
**Assessment of Teaching Methods and Academic Achievement of Students in
Social Studies**

BY

Monday H. LINUS, Ph.D
Faculty of Education
Golden Gate University
536 Mission Street
San Francisco, CA 94105
California

ABSTRACT

The study seeks to investigate the various assessments of teaching methods and the academic achievement of students in social studies. Students' opportunity to become active by observation, studying relationships, and manipulating objects relies on the teaching methods employed by the teachers and counselors of academic disciplines. The types of teaching methods investigated in this study are: the discussion method of teaching, the lecture method of teaching, and the field trip method of teaching. These methods of teaching were comprehensively treated in this study and proved sustainable to students' academic achievement in social studies. In the same vein, the study concluded that the discussion teaching method has a positive effect on the academic performance of junior secondary school students in social studies. Also, the study concludes that the field trip teaching method exerts an influence on the academic performance of junior secondary school students in social studies. The same case is applicable to the lecture teaching method on the academic performance of junior secondary school students in social studies. One of these recommendations was that appropriate teaching strategies should be adopted by teachers in order to motivate students to higher performance.

KEYWORDS: Teaching Methods and Students' Academic Performance

Introduction

Good achievement in schooling could be the partial contribution of a teaching method used by the teacher. According to Adodo (2007), one key overriding factor for the success of students' academic achievement is the teacher and the teaching adopted by him. According to Ibrahim (2000), teachers' role in preparing students to succeed in examinations cannot be undermined. Attention has been pointed to the quality of social studies teachers as the prime factor attributed to the cause of students' consistent poor academic achievement in examinations. Adepoju (2002) reported that a significant relationship exists between teachers' variables such as area of specialization, possession of academic qualification in education and the learning outcomes of junior school students. The teachers adopt good teaching methods to ensure students learn effectively in the process of educational pursuit.

Education, by its nature, makes knowledge possible, which is undoubtedly important to effecting the needs of society. Therefore, the measurable success of every human endeavour comes as a result of the formal type of education as its paramount. This formal type of education is effected through some form of teaching. In the act of teaching, there are two parties involved (the teacher and the learner) who work together (the subject matter)

designed to modify the learners' behavior and experience. Teaching requires knowledge of subject content, methods, techniques, and teaching materials to be used to make teaching interesting and effective. This, in fact, is the main objective of education toward which learners are to be helped to grow socially, intellectually, and emotionally (Ademulegun, 2001). Studies have also shown that teachers' teaching methods and experience exert a great influence on the academic achievement of students. Hence, Ilugbusi (2008) showed that teaching method and teaching experience in schools count significantly in the determination of students' achievement in external examinations such as West Africa Senior School Certificate Examination (SSCE), National Examination Council (NECO), National Business and Technical Education Examinations and the Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination. According to them, poor teaching methods and inexperience on the part of the teachers are easily upset and destabilized by unfamiliar situations.

The Discussion Method and Students' Academic Achievement

According to Ilugbusi (2008), pragmatism, as it advocates for progressivism in the educational system, emphasizes the learner as responsible for his or her own learning. Goldsmid (2008), also affirmed that the term "discussion" usually refers to a diverse body of teaching techniques which emphasize participation, dialogue, and two-way communication. The discussion method is one in which the instructor and a group of students consider a topic, issue, or problem and exchange information, experience, ideas, opinions, reactions, and conclusions with one another. There are a variety of ways to stimulate discussion. The use of the discussion method is to make students formulate applications of abstract principles, to gain practice in logic and thinking, to give prompt feedback, and to develop an appetite for further learning.

According to Balogun (2008), a successful class discussion involves planning on the part of the instructor and preparation on the part of the students. Discussion implies involvement. Ideally, the students and the instructor collaborate to meet mutual goals. Many experts further contributed that in this method, children discuss what they know about a given topic, and this method suits subjects like history and debate after reading has been done. In line with this discussion method, Ornstein (2004) gave his opinion that, in a way, discussion implies the participation of pupils in the process of learning by raising issues of their own, contributing ideas, asking questions, and seeking solutions based upon the study and drawing conclusions under the teacher's guidance.

The discussion method follows a guideline for proper usage. Eddie gives the following guidelines for the use of the discussion method: any class must be purposeful in order to keep it from degenerating to the level of idle talk or conversation. This is to say that the discussion of any class must be about something pertinent to the work of the course. The subject under discussion must be within the reach of the participants. This means that the discussion should be centred on issues that are familiar. The pattern of discussion should be circular in nature such that the teacher and the chain of pupils are involved. A good class discussion should have a good facilitator.

The advantages of this method include; giving pupils opportunities to express their views as well as listening to other pupils' view points on the topic for discussion. It encourages slow, shy and dull pupils to participate and hence develop themselves mentally. On many occasions, the discussion method of teaching provides an opportunity for background study, broad courage, and the development of skills. It provides an opportunity for pupils to learn social skills, that is, to co-operate, share views and work harmoniously.

The Lecture Method and Students' Academic Achievement

It is obvious that many good teaching methods encourage pupil activity. Good methods help engage students in making findings about things they did not know. With the adoption of a good method of teaching, the teacher has the opportunity to engage pupils in activities such as information collection and assimilation of available information. According to Sutherland (2009), teaching in the modern university is heavily oriented toward the lecture; in fact, we can say it is without doubt the most important formal teaching method used. The lecture method can loosely be defined as a continuing oral presentation of information and ideas by the professor; it is presumably a synthesis of his own reading, research, and experience, interpreted in light of his own insights. Otherwise defined, it is a teaching method where an instructor is the central focus of information transfer. Typically, an instructor will stand before a class of students and present information for the students to learn. Sometimes, they will write on a board or use an overhead projector to provide visuals for students. Students are expected to take notes while listening to the lecture. Usually, very little exchange occurs between the instructor and the students during a lecture. In close observation, it is the transferring of the notes by the teacher to the notebooks of the students without passing through the minds of either. According to the National Teachers' Institute (2000): The word 'lecture' is derived from the word 'legere,' a Latin word which means 'to give a formal talk prepared and organized in advance.' Obviously, therefore, the use of the method involves the teacher in preparing his lecture notes for use as he teaches the whole class. He delivered his prepared body of information with little or no interruption. Students take down notes or copy the teacher's note at the end of the lecture. At the end of the lecture, a few questions may be asked to clarify a few doubts or confusions.

Eddie in Ekanem (2004), further explains that the lecture method to a very large extent is the traditional method of teaching adults. It is autocratic in form and style. Superficially, it might seem that lectures are the easiest teaching strategy to describe and define, since the lecturer's role is apparently to transmit information. He quoted Obanga saying that a lecture is usually an exposition. The lecturer tells his students what he thinks they should know. The lecturer may contain any combination of cutting what well known authors have written on the topic of the lecture; expressing the lecturer's own opinions demonstrating how something works, or stating arguments in favour of and against or a particular preposition.

According to Wade (1973), many lecturers are dull and the result is that the students lose interest and there is little opportunity for feedback. The National Teachers' Institute (2000), in addition to indicating the weakness of the lecture method, states the following: The lecturer encourages these pupils to be passive receivers of knowledge. The lecturer hardly makes allowances for differing responses or the exercising of the pupils' curiosity. Lectures do not give pupils the opportunity to explore, think and interact with others. The pattern of lecture delivery hardly gives an opportunity for reinforcement to take place. In a lecture method, pupils tend to get bored, as it is only the teacher that is involved in the activity. Lectures alone hardly develop cognitive skills unless pupils later study information presented in a lecture. It does not take into consideration the age and individual differences of each child. Furthermore, because there isn't much opportunity for exchanges during lectures, teachers may not get a true sense of how much students understand. Students who are strong in learning styles other than auditory learning will struggle to be engaged by lectures. Students who are weak in note-taking will have trouble understanding what they should remember from the lectures. In spite of the above-mentioned inadequacies of the lecture method, some merits could also be identified. According to Eddie in Ekanem (2004), the

following merits are identified: It makes fewer demands on the teacher's time and effort for planning and preparation. It provides the teacher with a feeling of security by relying upon the supposed authority of the dispenser of knowledge. It is an efficient means of giving a vast amount of knowledge in limited time. It is relatively cheap to operate, as no special apparatus is needed to channel the thinking of all students in a given direction. Only by helping students understand verbal clues and learning new methods of organizing and taking notes will they truly help them become successful and get the most out of lectures.

Field Trip Method and Students' Academic Achievement

Balogun (1981), explains that field trips are undertaken in order to see practically what has been taught in theory or to let pupils actually discover things by seeing, touching, feeling, smelling or even tasting them. He further explains that in a field trip, the teacher takes his pupils out of the classroom to the scene where what he wants the pupils to learn about can be observed closely. He carefully prepared the pupils beforehand, so that they take note of the various aspects of the topic he wants them to learn. They then go back to the classroom or assemble somewhere else with the teacher to discuss what they have seen. Eddie in Ekanem (2004) further expatiates that it is an excursion taken outside the classroom for the purpose of making relevant observation for the purpose of obtaining some specific information. He further observes that if properly planned, it affords the students the opportunity to become actively engaged in observing, studying relationships, and manipulating objects. According to Ekanem (1988), the advantages of this teaching method are numerous. It satisfies children's interest and curiosity. It offers them a new learning environment other than the classroom. It helps children to see things for themselves. It offers pupils an opportunity for firsthand information. It makes use of more senses of learning. It leaves impressive marks on the memories of the pupils and facilitates a recall. The demerits of this method, according to the National Teachers' Institute (2000), are: If not well planned, pupils might be confused in their observations. It has to be timed. It could lead to idleness among pupils, without proper direction.

Conclusion

Discussion teaching method has positive effect on the academic performance of junior secondary school students in social studies. Also, the study concludes that Field trip teaching method exerts influence on the academic performance of junior secondary school students in social studies. Same case applicable to lecture teaching method on the academic performance of junior secondary school students in social studies. Moreover, good methods help engage students make findings on thing they did not know.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended that:

1. Appropriate teaching strategies should be adopted by teachers in teaching the students in order to motivate them for higher performance.
2. Students should be exposed to field trip in order to give personal experience which is believed to be the best teacher.
3. It is also worthy of note that students should be involved in discussion in the class in order to get them developed academically.

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