essentialists" that the mastery of factual material is not only educational objective of Social Studies instruction, and that abilities, attitudes, loyalties, habits, skills and the like, must also be cultivated in students.
3. **Love of Truth:** Certainly Social Studies instruction will have failed in one its principle objectives if students pursue it in a passive, credulous, unthinking subservience to all that is written and heard today about society and social problems. Surely all Social Studies student should receive constant training in critical thinking, in evaluating source material, and in detecting, analyzing, and appraising propaganda wherever and whenever it appears. Thus, students should not only learn the facts or even merely acquire knowledge and understanding; they should also acquire an interest, even an intense determination, always to get to the truth of the matter: in short, they should be initialed into the life-long quest for "whatsoever things are true." This is because social knowledge would be useless without concurrently acquiring an interest in learning, a love of truth, and a desire to see things clearly and see them whole.
 4. **Humanitarian Sentiments:** Here reference is made to the social and altruistic sentiment which give point and purpose to the whole process of the Social Studies. It encompasses an appreciation of the meaning of the being your brothers keeper, respect other people rights, discussions and opinion even in disagreement i.e. "brotherhood."
 5. **An Understanding of the Rule of Law:** This refers to the necessity for leading children from the repeatedly observed fact that man is a social animal to a realization of the need for government, the preferability, but not necessarily inevitability of self-government. In short, students should acquire an appreciation of the democratic ideology with its past struggles and achievements, its unsolved problems, its future possibilities and its ever-present challenge. Students should come t realize that democracy is not a framework for anarchic liberty and license, but is rather a form of government wherein law and authority are imperative. It is not that democracies lack authority. It is rather that the source and nature of democratic authority differs from that of all forms of government.

6. **Attitude, Appreciations, Allegiances:** In the foregoing consideration of general objectives, some of the specific objectives of Social Studies instruction have probably been obscured in the attempt to be brief. A more thorough coverage of objectives of Social Studies is achieved if one uses the analytical approach. Indeed, this approach is so thorough that its results are more almost intimidating to those who are responsible for Social Studies instruction. Certainly an analysis of Social Studies objectives makes it seem that Social Studies teachers are to be made to carry the whole educational responsibility. This, of course, is not implied, yet it is doubtless true that they must share, with all other teachers, educational objectives that are omnipresent in all educational ventures. The vital areas where they need to cover are:

- a. Acquisition of attitudes that promote welfare of individuals and the community such as:
 - i. Respect for rights and opinions of others.
 - ii. Recognition of and respect for the ethical standards or values of individuals, communities and mankind generally.
 - iii. Faith in human powers for improvement of individuals and communities.
 - iv. Vivid sense of social responsibility.
 - v. Interest in contemporary social problems and a desire to participate in their solution.
 - vi. Religious and political tolerance.
 - vii. Appreciation of national achievements-material, social and ethical.
 - viii. Recognition of national and local shortcomings.
 - ix. Sympathetic understanding of national powers and ideals.
 - x. Critical fairness in partisan.
 - xi. Appreciation of other communities and nationalities.
 - xii. Recognition of values inherent in peaceful relations of nations.

Qualities of Social Studies Teacher

The followings are some of the qualities which social studies teachers must possess in order to achieve the stated objectives in Nigeria schools.

1. **Be Systematic:** Social studies teachers need to systematically arrange his / her course topics and sub-topics in a chronological or some other orderly sequence and proceed with straightforward business-like singleness of purpose from one topic to the next according to plan. Teachers should remember that studies need to be truly planned courses of studies, not a maze of tangled trails designed rather to confuse than guide.
2. **Survey the Globe:** Social studies teachers need not to overlook any part- as not important part. This is because social knowledge is not to be parochial but wide and that is why teachers need to cite examples not only within their immediate environment but in the global environment since the world is a global village. Peters (1988) supported this by asserting that, "and what parts are unimportant in today's small new world?"
3. **Do not overlook any of the Social Sciences:** Social studies teacher need to make social studies courses not just history or just geography. The subject is built on all the social sciences. True, they draw heavily upon the insights of the historian, but they must not be limited to these. To so limit is neither legitimate nor defensible.
4. **Make it interesting:** Social studies teacher need to make the course interesting to students. Teachers should remember that the logical or chronological order which adults find best for arranging or storing knowledge after it has been acquired is not necessarily the order in which students best acquire knowledge. Generally, prefer the psychological to the logical order. Children, like trees and other growing things, have their own ways of developing, determining more by interest than by logic or any overriding determination to be systematic. This may be an annoying characteristic of student learning, but it is nevertheless an important one. Proceed then in accordance with the findings of adolescent psychology rather than with those of good adult logic, otherwise "teach-ability" suffers.
5. **Do not make the course too heavy:** Social studies teacher should to attempt to achieve too much within a limited time allocated on the school time-table. Coverage should not be achieved at the price of understanding if the teacher

really want to achieve success in their teaching. This is because the classroom is a composition of different students whose learning abilities are not the same.

6. **Democratic in Leadership:** Remember at all times that you are educating for democratic citizenship, for self-government. Let yours then be a leadership of free men. Provide a room for good-teacher-students relationship wherein authority and initiative are compatible for effective teaching and learning to take place in the schools (not only in social studies lesson), there must exist good relationship between the two parties involved (i.e the teacher and the students). It is a common thing that a particular student does not like or is not in good relation with a particular teacher, learning or understanding what such teacher teaches becomes the problem. Likewise for teachers to effectively inculcate in the students desired aims of social studies, there must exist close, cordial and friendly atmosphere.

Teaching Methodologies in Social Studies

One of the persistent difficulties of all social studies teachers is to preserve a wholesome even enthusiastic, interest in methodology without at the same time regarding it as an end in itself. All too frequently methodology has tended to monopolize the center of the stage while the general and specific objectives of social studies waited in the wings with only fleeting opportunities to make their voices heard. (Billett, 1987), assert that, "there is no device or instruction that can raise the quality of the educative process above the purpose, knowledge, the understanding, the vision of the teacher who employs it."

From the foregoing it is evident that there is no one rule of thumb method can be given as a universal solution for all problems of social studies instruction. Billet,(1987:6) believes thus,

It should now be apparent that there is no such thing as a method of teaching that is good for all subject matter at all times and in all places. Rather, there are methods by which, in a given situation, for a definite purpose, at some specific school level and with such instructional equipment as is available, a specific unit of subject matter organized in a specific way and placed in a certain sequence may be taught to students of a given kind and distribution of ability and background of

experience. In short, methods are instrumental and must be chosen and appraised in view of the ends to be reached and in the light of conditioning circumstances.

Here are some method which social studies teacher can employed in the teaching of the course to secondary school according to Billett,(1987)

Discussion

This method is of an informal nature. The teacher may lead the discussion and a pupils may serve as chairman. Sometimes a group of students may take charge of a discussion. With direction and training, a class will be able to carry on discussions and projects with little direct interference of the teacher. The teacher must see, however, that time is not wasted in worthless talk. Careful planning of assignments, a clear understanding on the part of the class as to what is expected of them, and proper experience and training will make this method of procedure worth while. Furthermore in he teaching of social studies current and controversial issues can be discussed in the class among the pupils under the guidance of the teacher. The class is helped because different ideas and talents are explained. It facilitate the development of individual and critical thinking. These are some examples Debates, open forums, panel discussion.

1. **Informal Lecture:** The lecture method is not recommended for general practice in the secondary school, but there are situations in different societies that teacher have to result to the use of only this method. Situation like population explosion that we are experiencing in Nigeria schools today, push teachers into the adoption of no other method than lecture method. Teacher in Nigerian school also adopt lecture method in order for them to be able to cover the syllabus in good time. Other instance when it may use, is when the class is beginning a new unit or topic. Teachers of social studies can use the lecture methods to summarize a large lesson by highlighting the most important points, to introduce a course and to aid and supplement students reading. This method can arose the interest of learners/ students. For teacher to effectively use this method the following steps must be considered.
 - The teacher must have to plan what to say so that the lecture will be sequential and systematic.
 - The lecture should be divided into sub-topics to have the necessary breaks from digression to break monotony.

- The outline of the lecture should be mastered so that the teacher should not be found always begin a slave to his lecture note.
 - Facial and other expressions of the audience should be given serious attention by the teacher to know the level of that interestedness in the lecture.
 - Humour should be built into the lecture by the teacher but irrelevant stories should be discouraged.
2. **Project Method:** The project method refers to activities which aid in the learning process. This is a situation where project work will given to the student to carry out under the motivation and supervision of the teacher. This method is characterized by students planning, physical activities resulting in physical creations while the teacher guides. Activities like dramatics, reading, making models, involves, planning, implementation and execution of results and evaluation. This method of teaching is strongly recommended for the teaching of social studies because it makes learning realistic by presenting real task for students to tackle. It encourage imitative, combined effort, each students contributing his/her ideas, skills and energy to he work of the group so that the goal of the project can be achieved. The accomplishment of the project give students better understanding about the topic.
3. **Problem Approach:** By this approach the solution of a pertinent problem is undertaken, in the main, by the students themselves. This method emphasizes mental judgment and investigation about a problem at hand. That is to say in the project techniques the activities both mental and physical leads to the accomplishment of a task but in the problem method the activities leads to mental solution. This method is very important in the teaching of social studies this is because it helps the development of reasoning skills in students. The teacher can raise a problem by asking such question as “why do we need social studies education in our society?” Attempt by he pupils at finding answer to these question goes along way in developing thinking faculty of the students. This approach has been criticized by many scholars on the ground that it does not encourage broad understanding of the subject, because students will read a text or portion of it not to get at its meaning but to choose a section or sections that give him the answer to the problem. Despite it criticisms, it merit to the teaching of social studies are many and they include:
- a. It conforms to life because life is simply problems solving.

- b. It arouse interest which aids the educative process.
 - c. It trains students on the art of good judgment formation.
 - d. It develops critical thinking in children.
 - e. It fosters students activity.
4. **The Contract Method:** The contract method provides a method of individual instruction. Under this method the students are given contracts or detailed assignments covering a unit of work to be completed within a certain length of time. The contract method may well serve as an excellent means of motivation if handled carefully.
5. **Supervised Study Method:** Supervised study provide period for study under the guidance of the teacher within the time when the class meets.
6. **Resource Method:** Through the use f resource books and reading, students may develop an entirely new attitude toward the study. The utilization of resource provides reality to material taught. Many types of resource might be used in the teaching of social studies; old newspapers, old coins, stamps, uniforms etc. Charts may also serve as an excellent means of arousing and sustaining interest. Various types of charts such as : picture charts, map chart, graph charts, organization charts.
7. **Field Trip Approach:** Field trips provide an excellent means of motivation and easy students better understanding of social studies lesson. This is because students learn better when all the sense organs are put to use and when learning is not always restricted to the classroom (Obameata et al 1989). Trips may be taken to local industries, banks, museums, court, stores, police station, water pumping plant, telephone exchange, hydro-electric plants, historical sites, art galleries. For field trip to yield maximum success, it must be adequately and carefully planned.
8. **Dramatic Sketches method:** This method tries to make the teaching of social studies real and concrete, by involving the students actively in the teaching, this they do through drama. This method is students centered. Students can dramatize some historical event as if they were present at that time, also societal problems can be dramatized e.g the current trend of corruption. Students with the help of their teacher can dramatized a corrupt policeman, how he collected money from the public. This will educate the students better

on what corruption is all about. Also mock elections can be held in the classroom with the colour and glamour of real election and mock court trials in the classroom may prove interesting to civic class of social studies lesson.

SOME CRITERIA OF GOOD METHODOLOGY

1. It must promote orderliness of instruction, it should at least suggest, if not outline, business-like sequences of procedures for the learning process.
2. It must give unity, focus, or centrality of purpose to educational undertakings. It must facilitate integration or connectedness both within subjects (vertical integration), and among subjects (horizontal education).
3. It must sponsor interest in the educative process. (Implies that students should not be passive recipients, but rather should be active participants in educational undertakings).
4. It must facilitate student contacts with many avenues for achieving valuable insight or understandings, attitudes, appreciation, allegiances, habits and skills.
5. It must facilitate socialized teaching so that students may learn co-operation, group thinking, democratic processes, etc., in more than mere academic terms.
6. It must provide for the co-ordination of learning and the evaluation of achievement.

It must be sufficiently flexible or adaptable to permit the use of various techniques to meet special teaching conditions and sufficiently liberal to accommodate individual differences in pupils, classes and teachers alike.

Conclusion

This paper has discusses the concept of social studies instruction, the central as well as general objectives, teachings methods that social studies teachers can adopt in the effective teaching of the instruction in order to achieve the stated objectives. While social studies instructors tries to adopt good teaching methods some criteria must be considered, these criteria were as well discussed.

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