

Impact of Community-Based Instruction on Implementation of Social Studies Curriculum in Secondary Schools in Abakaliki Education Zone of Ebonyi State

Ven. S. C. Nnamani, Ph.D, Ogene A. Oyibe, Ph.D

^{1,2}*Department of Arts & Social Science Education, Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki, Nigeria*

Abstract: *Schools in Nigeria, have for long functioned as if they are separate institution rather than an integral part of the host community which deprive them access to surplus available resources in the host community to improve their instruction. Most of the available instructional strategies employed by teachers in implementation of Social Studies curriculum content unfortunately, separate schools from the realities of their own communities. Against this background, this study set to determine the impact of community-based instructional strategy to implementation of Social Studies curriculum in secondary schools. Three purpose of the study and three research questions were formulated that guided the study. The design of this study was descriptive survey research design. The study was conducted in Abakaliki educational zone of Ebonyi State and the researcher adopted simple random sampling technique to select 360 respondents for the study. Questionnaire was used to collect data and data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation for all research questions. The findings of the study revealed that rationale for using community-based instruction is to provide cross-cultural learning experiences for students, ensure that students learn by joining theory with practical experience and thought with action and to prepare students for their careers/continuity education and to foster a re-affirmation of students' careers choices; that the use of community-based instructional strategy enhances teachers' productivity in instructional delivery, teachers the opportunity to enrich their instruction with community-based materials, interpret instructional activities to the learners' own dialect, in-depth explanation of complex Social Studies concept, opportunities for acquiring skills of improvisation and assist in building self-confidence in Social Studies teachers while in classroom and provides channels for students to learn at their own pace, platform to interpret lesson with concrete evidence from their environment, opportunities for students to acquire skills of problem-solving, help students to interpret instructional activities on their own dialect, simplifies teaching and make learning of Social Studies contents more realistic. Based on these findings, some recommendations were made.*

Keywords: *Community-based instruction; Social Studies Curriculum and Implementation*

I. Introduction

Over the years, schools in Nigeria have been faced with the task of providing students with the necessary tools for lifelong learning. In addition, Oyibe and Nnamani (2014:1) pointed out that "one of the challenges for Social studies teachers in Nigerian educational system is to meet the individual needs of students in a classroom setting characterized by multiple levels of ability, skills, attitudes, behaviours, interest, emotion, social and physical development". In reality, students occupy a central place in all matters concerning education, ranging from planning, development and implementation of a curriculum to pedagogic methods and strategies. Their psychological disposition, socio-economic status as well as the level of his physiological wholesomeness and educational background influence and sometimes even determine what an educational practice is or should be. Every learner is therefore an inevitable factor in the implementation of Social Studies curriculum. This probably informed the view of Awe in Fadiye (2005:6) who held that, "...Social Studies is a discipline if properly programmed and effectively taught should help to solve social problems that are facing developing countries like ours (Nigeria) where the old norms are fast losing their grips and without any effective substitute to replace them". Ikwumelu and Oyibe (2014) added that if teachers in classroom effectively teach Social Studies curriculum content, it will instill in the students inquiring spirit that will bring about development of values in their own learning.

Social Studies being a problem-solving discipline focuses on the problems affecting the students and the solutions to those problems with the ultimate aim of effecting an improvement or total change in man-environment interrelationship. Siler (1998) explained that teachers tend to use only one teaching style day after day, which denies students the opportunity of a variety of teaching methods. Explaining further, Ellis, Fouts and Glenn (1992) stated that teachers often rely solely on lecture method, assignment and traditional tests that have no base in the students' community as methods of teaching and learning. However, researches findings have

revealed that students have more interest in a topic when a variety of teaching methods are implemented (Slavin, 1995; Byford and Russell, 2006 and Chiode and Russell, 2006).

Thomas (1995) observed that students who possess a variety of methods to approach learning will have greater chance of becoming independent and strategic learners. As students learn differently and their needs vary, using only one instructional strategy is not most effective. Teachers can use strategies to help students learn, assess the degree of learning, and determine how well a learner has transferred the strategy into a personal learning tool. The learning environment must take students beyond rote learning into a level of discovery and exploration. School should incorporate into their instructional programmes the strategies which will assist students in reaching the academic expectations. Social Studies instruction should begin with teacher modeling, proceed to student implementation with corrective feedback, and be followed by the student completing the task independently. Through these processes, students will have the opportunity to internalize the strategies presented to them and be able to interpret the curriculum content of Social Studies correctly and encourage its meaning. Since Social Studies is one of the core subjects in the Nigerian educational system, it should be able to inculcate basic values necessary for societal development. For this to be achieved there must be effective instructional programme that will ginger and stimulate the actions of students to learn.

Social Studies instructions are most often based on an expanded horizons approach, in which students focus on the community only in early grades, with cursory references in the following years as the focus of Social Studies moves to "larger and seemingly more significant world" (Schug and Berry, 1984). While the local community is usually studied at some point in the secondary school Social Studies curriculum that is not often a central organizing theme. Schools have for long functioned as if they are separate rather than integral part of the community. Muth and Senesh (1977) argued that existing Social Studies curriculum, unfortunately, "separate school from the realities of their own communities". For example, politics and political process in most schools focus on state and national political institutions without providing students with opportunities to examine the political processes of their own communities. Mezieobi in Bozimo and Ikwumelu (2008) opted to say that Social Studies is a formalized, correlated or integrated study of man and his environment which involves the learner with the cognition, skills, values, attitudes, and competencies that will enable him become an informed, rational, analytical, participative and functional citizen. Community is a place where the child will function after schooling and therefore, it is imperative to base the instructions of Social Studies on community resources.

The underlying consideration in taking a decision as regards choice of the most suitable method for implementation of Social Studies curriculum content in the classroom setting is however the individual differences of the learners and the teacher's ability to identify and respect these differences and apply his instructional methods and materials appropriately. While some learners are inclined to learning with ease via particular method or set of methods, others learn with reduced anxiety when the instruction is community based. This makes community-based instruction both necessary and important in the implementation Social Studies curriculum content.

Community -based instruction (CBI) is defined as a regular and systematic instruction in meaningful functional, age, appropriate skills in integrated community settings, using naturally occurring materials and situations (Nisbet, 1992). It is a critical component of the education programmes for students primarily because, as adults, the community is where they will need to utilize the skills they acquired during their school years. The expectation is that our students will live, work, shop, and play in integrated environments in the community, and that they will participate, either independently or with accommodations and supports, in typical activities across a variety of setting. Community- based instruction otherwise called service learning has been identified as an effective approach for teaching and functional life skill, to students who exhibit a wide variety of learning abilities. Instruction in community settings increases the generalization of skills learned in the classroom setting and can increase the rate of acquisition of new skills through applied practice. (Certo, Haring & York, 1984).

Community-based instruction (CBI) is designed for students that need intensive instruction in functional and daily living skills. Community-based instruction is educational instruction in naturally occurring community environments providing students "real life experiences". Winter (2009) opines that the goal is to provide a variety of hands on learning opportunities at all age levels to help the student acquire the skills to live in the world today. CBI expediencies allow students to see, hear, smells, and do things in real life setting that are very abstract. Doing things in the natural environment is concrete, reinforcing, and assists in providing educational relevance for the students.

The approaches of Community-Based Instruction offer an alternative to the student who enjoys working with people to achieve a set instructional objective and uses the community in a partnership with the school. The expediencies may be short-term or long-term and must be corded through the school with instructional expectation clearly defined. According to Graphardt institute for public service (2009: 52), "the approaches to community-based instruction comprise the following: Field studies, Mentoring/ Apprenticeship, Networking, Service learning and, Shading".

Mentoring: This is a teaching strategy in which highly experienced teacher in a school is assigned a number of less-experienced ones to serve as their mentors or professional guides. This is like the Peer in-service Approach (PISA) which is a self-help in-service Approach that drastically reduces the cost of training programmes in Local Government Area. Mentoring in this context is the matching of students with a person in the community. Their relationship can be from a variety of different perspectives (e.g., cultural, social, shared interest in computers). **Apprenticeship:** This strategy matches student with community people collaborative work projects. This approach is helpful to student who can learn best through visualizing and imitating. The trade industry often uses the concept of apprenticeship through on-the-job-training. Cooperative education is the method of instruction that uses parallel or alternating pattern of paid work experience with period of school attendance. A training agreement and a training plan are drawn up between the school, the student, parents of a minor, to the employer to work and school experience are planned and correlated to meet the student's specific occupational goals. Student experiences include professional or technical learning, or personal services, such as a day-care center.

Networks are formed to facilitate researching information. Involving students in a network is motivational, meets the needs of many students and facilitate interdisciplinary learning. Networking, via telecommunication allows students to collect data not only in their school or community but also around the state, country, and the global world. Service-learning is a teaching and learning strategy that integrates meaningful community service with instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen communities. Through service-learning, young people- from kindergarten to college students-use what they learn in classroom to solve real-life problems. They not only learn the practical applications of their studies, they become actively contributing citizens and community members through the service they performed. Graphardt Institute for Public service opines that service learning can be applied in wide variety of settings, including schools, universities, and community-based and faith based organizations. It can involve a group of students, a classroom or the entire school. Example of service-learning are, understanding of pollutions, creating a healthy cookbook, understanding the consequences of poor nutrition and lack of exercise, opening of a fruit and vegetable stand for the school and community. This help the student and community to involve in transformative experiences.

Shadowing is a short-term experience that provides the student an opportunity to observe the events that occur within work content. Take for instance, a student studying government might know the mayor at a town meeting or one studying health might shadow a health care professionals. Social Studies as a curricular offering, possesses some attributes that render its conceptualization and pedagogy amenable to constant change. For example, its major themes which include, man, his environment, his interrelationship with his environment as well as the problems emanating from such interrelationship, are all prone to constant changes. As a result of this, all the elements of Social Studies curriculum and implementation are expected to change in consonance with the fluidity of the discipline's themes. It is upon this very background this study was designed to ascertain the impact of Community-based instruction on implementation of Social Studies curriculum content in secondary schools in Abakaliki educational zone of Ebonyi State.

II. Research Questions

Three research questions were designed by the researchers that guided the conduct of this study. The questions are:

1. What is the rationale behind application of community-based instruction to implementation of Social Studies curriculum content in secondary schools?
2. In what way could the use of community-based instruction to implementation of Social Studies curriculum improve teachers' instructional performance in classroom?
3. In what way could the use of community-based instruction to implementation of Social Studies curriculum improve students' learning of Social Studies content?

III. Methodology

The design of this study was descriptive survey research design. Descriptive survey research design aimed at collecting data from the respondents without manipulating any variable (Ali, 1996). The design was aimed ascertaining information on the impact of community-based instruction on teaching and learning of Social Studies in secondary schools in Abakaliki Educational Zone. The study was conducted in Abakaliki educational zone of Ebonyi State and the researcher adopted simple random sampling technique to select thirty (30) public secondary schools in Abakaliki Educational Zone, two (2) Social Studies teachers and ten (10) students were selected from each school totaling three hundred and sixty (360) respondents for the study. The instrument used for data collection was questionnaire and data were analyzed using mean and standard deviation for all research questions. The items that had mean scores above 2.50 were accepted while items that had mean score below 2.50 were rejected.

IV. Results and Discussions

Research question 1: What is the rationale for the use of community-based instruction to implementation of Social Studies curriculum content in secondary schools? Data collected from item 1-9 were used to answer the research question. Summary of result of data analysis were presented in table 1.

Table 1: Mean responses of respondents on the rationale for the use of community-based instruction to implementation of Social Studies curriculum content in secondary schools

S/No	Questionnaire Items	X	SD	Decision
1	To ensure students learning by joining theory with experience and thought with action	2.96	0.59	Agreed
2	To give students the opportunity to do important and necessary work	3.00	0.60	Agreed
3	To help students to see the relevance of the academic module to the real world	3.05	0.65	Agreed
4	To better prepare students for their careers/continuity education and to foster a re-affirmation of students' careers choices	2.85	0.57	Agreed
5	To make student become a functional citizens	2.83	0.56	Agreed
6	To make Social Studies contents more realistic goal	3.30	0.66	Agreed
7	To provide cross-cultural learning experiences for students	2.97	0.59	Agreed
8	To identify the challenges of the society or community	3.02	0.61	Agreed
9	To increase the civic and citizenship skills of students which will enhance their self-esteem and self-confidence	3.04	0.59	Agreed

The grand mean of all items in table 1=3.00

The results of data analysis presented in table 1 revealed that the respondents agreed that all the items in the table are the rationale for the use of community-based instruction to implementation of Social Studies with a grand mean 3.00 which is greater than 2.50 set as the mean for decision rule. In the table, it is observed that the respondents agreed that rationale for using community-based instruction is to provide cross-cultural learning experiences for students, ensure that students learn by joining theory with practical experience and thought with action and to prepare students for their careers/continuity education and to foster a re-affirmation of students' careers choices among others. These findings, re-affirmed the view of Winter (2009), who maintained that the goal is to provide a variety of hands on learning opportunities at all age levels to help the student acquire the skills to live in the world today. These skills acquired are expected to assist students live, work, shop, and play in integrated environments in the community, and participate, either independently or with accommodations and supports, in typical activities across a variety of setting. This is why community-based instruction is otherwise referred to as service learning which has been identified as an effective approach for teaching and functional life skill, to students who exhibit a wide variety of learning abilities.

Research Question 2: In what way could application of community-based instruction to implementation of Social Studies curriculum improve teachers' instructional performance in classroom? Data collected from item 10-19 were used to answer the research question. Summary of result of data analysis were presented in table 2.

Table 2: Mean responses of respondents on impact of community-based instruction on teachers' instructional performance

S/No	Questionnaire Items	X	SD	Decision
10	Community based instruction enhance productivity in the classroom	3.13	0.66	Agreed
11	It gives teachers the opportunity to enrich their instruction with community-based materials.	3.10	0.61	Agreed
12	It helps teachers to see the relevance of the community-school relationship	3.02	0.55	Agreed
13	It helps teachers to interpret instructional activities to the learners' own dialect	3.03	0.57	Agreed
14	It assist teachers to give in-depth explanation of complex Social Studies concept	3.01	0.56	Agreed
15	It makes the implementation of Social Studies contents more realistic	3.04	0.59	Agreed
16	It aids the development of Social Studies teachers' pedagogical skills	3.16	0.66	Agreed
17	It provides opportunities for acquiring skills of improvisation	3.07	0.61	Agreed
18	It assists in building self-confidence in Social Studies teachers while in classroom.	3.11	0.62	Agreed
19	It leads teachers to discovery of area of interest and its development	3.09	0.61	Agreed

The grand mean of all items in table 2=3.07

The results of data analysis presented in table 2 revealed that the respondents agreed that all the items in the table are the impact of community-based instruction on teachers' instructional performance to implementation of Social Studies curriculum with a grand mean 3.07 which is greater than 2.50 set as the mean for decision rule. In the table, it is observed that the respondents agreed that the use of community-based instruction to implementation of Social Studies curriculum enhances: teachers' productivity in instructional delivery, teachers the opportunity to enrich their instruction with community-based materials, interpret instructional activities to the learners' own dialect, in-depth explanation of complex Social Studies concept, opportunities for acquiring skills of improvisation and assist in building self-confidence in Social Studies teachers while in classroom. These findings are in line with the observation made by Ikwumelu and Oyibe (2011) that, utilization of instructional methods that are community based create the opportunity for teachers and students to internalize the strategies used and be able to interpret the curriculum content of Social Studies correctly and encourage its meaning. Community-based instruction provides on-the-job training for teachers that in turn enhance their pedagogic skills, attitudes and knowledge.

Research Question 3: In what way could the use of community-based instruction to implementation of Social Studies curriculum improve students' learning of Social Studies content? Data collected from item 20-28 were used to answer the research question. Summary of result of data analysis were presented in table 3.

Table 3: Mean responses of respondents on impact of community-based instruction on students' learning of Social Studies content

S/No	Questionnaire Items	X	SD	Decision
20	Community based instruction provides channels for students to learn at their own pace	3.52	0.55	Agreed
21	It provides students with the platform to interpret lesson with concrete evidence from their environment.	3.45	0.58	Agreed
22	It helps students to see the relevance of their community in the wider society	3.05	0.65	Agreed
23	It helps students to interpret instructional activities on their own dialect	3.48	0.57	Agreed
24	It localize instruction and promote mother-tongue thereby making learning interesting	3.38	0.63	Agreed
25	It simplifies teaching and make learning of Social Studies contents more realistic	3.46	0.59	Agreed
26	It leads students to discovery of area of interest and its development	3.45	0.60	Agreed
27	It provides opportunities for students to acquire skills of problem-solving	3.47	0.57	Agreed
28	It assists in building self-confidence in Social Studies students while dealing with learning tasks	3.15	0.62	Agreed

The grand mean of all items in table 3=3.38

The results of data analysis presented in table 1 revealed that the respondents agreed that all the items in the table are the rationale for the use of community-based instruction to implementation of Social Studies with a grand mean 3.38 which is greater than 2.50 set as the mean for decision rule. In the table, it is observed that the respondents agreed that the use of community-based instruction to implementation of Social Studies curriculum provides: channels for students to learn at their own pace, platform to interpret lesson with concrete evidence from their environment, opportunities for students to acquire skills of problem-solving, help students to interpret instructional activities on their own dialect, simplifies teaching and make learning of Social Studies contents more realistic. These findings of the study is in line with the observation of Certo, Haring & York (1984) that community-based instruction has been identified as an effective approach for teaching and functional life skill, to students who exhibit a wide variety of learning abilities. Instruction in community settings increases the generalization of skills learned in the classroom setting and can increase the rate of acquisition of new skills through applied practice.

V. Conclusion

The findings exposed chains of knowledge to the Social Studies teachers on the impact of teaching students functional skills on the student natural occurring environments which will help to implement effectively the current Social Studies curriculum in junior secondary schools. The study also provides curriculum planners with reasons to plan a curriculum which will reflect the social values of the community in order to improve the quality of instruction.

Following the analysis and findings of the study, it could be concluded that if community-based instruction is adequately applied in Social Studies, it will go a long way in ensuring functional and competent students who can withstand any challenges from their environment and if adequately utilized will help to inculcate skills, values, desirable attitudes, and worthwhile behaviour necessary for effective citizenship in the

society. It implies that adequate selection and use of adequate techniques, methods and strategies for teaching and learning of Social Studies should be introduced.

VI. Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

- Teachers should endeavor to integrate what goes on in the school to the wider community of students as they are meant to function in their community after schooling.
- Seminars, conferences, and workshops should be organized to re-educate teachers of Social Studies on the knowledge of community-based instruction as well as other methods of teaching Social Studies in the secondary school levels.
- Community resources should be used as part of instructional materials for teaching and learning of Social Studies.
- Teachers should equally from time to time use community as part of recreation during instruction.

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