

## Achieving Citizenship Education Goal through the Teaching and Learning of Social Studies by Junior Secondary School Students

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### **Abstract**

*Citizenship education is the training of the mind for the production of active, responsible and democratic young individuals who are ready to contribute meaningfully/positively to the growth and development of society. In other words, citizenship education is the preparation of the young adults, so that they possess the knowledge, skills and values which are essential for active, participation in society. This paper therefore examined how citizenship education goal could be achieved through the teaching and learning of social studies. The teacher who is at the centre of instruction in the classroom is responsible for teaching and modeling in junior secondary schools for the production of responsible, active and participating members of the society. The desire of every nation is to produce young good adults for national development. Pedagogy for social studies education to achieve citizenship goal has been explained. Conclusively, a well taught social studies lesson is likely to produce young people who have acquired the basic, knowledge, skills and values for effective citizenship. Recommendations were made among others that social studies as a core subject at the junior secondary school level should be taught in a manner that citizenship education be achieved.*

### **Introduction**

Social studies is an area of the curriculum designed specifically for the study of man and how his problems are solved. It deals with how man can fit into the society by utilizing the necessary attitudes, values and skills. As a result, social studies borrows ideas from the social science subjects to understand, analyze and react to situations. Social studies focuses on the use of critical and reflective thinking to solve the problems that hinder man's survival. It is a course of study devoted to the promotion of citizenship education and reflective inquiry. Social studies has the responsibility for preparing youth for roles as active participants in their various communities (Mezieobi and Domike 2009).

These authors went further to define social studies as a programme of study within the school curriculum which the contents of its programme are based on the needs of the society. Social studies emphasizes the relationship human beings have with each other and with their physical environment. Therefore, the society uses social studies to inculcate in the young ones

the knowledge, skills, attitudes values, and actions it considers important concerning the relationship human beings have with each other, their environment, and themselves. Osakwe (2010) defined social studies as a subject in the school curriculum that engenders sound education of the citizens, as well as inculcates a sense of consciousness and social responsibility. It also inculcates in individuals values of honesty, cooperation and the need of the nation, as well as the desirable skills to solve environmental problems.

### **Relevance of Social Studies in the Society**

Social studies as a process of education which has goals and purposes aimed at preparing youth for responsible citizenship. In order to achieve these goals, social studies trains students and equips them with knowledge, values, attitudes, skills that will aid them in understanding their environment and to take rational decisions as need arises (Rudduck 2013). Social studies equip learners with selected knowledge, skills, attitudes and social actions concerning the relationship people have with each other and the environment in which they live. In other words, according to Thompson (2007), social studies content aids to understand man and how he exists in his environment. It deals with the activities of man at home, in the family, in the village, in school, at workplace, in politics, at play, in religion and in everything or whatever man engages in his efforts to survive in the environment in which he lives.

Social studies as a subject, attempts to investigate man and his struggle for survival in his environment. It provides ways of looking at the society in order to understand its structure, its problems and looks for ways of solving such problems. The relevance of social studies is to focus on human life for the purpose of giving individuals the opportunity to practice solving problems which is of crucial importance to the individuals and the society.

It is not out of place as Osakwe (2010) stated that the knowledge, attitudes and skills which a young adult acquires in the process of studying social studies could help as a mature citizen to take decisions which are useful to such individual and society.

### **Social Studies and Citizenship Education**

The ultimate aim of education is to shape human behaviour. That is why societies all over the world establish educational systems in order to develop/produce citizens who will behave in desirable ways. These desirable behaviours are embedded in education (Alberta 2000). Some of

these behaviours are simple, like skills used in reading; others are more complex like successful consumerism or responsible citizenship (Uchendu, 2007).

Dubey and Barth (1980) viewed citizenship education as indoctrinating the groups in things that society considers valuable. It is the process of inculcating significant cultural behavioural values and knowledge in the individual members of the society. Osborne (2010) concisely defined citizenship as a common understanding beyond legal status, as a member of the state (complete with the rights and benefits associated with membership) and the duties that are expected. Citizenship is situated as intensely value laden embodying a set of ideals that represent what citizens ought to be and how they ought to live in order to enjoy the right of citizenship.

There is a widespread agreement that the appropriate aim of social studies is citizenship education or the preparation of the young people so that they possess the knowledge, skills and values necessary for active participation in society (Ross, 2004). Most social studies teachers justify the existence of this subject in the school curriculum on the ground of citizenship education. Social studies is concerned with the training of citizens who are knowledgeable about physical, cultural, economic and political immediate and distant environments. This training equips them with skills and attitudes for effective participation and contribution to the political and socio-economic development of the society (African Social Studies Programme, Mombassa 1968). More specifically, Nigeria intends to prepare its citizens for effective participation and contribution to the life of the society through social studies Hence, personal contributions to the creation of a United Nigeria ... and to raise a generation of people who can think for themselves, respect the views and feelings of others; respect the dignity of labour, and appreciate those values specified under the broad national aims and live as good citizens (FGN, 2013).

These individuals acquire knowledge, skills, attitudes and experiences in the process of citizenship education earned through social studies.

Merryfield and Subedi (2001) stated that the role of social studies in citizenship education includes the preparation of youth for civic competence. To add to this, social studies goes beyond the traditional construct of knowledge to incorporate more perspectives from diverse global culture. This would explain that social studies is particular about integration of experiences and knowledge concerning human relations for the purpose of citizenship. Their proposition showed that they do not only accept citizenship as the primary purpose of social

studies, but also have some consensus regarding conceptual framework for teaching it. To achieve this, learners need to be actively engaged in their learning. They need this engagement for living a purposeful out of school life. They need to be engaged in classroom and they need to be engaged in activities outside the classroom.

Social studies instruction laced with citizenship education is important in Nigerian Society. For example for one to be a responsible citizen, one needs to be aware of the things that are injurious or environmental hazards and avoid them. Therefore as an area of study, citizenship education enables one to be a useful member of the society and avoid things that can claim lives. It aims at helping one to acquire the necessary skills that would make one active, useful and capable member of one's society. Like environmental education citizenship education helps one to be aware as well as sensitive to the problems of one's society with the aim of finding solutions to them. (Iyewarun, 2009).

Citizenship education with the foundation on social studies is the preparation of young adults for social responsibility. It is also the education through which the youths are taught their rights, privileges and duties, which make them responsible citizens and active members of their society (Lawson 2003). Equally, (Newman 1991) considers citizenship education as educative means which nations employ in integrating their individual members, and in helping them acquire skills and competencies. Speaking broadly Hannam (2013) declared that citizenship education enables one to be at home with one's people armed with the relevant skills and values. It is the type of education that encourages progress and development. This is possible through the teaching/learning of social studies. Hannam stressed. This could also explain why government all over the world have encouraged citizenship as an education that develops various aspects of the individual and equips him with knowledge and skills that would enable him to be useful and contribute positively and meaningfully to his society.

Osborne (2010) further posited that citizenship education is not merely a subject matter that must be taught in schools, but rather a process of active involvement and discovery that is intimately linked to curriculum of social studies and that intensifies the academic experience.

In recent years, the nature of citizenship education has become the focus of considerable public debate in many countries of the world. As old empires dissolve, boundaries shift, ethnic interest reassert themselves and cross-national alliances challenge the primary of the nation-state, as the arbiter of citizens interests, questions inevitably arise concerning the concept of citizenship

in increasingly interdependent and multicultural societies. In a period of such momentous change, there is a profound need for greater understanding among young people, the changing nature of citizenship so that they can take informed decisions as future voters, workers, parents, and community participants (Deuchar, 2013). It is the knowledge gained from social studies instruction that would enable these youths to take this informed decision.

However, the concept of citizenship does not have a unitary character. The notion of citizenship has not remained static as each historic period has developed and transformed the concepts because social and political notions of citizenship are constructed within the hanging cultural environments. Citizenship has multiple dimensions and there are a variety of current discourses that are likely directly or indirectly linked with the citizenship debates at local, national and global levels (Newman 2009).

It is the aim of social studies to help to develop in an individual those unique skills and competences his society cherishes and values. Thus citizenship education prepares individuals to be good citizens and equips them to learn how to engage in the political process, how to pursue power and influence government positively (Iyewarun 2010).

## **Concept on Achieving Citizenship Education**

### **1. Pedagogy for Social Studies Education**

Pedagogy may be conceptualized as the way that subject-matter is selected, organized and presented to learners in an educational context so that teachers can accomplish the educational goals (Okon, 2014). This conceptualization gives pedagogy a more dynamic and holistic perspective. For many people the term “pedagogy” simply means teaching methods, implying teacher-centred or didactic forms of instruction (Print and Smith, 2000). Reporting a research on citizenship lessons in secondary social studies classes Newman (1991) corroborates such a concept and speculated on the reason for such lackluster teaching:

Authentic discourse is usually suppressed by the belief that the purpose of teaching is to transmit fixed knowledge to students so they can reproduce it in identical form to teachers who reward students for playing the game of telling teachers what they want to hear rather than asking and answering questions that students consider important and by enormous efforts to keep order and control over masses of students (p. 359), Newman (1991).

Effective teaching of social studies requires that teachers understand an array of pedagogical strategies which address citizenship education initiatives in a constructive manner in

order to achieve a democratic, civil society. For social studies to achieve its citizenship goal, Print and Smith (2000) asserted that the role of teachers in addressing pedagogical issues and practice is crucial as. This stresses the importance of participative, active learning about civic and citizenship by young people. Hence an active approach to learning by students will be reflected later in an active approach to participative citizens as adults. Learning by doing and exposure to appropriate role models are seen as powerful learning tools. Consequently students who learn citizenship education in schools in a participatory manner are likely to become active citizens to maintain a democratic, civil society. Hannam (2003) speaks of the value of citizenship curriculum which includes participatory opportunities for young people.

Moreover, by creating greater opportunities for young people to participate within school, Rudduck (2013) explained that stronger and more meaningful links be established between the context and process of learning within school and students' lives beyond the school. This assertion is further supported by Deuchar (2013) who argued that in order for students to become truly active citizens in the wider society the foundations of participation need to be laid through a participatory school ethos found in social studies syllabus and the full democratization of classrooms.

Pedagogies can be classified according to the degree in which students are actively engaged in the learning process. At one end of the continuum lie strategies which are learner-passive and cognitive – focused. Here students are directed to learning conceptual tasks through such strategies as traditional expository teaching, document analysis and using audio-visual curriculum materials that is classroom-based, passive-cognitive pedagogies. However, this write up is concerned with the one at the other end of the continuum that is the learner-active, participatory-focused strategies which seek to engage students in the learning process. Example includes role playing, simulations and cooperative learning strategies (Okon, 2007).

### **Classroom-Based, Active, Participatory Pedagogies for Social Studies Classroom**

The fundamental features of participative pedagogies located within the social studies classroom are essentially fourfold;

- (1) Teachers select activities and construct them in ways which require active students participation.
- (2) A task is set or a problem is identified to be solved.

- (3) Students work together to address the issues or resolve the problems.
- (4) The activities are carried out within the classroom under the teacher's supervision.

Among the well-supported strategies are cooperative learning groups, classroom discussions of current events and mini-parliament (Okon 2007). Problem solving, especially exercise using groups is favoured as an appropriate strategies for social studies education. Brophy and Alleman (2008) findings outline the benefits of students taking increasing responsibility for organizing and directing their own learning and encouraged researchers to identify model programmes where the teacher serves as facilitator. Teachers should provide opportunities for students to participate in inquiry processes, engage in collaborative, substantive and reflective discussions; use cooperative learning structures, speaks their minds, listen respectfully to the contributions of others and engage in problem solving and decision making. This instructional model proves to increase motivation, develop valuable skills and enhance learning in students of all ability and grade levels.

With the construction of effective curriculum materials and appropriate teacher professional development, the focus of teaching social studies for citizenship education can be directed successfully towards problem solving pedagogies. Ross (2004) and Alberta (2000) have signified citizenship as the ultimate goal for students in social studies. The intent is for students to become knowledgeable and purposeful responsible citizens. The students develop the skills of citizenship by applying rapidly changing knowledge standards to meet the needs of the nation and the world. This is accomplished, however, primarily within the classroom. These authors view this form of citizenship creation as a simultaneous process of addressing knowledge, skills and attitude objectives. Hence, to become not only a local and national citizen, but also a global citizen in a changing world. Emphasis is thus placed on learning those social studies facts, concepts, generalizations and skills that are useful for lifelong learning and responsible citizenship.

### **Social studies objectives for junior secondary school**

Edinyang (2014) clearly highlighted the objectives of social studies in Nigeria post primary schools (junior secondary level) as centrally developing citizenship education, they are:

1. To create awareness and understanding of our evolving social and physical environment.
2. To develop a capacity to learn basic skills.
3. To ensure the acquisition of relevant body of knowledge and information.

4. To develop a systematic appreciation of the diversity and interdependence of members of local community and wide national and international community.
5. To develop in students positive attitudes of togetherness, comradeship and cooperation towards a healthy nation. Edinyang also observed that social studies curriculum in post primary schools is focused on intellectual development and socialization of man.

### **Teachers' Professional Tasks**

To achieve citizenship goal, teacher factor must be taken into cognizance. The teacher is at the centre of instruction. It is almost a truism that the teacher holds the key to sound education. James (2003) saw the teacher as pivot on which every educational development hangs. The teacher is the spinal cord of educational system at all levels. Central to effective teaching and learning of social studies via citizenship goal is his competency.

The foregoing recall of the view of eminent educators, commissions and the government is to underline the due emphasis place on the teacher as a critical determinant in the continuous search for education. When the curriculum has been developed by the authorized agencies, it is the task of the teacher to interpret the inert curriculum. This involves explaining the prescribed curriculum in order that it could be understood, first by the teacher and next by the learners. This means correctly establishing the scope both in terms of the coverage, breadth and complexity of intellectual demand of the content or subject matter, that is, the breadth and the depth (Etuk, 2011). It is also the responsibility of the teacher to translate the broad goals into behavioural objectives, arrange and organize the contents for continuity, sequence and integration, set up appropriate learning activities for the learners, direct and monitor the learning process, select and apply the teaching aids and materials and determine the learners achievement performance. In other words, it is the responsibility of the teacher to implement the curriculum (Etuk 2011). The degree of success of implementing the curriculum to achieve quality education depends to a large extent on the intellectual ability, experiential horizon, motivation and attitude to work of the teachers (Mkpa, 2005). The point cannot be overemphasized that teachers service delivery system – the way knowledge and skills are taught directly affects students' learning.

In identifying appropriate pedagogy for social studies vis-à-vis citizenship education, the pedagogy/teacher-knowledge based nexus is important. A premise well recognized in education is that the teacher cannot teach effectively that which is not known and “no education can rise above the quality of its teachers” (FRN, 2013). Innovative teachers should employ individualized

problem solving exercises, critical thinking and case studies. Teachers need to reflect upon the relative merits of the comfort obtained by using familiar methods compared with the potential value of using more innovative strategies while teaching social studies for citizenship education. Teachers must be able to educate the students to possess citizenship as a matter of belief (Osborne 2010). Furthermore Osborne argued that teachers are to teach citizenship, teachers and students must take cognizance of the debate that surrounds the concepts. This is significant to the challenges of every nation.

**Table showing how Teachers could use Classroom-Based, Active, Participatory Pedagogies to Teach Citizenship Education Concepts**

<b>Content</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Teacher activity</b>	<b>Type of pedagogy</b>	<b>Student activity</b>	<b>Type of skill, attitude or knowledge acquired</b>
Creating awareness and understanding of the social environment	To find out the position of the people concerning a particular issue or problem.	The teacher gives a specific problem to be investigated by the learners.	Opinion poll	Obtain information from respondents based on the issue being investigated.	Skill of gathering information.
Inspiring	To instill	The best is	Role model	Learners are	Positive

discipline among learners	positive attitude into the learners	for the teacher to lead exemplary live that inculcate in learners the highest virtue of discipline.		encouraged to see their teachers as model	attitude that supports communal living
Acquiring relevant knowledge and information about the society	Learners would be given adequate information concerning their environment.	The teacher gives guideline and directive.	Field trip	Students are to write down notes based on what they see or observe.	Students acquire adequate knowledge about the environment in which they live.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, effective citizenship plays an active role and, therefore, its preparation for this role must be active as well. The most positive contribution a teacher could make to the acquisition of democratic values via citizenship education is to create a classroom climate characterized by a process of giving students freedom to express their opinions. This is more important than any particular content of the curriculum. Hence citizenship education has a major contribution to make to the process of promoting active citizens through social studies teaching. Indeed, this suggests that in order to succeed in securing young people's rights, the development of participants' opportunities for young people both in and beyond classroom is the key.

## Recommendations:

Based on this write-up, the researcher therefore made the following recommendations:

1. Social studies as a core subject at the junior secondary level of learning should be taught in a manner that citizenship education be achieved.
2. For knowledge, attitude and skills to be acquired the pedagogy for teacher-knowledge based nexus is important.

3. The teacher who is at the centre of educational instruction should affect the lives of the learners positively through classroom teaching/learning as well as by modeling.
4. The classroom atmosphere should be conducive enough to enable learners express their views.
5. For a developing country like Nigeria, citizenship education is needed for the production of responsible, active and participating young adults who would contribute positively to the development of the nation.

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