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PATTERNS OF TEACHER'S INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNIQUES IN SOCIAL STUDIES

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the patterns of teachers' perceptions of which instructional techniques are more effective for teaching social studies in the secondary schools, as well as those factors that largely determine their choice of techniques in teaching. A questionnaire was used to gather data from 30 social studies teachers drawn from 10 secondary schools in Oyo State.

The results show that activity, discussion, simulation and role-playing are those highly rated by teachers. Teaching experience, learners' needs and teachers' exposure are also shown to be the factors that more often influence teachers' choice of teaching methods.

INTRODUCTION

The teacher's single, most fundamental role in the classroom is to effect learning in his students. He does this, essentially, by contriving the right kind of interaction between the students and the content to be learnt, an interaction that results, for the individual student, in the 'acquisition' of the content. The teacher's paramount tool in contriving this relationship is the

teaching method he employs.

Teaching method becomes, therefore, a most indispensable tool in the realisation of education objectives (Dubey, 1980). How the individual learns is as important as if not more than what he learns (Ogunsola, 1983).

The way one learns a certain task is usually determined (or ought to be determined) by the nature of the task. More specifically in relation to school

subjects, the nature of the school subject and of its instructional objectives should determine, or at least influence, how that subject should be learned.

This assertion may have a special importance for social studies, which as an integrated subject that aims at fostering in learners a more profound understanding of man's interaction with his physical and social environments (Obebe, 1980; Ogunsanya, 1984; Mansaray, 1991) is in many ways unique in the school curriculum. The ultimate goal of social studies is to develop in young learners the requisite competencies, skills, outlooks and attitudes that would enable them to function as 'effective' citizens who understand the problems of their society and can appropriately address those problems. This goal is to be achieved, largely through classroom teaching. How our students are being taught in social studies lessons becomes, therefore, a matter that must command a great deal of attention if the objectives of social studies are to be achieved.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

There was a serious controversy among teachers, educators as well as researchers in education as regards the pre-eminence of one over the other among the two key aspects of any teaching subject. These are the mastery of the content and methods of teaching.

In their own observation, Bining and Bining (1952) observed that "some scholars in arguing for either side have maintained extreme positions". Some of the scholars maintained that, for a teacher to teach effectively, all he needs to do is to master all there is to know in terms of content of the subject. The argument was that when the teacher has effectively mastered the content, he would be able to impact the knowledge easily to the pupils.

On the other hand, another group of scholars held the view that it might be presumptuous to conclude that once a person acquires all available information on a subject matter, he will necessarily make an efficient or effective teacher.

It was the view of this group of scholars that how to teach is more important than what to teach. Their argument was that a teacher could gather as much information on a topic as he possibly could; if he is deficient in how to communicate same to the learners, the objective of the lesson may never be achieved.

However, Branon (1971), presented what can be called a 'common-sense' view on the debate; that both content and methods go hand in hand and one is as important as the other. According to him, a teacher can hardly teach what he does not know; still not all excellent scholars make good teachers. Thus for a teacher to be effective, he needs to be in good control of

both the content of the subject he teaches and the methods of teaching it.

The teaching methods employed in social studies are very important. The integrated nature of the social studies had made it imperative for teachers to adopt certain methods in teaching the subject.

Ogunsanya (1984) noted that social studies is a practical subject and that the whole society constituted its laboratory. It is thus imperative for social studies teachers to master properly the use of the various methods available for teaching the subject, so as to achieve its desirable diverse objectives.

In proposing a number of methods and techniques for teaching social studies, therefore, Aina et al (1982) identified some methods for effective organisation of social studies programme.

Those methods identified by them include the following: Lecture method or Expository method, Discussion method, Problem-solving method, Project method, Case-Study method, Inquiry method, Dramatisation method, Simulation method, Role Playing method, and Activity method.

Taken as a whole, the available research evidence suggests that the use or significant superiority of one teaching method over the other is inconclusive and inconsistent. It is therefore pertinent that further researches under better controls,

larger samples, better instrument; significant differences among the various teaching strategies. This therefore necessitated this research effort.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

This exploratory study sought to identify those teaching methods, which social studies teachers generally prefer in teaching their lessons. The aim of the study was to get social studies teachers themselves to indicate, from a list of methods, those they prefer or do not prefer in teaching social studies, and to infer from such indications what the general perceptions of teachers are with regard to the relative 'value' of each method in realising the objectives of social studies teaching. Specifically, the following research questions were addressed:

1. Do social studies teachers have preference for specific teaching methods?
2. If yes, what are the reasons for such preferences?
3. What are those criteria considered most fundamental by social studies teachers in choosing their methods?

The underlying assumption in this study is that social studies teachers are familiar with the different teaching methods described here. It is also assumed that being practising teachers, they are aware of what factor or factors to consider in choosing

their teaching methods.

HYPOTHESES TESTED

The following hypotheses were tested in this study. They are stated in null form as follows:

- (i) There will be no relationship between years of teaching experience in social studies and preference of methods by the teachers.
- (ii) There will be no relationship between exposure to social studies course or courses and frequency of use of methods by social studies teachers.
- (iii) There will be no relationship between needs consideration and frequency of use of methods by social studies teachers.
- (iv) There will be no relationship between the classroom interaction and the frequency of use of methods by social studies teachers.

SUBJECTS

A total of 10 secondary schools were randomly selected from all the secondary schools in Oyo State. For the purpose of sampling, the researcher consulted a list of secondary schools in the Oyo State Teaching Service Commission. Finally, 10 secondary schools were used for this study from which the researcher randomly selected an

average of 3 social studies teachers teaching J.S. I-III. The respondents involved in the study were therefore 30 in all. The subjects consist mainly of social studies teachers in the selected secondary schools.

PROCEDURE

The researchers constructed a questionnaire for social studies teachers. The questionnaire was mainly to elicit responses on awareness and preferences of methods of teaching by social studies teachers at the secondary school level. Other items in the questionnaire were to elicit responses on other variables, e.g:

- (a) teachers' qualification
- (b) area of specialisation
- (c) teaching experience in social studies, and
- (d) other problems militating against the effective teaching of social studies.

These variables are likely to have some influence on the teachers' awareness and preference of method of teaching social studies in the secondary schools.

The researcher visited all the schools included in the sample. The questionnaires were administered personally to at least three (3) social studies teachers in each school. The teachers were

assured that the information given by them was purely for research purposes and hence will be treated in utmost confidence.

ANALYSIS

This is a correlational study. The responses in section B, Questions 7 and 8 (Classroom Interaction and Preference of Methods) and Section C (Needs Consideration) are on Likert type scale. The values range from 5 (strongly agree) to 1 (strongly disagree). While the values of responses in Question 8 (u) range from 5 (used all the time) to 1 (not known at all), the responses on Exposure to Social Studies course or courses coded Yes or No were given the values of Yes 2 and No 1. The Pearson's product Moment Correlation Coefficient formula was used and the results were tested on a probability level of .05.

The test of significance was used in the decision of all the hypotheses for discussion purpose only, not for rejecting or accepting the hypotheses. An attempt was also made to show the mean scores of the frequency of the use of methods in determining their ranking. The methods were ranked from 1st position to 10th position according to their mean score. Lastly, the needs consideration was also ranked to show which of the needs were given higher consideration by the social studies teachers.

RESULTS

Teaching Experience and Preference of Methods. The result of the correlation of the social studies teachers' experience calculated mean, with their preference of methods is presented in Table II.

The 'r' value here is -0.28 (Table II), indicating a negative relationship between the two variables. The research hypothesis is therefore not accepted with this result. The result shows that teaching experience does influence frequency of use of methods but rather it shows a negative relationship.

This result, though surprising is not totally unexpected. Although one would have expected that teachers that have a higher number of years of experience in teaching would be able to adopt the most suitable methods yet, this was not so. This result then confirmed Dada's (1999) observation that "the more years teachers put in service, the more they become redundant and they do not want to change to new innovations in teaching". They continue to use old methods and so they resist any attempt to change.

According to Fraser (1957) this same fact can be upheld. When asked to comment on factors limiting the development of the social studies curriculum, according to Fraser (1957), one educator replied that his school system was not hampered by

legal restrictions but rather by '... self imposed standards by teachers and tradition deeply implanted in our culture'.

Table III shows the result on the second hypothesis. The result of the correlation of the social studies teachers' exposure to social studies course/courses and the preference of use of methods.

The result on the second hypothesis is highly welcomed. The result shows a positive relationship between exposure to social studies course or courses and teachers' choice of teaching methods. This result is not surprising because a majority of the teachers did their N.C.E in history or other related discipline of the social sciences, and they were exposed to social studies course or courses during the period of training. This would have grounded them in the rudiments of methodology of teaching social studies. This result confirmed that of Ogunsola (1983) that the degree of exposure to the use of methods does influence the perception of the teachers in their choice of methods in teaching social studies.

Table IV shows the result on the relationship between needs consideration and frequency of use of methods by social studies teachers.

This result shows a positive relationship between these two variables. The findings revealed that there is a

relationship between needs consideration and frequency of use of methods by social studies teachers.

The result is not strange going by the result on the second hypothesis which showed a positive relationship between exposure of the social studies teachers and the frequency of use of methods adopted by those teachers. Possible explanations for the result is that since these teachers were exposed to social studies course or courses they were able to perceive the needs to be considered in their choice of methods of teaching social studies.

Although the result calculated at 'r' value was positive ($r = 0.077$) (Table III), this result is however low. The result shows that although these two variables are related, the relationship is weak. This agrees with the general indication in the literature that all necessary factors are often not considered in choosing a teaching method, and that where they are considered, only a very few (and often the least important) do decide the eventual selection of the method(s) employed in teaching.

Table V shows the result of the fourth hypothesis. That is the relationship between classroom interaction and frequency of use of methods.

The research hypothesis is not accepted with this result. However, the result shows that there is a relationship, but the

relationship is negative.

The result on the fourth hypothesis shows a negative relationship between the classroom interaction and the frequency of use of methods by social studies teachers. Social studies teachers are expected to contrive a stimulating teaching environment to facilitate the effective teaching and learning of social studies content.

A possible explanation for this result is that, although the teachers may be aware of the necessary teaching methods, yet because of other factors such as time, non-availability of materials, increasing number of students, which Salawu (1982) identified as some of the problems that may prevent a teacher from using the relevant methods even if the teacher has a good perception and awareness of the necessary methods, they may not be able to contrive a better classroom interaction.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In examining the mean scores of each of the methods as preferred by the teachers, the calculated mean scores showed that activity method, discussion method, as well as simulation and inquiry methods ranked first, second and third respectively. The findings of this study suggests that teachers of social studies now use relevant methods

because of the right exposure of the teachers. Although we have those teachers who still demonstrate ignorance as to the objectives of social studies as different from the separate subjects of the social sciences, yet the result in this study is encouraging.

On the basis of the findings in this study, particularly on the first and fourth hypotheses, it is suggested that a greater effort is still needed in getting teachers who are specialists in social studies. In training those teachers, their trainers should endeavour to familiarise their trainees with the various methods of teaching social studies.

To achieve its aims as citizenship education, it is hereby recommended that Government through the Ministries of Education should support those who show willingness in going to higher institutions to study social studies. This is imperative in the present situation where social studies experts are not available to handle the subject as expected. Also, opportunity for in-service training and study leave should be given to the social science subject specialists who show their interest and willingness to go for further studies in the area of social studies education. These will promote the teachers' interest, and serve as incentives for the handlers of the subject.

Table I:

METHOD	RANKING ACCORDING TO PERCENTAGE
Activity	95%
Discussion	92%
Role Playing	91%
Inquiry	90%
Simulation	89%
Dramatization	86%
Problem Solving	86%
Lecture	77%
Project	75%
Case Study	72%

Table II:

Variables	X	S.D.	r'
T.E.	8.5	4.89	-0.28
F.U.	3.5	0.23	

$N = 30, df = 28, P = 105, r' < 1.96$
 $\therefore r'$ is significant at 0.05

The 'r' value here is -0.028, indicating a negative relationship between the two variables. The research hypothesis is therefore not accepted with this result. The result shows that teaching experience does influence frequency of use of methods but rather it shows negative relationship.

Table III:

Variables	X	S.D.	'r'
Exp.	1.7	0.47	0.23
F.U.	3.59	0.23	

N = 30, df = 28, P = .05; 'r' < 1.96

∴ 'r' values here is 0.23 indicating a positive relationship between the two variables. The research hypothesis is upheld with this result.

Table IV:

Variables	X	S.D.	'r'
*N.C.	4.11	0.36	0.077
F.U.	3.59	0.23	

N = 30, df = 28, P = .05; 'r' < 1.96

∴ 'r' is significant at 0.05

*N.C. = Needs Consideration.

The 'r' value here is 0.077, indicating a positive but weak relationship between the two variables. This upholds the research hypothesis.

Table V:

Variables	X	S.D.	'r'
*C.I.	3.17	0.32	-0.171
F.U.	3.59	0.23	

N = 30, df = 28, P = .05; 'r' < 1.96

*C.I. = Classroom Interaction.

The 'r' value here is -0.171, indicating a negative relationship between the two variables.

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