

INSTRUCTIONAL MEDIA FOR EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND LEARNING OF CHRISTIAN RELIGIOUS KNOWLEDGE IN SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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Abstract

The paper discussed the instructional Media for Effective Teaching and Learning of Christian Religious knowledge (CRK) in Senior Secondary Schools. The use of media makes teaching and learning activities more effective, efficient and real. Media are those things that carry information, knowledge, ideas and messages from one person or place to another. Instructional media are devices used by the teachers to transmit instructional content to target audience. Media can be selected purchased or produced by the teacher to attain the instructional objectives. The paper concluded that to select, produce, and utilize mediato enhance meaningful and life long learning, the teacher must be familiar with the principles and criteria guiding media selection, production and use. The paper also made some recommendations.

For instructional activities to take place, there must be one form of communication or the other. Communication is an exchange of ideas, information, knowledge or message. The exchange of information can only be possible through a channel or medium. On this note, media are means through which information, messages or knowledge are transferred from one person to another or one place to another.

In this context, instructional media refers to those carriers of instructional content. They are also known as educational media that transmit instructional content to target audience. Good (1973) in Awotua-Efebo (1999:212) viewed instructional media as:

“any device with instructional content or function that is used for teaching purpose, including books, textbooks, supplementary reading materials, audio-visual and other sensory materials, scripts for radio and television instrumentation programmes for computer-managed package sets of materials for construction or manipulation”

For Ughamadu (1992), educational media could refer to the wide variety of instructional materials such as textbooks, chalkboard, models, mock-up, charts, television, radio and other projected and non-projected devices or tools which bring about effectiveness and efficiency in teaching-learning process and invariably promote and enhance the attainment of instructional objectives. Awotua-Efebo (1999) defined instructional media as anything (materials and equipment) that can help the teacher to communicate effectively his/her ideas to the students so that at the end of instruction, the students can do that which the teacher stated in the objectives. For Awotua-Efebo, these materials and equipment include real objects, projected and non-projected images, models, prints, non-print, etc.

Agun (1988) in Agun and Imogie (1988) defined instructional media as all forms of information carriers, which can be used to record, store, preserve, transmit or retrieve information for purposes of teaching and learning. For Ajayi-Dopemu (1988) instructional media's referred to the various information carriers employed in instruction. According to Ajayi-Dopemu television, radio, teaching machines, textbooks, computers, models and pictures are some of these available instructional media which make it possible for instruction to take place, besides the teachers.

Based on the opinions of scholars, one may rightly state that instructional media are those things that teachers use in order to communicate effectively instructional concepts, principles, philosophy, theories values, and norms to the learner so that at the end, the set educational and specific objectives will be achieved.

There is no doubt that when learners are not aided with media of different classification and modes in teaching and learning, especially in the present phase of technological development, the learner will be faced with insurmountable difficulties to learn. Media have occupied a part of our daily lives that without them, effective instructional communication (communication between teachers and students) becomes difficult.

Human beings are endowed with five sense organs for proper functioning in the society, including the classroom situation. Christian Religious Knowledge teachers ought to sensitize these senses of the learner through the use of instructional media carefully selected or developed on their merits to receive, transmit store and retrieve information to achieve the instructional goals. In the teaching and learning of CRK to obtain high achievement retention and transfer of knowledge for life long learning, the Bible, CRK textbooks, video, radio, television, field trip, models, powerpoint, audio cassettes, pictures, etc are very effective at all levels of education, with particular reference to Senior Secondary education level. They promote and facilitate teaching-learning activities. Furthermore, when properly combined and appropriately used, the

forementioned media could help the teacher to teach more efficiently and effectively and learner to learn faster, better, retain longer and transfer learned material more effectively.

The secondary school, according to National Policy on Education (NPE,2004), is a level of schooling during which children receive secondary education as ascribed in the policy document which involves two stages: Junior secondary school where learners are exposed to both pre-vocational and academic programmes and senior secondary education level that has a comprehensive and core curriculum designed to broaden pupil's knowledge and outlook. This study is on the senior secondary education level.

Importance of Instructional Media

Instructional media are important component in the teaching-learning environment. Teachers and learners can refer to and use them as sources to obtain knowledge, new ideas and to acquire new skills and competences. It is clear that to achieve effectiveness and efficiency in teaching learning process, media must be incorporated. Media can be selected or produced as the case may be to make optimum contribution to the attainment of instructional objectives. Beside using media to enrich the learning capabilities of the learner, media perform the following among other functions in instruction:

1. Media are used to reinforce and enrich the mastery of the subject mater by the students teachers.
2. Media help student teachers to acquire necessary professional (teaching) skills.
3. They help student-teachers to gain confidence more quickly.
4. They promote and enhance the attainment of instructional/objectives
5. Media make learning real and meaningful.
6. They facilitate communication and transfer of ideas.
7. They improve the quality of teaching and learning.
8. Media make the task of the teacher simpler while broadening the scope of interaction with materials.
9. They stimulate and sustain learners' interest.
10. Media make instructional communication more convenient , faster and precise.
11. They may be used in assessing performance skills as in the case of micro teaching.
12. Media can be used as aids to the presentation of instructional content by the teacher.
13. It can be used to promote interaction in the teaching and learning process.

The essence of these media is that they break the parameters imposed by time, place and the traditional pattern of the teacher on instructional activities in the classroom.

Designing and Producing Instructional Media

Instructional media for effective teaching and learning are not always readily available. In line with this, teachers should be conversant with the skills, and principles of designing and producing of some needed instructional media from local material to improve, facilitate and promote teaching learning process. This is in support of the opinion of Shakespeare in Awotua-Efebo (1999:215):when we mean to build, we first survey, then draw the model”.

To be successful in the design and production, the teacher should:

- Have stated objectives.
- Know what to produce
- Be familiar with the materials and facilities required for any meaningful design and production.
- Have a target audience in mind
- Determine the cost of production
- Have a set environment
- Posses basic and relevant skills in design and production
- Design and produce effective media.
- Test the media for effectiveness

(Onyejeemezi, 1987; Ajayi-Dopemiu, 1988, and Ughamadu, 1992)

Criteria for Selection and Use of Instructional Media

Instructional media can only be useful and achieve the set objectives if it is selected in line with the laid down principles and criteria. Criteria to be followed in selecting effective instructional media according to Ughamadu (1992) and Ike (1995) are:

Instructional objective: Teachers’ main target in teaching process is to achieve specific instructional objectives. As a result, the instructional media a teacher selects should be such that will aid him or her achieve the specific instructional objectives in the three domains of educational objectives, though no one medium is ideal for all the objectives. As audio-visual media such as television, video, powerpoint and overheard projector are more appropriate for the achievement of affective and psychomotor domains respectively, visual or audio media such as printed media, charts, boards, radio, teleconferencing, computer etc are effective in achieving cognitive domain.

Availability: It has been difficult responding effectively to the National Policy (2004) emphasis on the application of educational technology in Nigerian schools as a result of scarcity of the needed instructional media. In line with this, the teacher should consider whether the media he or she wants to use are available or within reach, if not, it is meaningless selecting it for instructional purposes.

Practicality: It is important to check whether the media to be used for instructional purpose can be used within the instructional environment because what is applicable in a given environment may not be possible in another environment for certain reasons as in the case of mobile phone networks. One may be tempted to say that some instructional media are subject to environment.

Media Characteristics: What media are made up of determine to a large extent whether they should be selected for instruction or not. To this effect, the teacher should consider whether the media to be used are easy to operate, carry about, repair, durable, sufficient and storable for a long time. In the absence of these qualities, there is no need selecting them for instructional purposes as they will obstruct free flow of information.

Infrastructural Amenities: In selecting media for teaching and learning, it is necessary to call to mind other items that the media require to function properly. For example, television, video, projector, powerpoint, computer etc. need power for operation. So in a situation where electricity or generator is not available, they cannot be selected for class use. Some media also need studio, laboratories, listening and viewing rooms before they can be effectively used.

Learner's Characteristics: Learner is the centre of all curriculum. For any medium to be selected for instruction, it must be in line with the need, age, interest, background, etc of the learner for whom it is meant for. In line with this therefore, the teacher ought to select media that will touch and satisfy individual differences of the learners so as to achieve the specific instructional objectives. In other words, learning style of learners contribute much in their ultimate achievement and should be taken into consideration.

Teacher's Capability: Media operation is as important as their selection for instructional purpose. To this effect, the classroom activity depends much on the teacher's knowledge, skills, competences and resourcefulness. Then, how and when to apply media to achieve the set objective are important and should be considered. Based on this, teachers should up-date their knowledge through seminars, in-service training, workshops and conferences on how best to operate new media and technologies to improve teaching and learning.

Cost: Fund is a big challenge to any reasonable venture. To select any media for classroom utilization, the teacher should consider the financial involvement and see whether he/she or the school management can provide and are willing to spend to procure the needed media for instruction.

Personnel: Two good heads, they say, are better than one. Teachers as actual implementers of school curriculum are not all-knowing. They need other peoples'

knowledge and skills to reach their destination, function properly and achieve their instructional objectives. To this effect, technicians and technologists to repair, maintain and operate media to be selected by the teacher should be available.

Size of the Class: The number of the students in the instructional setting contributes much to the type of media to be used in teaching-learning situation. Some media can be used in teaching both small and large classes such as overhead projector, powerpoint while some are more ideal in teaching only small classes. For example, model, mock-ups, charts, pictures, television, video etc.

Awotua-Efebo 1999:216) outlined three items to consider in selecting media for a lesson. They are: “Who are we teaching? Where are they learning? And what are they learning”

In respect to Awotua- Efebo’s criteria for selection of instructional media for the attainment of specific instructional objectives, it is believable that having full knowledge of the people the media is meant to serve helps the teacher to select those media that are more likely to take care of their individual differences to motivate them more. “*Where*” in the second question refers to the place or environment where the teaching and learning is taking place. This idea guides the teacher to select medium (media) that will be suitable to the environment considering the facilities and space available.

“*What*” with regard to lesson content requires the teacher to have in depth knowledge of the subject matter so that he/she will be able to select a medium that will achieve the set objectives in line with domain (s) of educational objectives. In a nutshell, a teacher should study very well the lesson content and the expected objective, then select an appropriate medium and combine with it the method used in delivering the instructional content/objectives.

Media for Effective Teaching and Learning of Christian Religious Knowledge in Senior Secondary Schools

Christian Religious Knowledge (CRK) is an art subject that is so abstract that learners most of the time, don’t gain enough experience from oral teaching only. As a result, the teaching and learning of the subject appear to be ineffective. This may lead to frustration, poor performance and lack of interest for the subject is taught mainly with lecture method, memorization, storytelling, dramatization, and role-play. So, as long as the process of instructional communication depended more upon the range of human voice, eye and ear, and as the society continues to advance and develop, it calls for more advanced media in this era of knowledge explosion and large population in classes which can sensitize both the eye, ear and emotion in transferring of CRK concepts, principles, philosophy, theories, values and norms to learners to improve its teaching-learning, achievement, retention and transfer of knowledge. Some of the media that can

facilitate CRK teaching and learning are: television, video, power point, overhead projector, Bible, CRK textbooks, radio, field trip, models, audio cassettes and pictures.

Television

Television is an electronic mass medium. It can be programmed as recorded video to present instructional content to the learner. Television takes direct teaching of the desired subject as in the case of Christian festivals such as Christmas, Easter, Triumphant Entry (Christ the King) of Jesus into Jerusalem, the Last Supper, etc, are televised to educate learners on the likely event surrounding the festival.

PowerPoint

It is a new technological device in the field of education. It is an audio-visual medium used to present instructional content which allows the target audience to see and hear what is meant for them. PowerPoint enables teachers to create a series of slides on a computer which may be projected in the instructional environment using a data projector. It comes with pre-formed templates which help in preparing professionally looking and visually stimulating slides.

PowerPoint contains a variety of methods of changing from one slide to the next called “**Transitions**” This helps in presentation of information to show photographs and illustrate the characteristics of a concept. Systematically, image is built up little by little by the aid of PowerPoint “*animation*” when text or diagrams are prepared in advance. For example, scanned or snapped pictures. Like all technologies, PowerPoint needs a little practice to develop skills in using it. Teachers of CRK can use PowerPoint in their lessons on God’s Creation of the World, David and Goliath, Esau and Jacob, Elijah at Mount Camel, Joseph as a Leader, etc.

Video

Video is an audio-visual mass medium that is more ideal for large and small group lectures. Digital Versatile Discs (DVD) make video images easier to use in the classroom to present learning materials for learners to see and hear. Video images can also be made available through a website for students to view in their private study. The CRK teacher can incorporate video in teaching and learning of the Birth of Jesus Christ, the Trials and Death of Christ, the Triumphant Entry into Jerusalem and the Cleansing of the temple, the Miracles of Jesus, Saul’s Disobedience, Ahab’s Greed and its Consequences, the Supremacy of God, Baptism and Temptation of Jesus, the Resurrection and Appearances of Jesus. Videos record, store and transmit information, skills, values and moral to learners.

Overhead Projector

Overhead projector like PowerPoint and video is an audio-visual medium used to present information, ideas, concepts etc to a target audience in teaching-learning environment. Learners learn the learning materials through the two sense organs – the ear and the eye. It gives the teacher or presenter the opportunity to face the audience to draw attention to a particular point while illustrating on the content. Overhead projector stimulates and sustains learner's interest and attention. The CRK teacher should incorporate overhead projector in presenting CRK concepts such as poor parental responsibilities of Eli and Samuel, Solomon's Wisdom, Unwise Decisions of Solomon and Rehoboam, Ghazi's Greed and its Consequences, Jonah as God's Messenger, etc. Overhead Projector will help learners to see, hear, react to the learning materials, and make value judgement.

It is important to point out that all audio-visual media such as television, video, PowerPoint, and overhead projector present learning materials with voice and pictures which possess the ability to stimulate learners generally and CRK students in particular through the auditory and visual senses. They provide concrete and realistic experiences, clarify abstract ideas, enrich the mastery of content, promote greater acquisition and longer retention of factual knowledge, and show complex sequences of events. Audio-visual media are not a substitute for good teaching, but they are complementary materials which assist the teacher in the communication process.

Radio

Radio is an audio electronic mass medium used to sensitize only the auditory organ of the learner. A well-planned instructional radio program can be used to present CRK concepts. CRK discussion program on Birth of Christ could be aired on a regular basis. Jingles and drama on radio could be used to present instructional content on Trial and Crucifixion of Jesus Christ, Justification by Faith and Ascension of Christ .

It is necessary to point out that all mass media such as television, video, radio are good and effective for distance learning programme as learners can participate actively in teaching-learning process, distance and teacher's absence not with standing. But in the absence of the teacher, as in the case of radio, video, television, it becomes a one-way communication as the students cannot ask questions.

Instructional Text

In teaching and learning CRK, it requires printed materials (media). CRK teachers must make use of the Bible which is the main reference book and other related CRK textbooks to enhance effective teaching and learning. They can incorporate small handbills, posters, tracks, graphs, drawings, focusing on different issues, concepts, events, values and norms pertaining to CRK. This will create multiple effects on the

learner as they can read and interpret or explain to others, what they have learnt from these books (materials).

Field Trips

Field trips refer to visiting the learning material or content in its natural setting by the learner. That is, learners going outside the classroom to study the setting, objects, people, concepts, or processes of interest in their natural setting. For example, going to Jerusalem, Israel, Egypt, Mountain Calvary, Mount Carmel etc. to observe the important places mentioned in the Bible relating to the subject. Field trips make possible the utilization of phenomena that cannot be brought into the classroom for observation and study.

Visual Media

Visual media are those carriers of instructional content that can only be learnt by observing them but cannot be heard. Visual media are very effective in teaching and learning generally. To achieve effective teaching and learning of CRK, models and pictures of important persons or figures should be presented to the target audience to see and have ideas of what those things represent or look like.

Conclusion

Media as carrier of information are indispensable in teaching and learning process if we ought to attain effectiveness, efficiency, life long learning. It is expected of the teacher to be careful in selecting or producing media for instruction, observing the criteria for media selection, production, and use.

Recommendations

Based on the importance of instructional media in teaching and learning process, the following recommendations were made:

1. Government and school management should provide technological instructional media to help teachers communicate effectively with the students no matter the number, especially now that we are in technological age.
2. Teachers should endeavour to make media an integral part of their instructional activities in order to make teaching and learning easy, real, interesting, and effective.
3. For the fact that fund is not always available and enough, student-teachers should be given proper training on how to produce some media for instructional purpose.
4. Teachers should be familiar with the principles and criteria for media selection so that the aim for the usage will not be defeated.
5. To ensure that optimum learning takes place in the learner, teachers should try to back their instruction with related visual media.

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