

METHODS USED IN TEACHING GEOGRAPHY IN BOJI BOJI URBAN SECONDARY SCHOOLS, DELTA STATE, NIGERIA



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Abstract

The study examines the different methods of teaching geography in Boji Boji urban Secondary Schools in Delta State, Nigeria. The study sample was made up of 120 students, 10 geography teachers from 5 secondary schools. The questionnaire, observation and document content analysis were the main instruments for data collection. The responses to the questionnaire were coded and data entered into the computer for the analysis. The findings, revealed that teachers prefer the use of question and answer as a method of teaching at 83 percent, but students prefer the use of field work as a method of teaching at 78 percent. It is therefore concluded that these factors are critical for students achievement in geography. It therefore recommends amongst others, that the state government should recruit more skilled and specialist geography teachers to the study area.

Keywords: Geography, Teaching, Methods, Secondary Schools.

Geography teaching is part of the broader field of education and its importance in secondary school curriculum cannot be overemphasized. It trains the learners to manage their environment for the good of the society as a whole (Bloomfield, 1970). Geography is one of the optional subjects in the secondary school curriculum in Nigeria. It is being taught in senior classes of secondary schools. It could be combined with Arts, Social Sciences or science subjects in the senior secondary classes. The effective teaching of geography could be measured by reviewing the methods of teaching applied by teachers vis-as-vis the performance of students in school examinations (Adeyemi, 2008). The geography syllabus as outline in the West African Examination Council handbook divides the subject into four parts – physical, regional, human and map work. According to Akpata (1993) map work has posed a great threat to effective geographic education in post-primary institutions and weakened the morale and enthusiasm of students for geography, thus leading to high rate of attrition in the number of students that register for geography in senior secondary schools

examinations. Map work constitutes a paper and features prominently in objective component of examination. Consequently, any student that fails in map work paper is likely to fail geography in WAEC examination.

Furthermore, Anikweze (1985, 2000) observed that despite appreciable innovations aimed at improving the teaching and learning of Geography at the higher school level, one still finds students expressing dislikes and apprehension for geography. Thus, aversion for the subject is consequently built up and the end result is ultimate drop out from the subject. It is feared that if the trend is not curtailed, the future of geography as a discipline maybe threatened by inevitable obliteration from the school curriculum. This reduces students' enrolment in geography and constitutes a negative achievement for students in geography, as such many of them prefer other social sciences and arts subjects. This situation is mostly traced to lake of appropriate teaching strategy and well-harmonize relationship with other aspects of geography.

A variety of methods exist that maybe employed in the teaching of geography. Most of the methods used in geography education according to Osakwe (1994) are not unique to the subject but have been proved useful in geography instruction. The geography teacher is expected to be quite familiar with the various methods of teaching the subject with the aim of selecting the most appropriate method at any point in time. The aim of the research is how to make Geography more "alive", more "real" and more manageable by secondary school students. This has necessitated the need to examine the way this subject is taught in our secondary schools.

Statement of the Problem

A common observation within the school system revealed that many secondary school students regard geography as being very wide in scope. The poor performance of students in the subject in SSC examinations lent credence to this point. The contention of researchers (Seweye, 2000) is that the teaching strategies used in many schools, might not have been appropriate enough to allow effective teaching of the subject. The problem of this research, therefore, was to determine what best teaching strategies could be applied in fostering effective teaching of geography in the senior secondary schools in Delta State, Nigeria. The problem for this study is therefore to find out whether the poor performance of students in Geography in the SSC examination is as a result of the teaching method used or not.

Different Methods of Teaching Geography

Skilled teachers always keep in view that teaching must be dynamic, challenging and in accordance with learner's comprehension. They employed different methods for making teaching interesting, inspirational and effective. Hence, this study was aimed at examining the teaching strategies used by geography teachers and to determine the best strategy that could bring about effective teaching and better performance of

students in schools. The traditional methods include: discussion, fieldwork, lecture, project as well as the questioning method of teaching.

i. **Discussion Method:** The discussion technique is an aid in teaching and learning situation with the sole aim of pooling ideas and views together to resolve an issue. It encourages the spirit of tolerance because the views and ideas held by an individual maybe proved to be incorrect during a discussion. It fosters the spirit of cooperation and listening to another person's viewpoint. The use of this method is suitable for meeting the objectives of Geography teaching because the method provides an effective means of developing skills and of utilizing facts and information, i.e. students not only learn to communicate ideas, but also to dissect and evaluate them and find wider and more practical applications for them. As a result, better understanding is ensured making learning more meaningful and more lasting (Quist, 2005).

On the other hand, a classroom discussion may end up being a buzz or noisy session, where everybody says something under a rowdy atmosphere, with very little or nothing concrete achieved. The teacher's role in a discussion is that of a guide, rather than an authority figure. The aims and objectives of the discussion must be spelt out.

ii. **Fieldwork as a Method of Teaching**

Fieldwork is loosely regarded as being synonymous with excursion or fieldtrip in geography. In its strict sense, excursion is much more a pleasure trip with very little educational result achieved. Fieldtrip and fieldwork imply very serious and rigorous work done on the field to buttress the normal classroom activities. It uses the field as its laboratory or testing ground.

Fieldwork has been defined as a science of selecting, observing, evaluating and reporting information in a specific area (Gitau, 2008). It involves the direct use of the environment as a source of physical information. It can be organized to cover the area around the school. Most secondary school teachers have had a misconception that fieldwork is only effective when the study is taken only to a far area. This misconception has made fieldwork to be used once or twice in the entire secondary school life of a student.

Ebisemiju (1981) identified the shortcomings of the geography being taught in most Nigerian schools as inclusive of little emphasis in the interrelatedness of the various branches of the subject. He specifically isolated, defective and outdated teaching methods as responsible for students poor understanding of geographical phenomena. He recommended both deductive and 'active' methods of teaching, the latter referring to field studies, practical work, collection of specimen, use of models, games and simulations. According to Anikweze (1995) this active methods offer pupils opportunities of learning through observations, data collection, data recording, analysis and interpretation.

Lecture Method of Teaching

This is sometimes referred to as presentation method. It is the oldest method of instruction in geography classrooms. Basically the lecture method is a technique of teaching in which the teacher passes on information to his or her students. The students activity is listening and taking of notes and this makes the students passive receptors of knowledge.

There are two forms of lecture methods: formal lecture method where communication is only one way and the informal lecture method where communication is two way i.e. from the teacher to the students and from students to teacher. In Geography teaching, formal lecture is more appropriate because it provides the teacher with feedback from the students. Although this method is teacher centered, it is mainly used by Geography teachers when presenting factual information or teaching a large class. Alcorn (2010) justifies the use of lecture method in secondary schools under the following conditions: when presenting important materials not easily obtainable, when supplementing textbook materials when developing interest and appreciation, when summarizing important points after a unit study. As advocated by the Gestalt psychologists, facts and information are meaningful only when they are taken in relation to the whole concept being taught (woolfolk, Hughes & walkup, 2008).

Based on researcher experience as a geography teacher, it has been realized that the teacher's personality contributes a lot to the success of lecture as a teaching method. Although, the lecture method provides a way to communicate a large amount of information to many listeners, maximized feedback from students etc, but often disengages students from the learning process, causing information to be quickly forgotten (Oforundare, 2013).

Project as a Method of Teaching

This is the method of teaching in which a problem is identified by the students as well as the teacher(s) in the environment. This is where the topic chosen for study should be a real problem in the learners' environment that when solved, the students will see a positive change in the environment. For instance, students maybe taken to an area around the school compound which has been affected by soil erosion and then asked to work in groups to conserve the soil. When this is done the students will feel satisfied and appreciate their work.

This method is learner centred, because it emphasizes the involvement of the teacher as a guide. According to Whitcombe and Tombs (2007) Project method when used well by the teacher, learn and work at their own pace, develop the spirit of curiosity, enquiry and investigative approach to acquire knowledge and to provide opportunity for learners to come into contact with the problems, challenges and opportunities in real life situation. The main advantage is that it enable the students to demonstrate the acquisition of positive attitudes, values and skills for self reliance. (Omor and Nato, 2014).

Furthermore, researchers at the UK's National foundation for Educational Research carried out a study and revealed that teachers who use project method such as gardening in their teaching improve the learners readiness to learn and encourage learners to become more active in solving problems (Jan, etal, 2008). Finally, the report commissioned by the Royal Horticultural society (RHS) says that the use of projects such as school gardening should be used as key teaching tool rather than as an extra-curricular activity because it encourages learners to be more active in solving problems of their environment (Kogola, 2010).

Questioning Method

This method is sometimes referred to as the Socratic method. A question is a statement that demands a response. Successful classroom teaching to a great extent is determined by the skill with which a teacher ask questions. The use of the questioning method is based on the teachers desire to make the information being passed on less burdensome. If properly used the questioning method could lead to successful teaching and learning situation. On the other hand, if it is abused or misused it could yield negative results.

According to Osakwe (Ibid) questions are used in geography lesson for a number of reasons:

first, it may be used at the beginning of a lesson to test previous knowledge.

Second, it may be used for linking the new with the earlier topic or lesson.

Thirdly, it is used to:

- i. Re-invigorate flagging interests,
- ii. Check listlessness,
- iii. Direct students attention to essential points that have been raised,
- iv. Evaluate progress,
- v. Summarize a lesson.

fourthly, questions should be used to stimulate thought and not as a fill-up. Ngaroga (2008), contributes to the effective use of questioning by stating the following steps to be followed by teachers:

- a. State the question you want to ask,
- b. Pause to allow the student to think about the answer to the question,
- c. Call on the name of the student,
- d. Listen to the answer,
- e. Comment on the answer.

Finally, question should be purposeful, unambiguous and tailored to the level of the students, to serve the purposes it is meant for.

Methodology of Study

The study was conducted in Boji Boji Urban which is situated within the two local government areas of Ika North East and Ika South of Delta State. Longitudinally

Ika land lies approximately between 6°06'E and 6°24'E and Latitudinally between 6°02'N and 6°23'N, it has a land cover of about 20 sqkm. It is bounded in the North and East by Edo State, in the East by Aniocha Local Government and the South by Ndokwa Local Government Area. The population of this area, has grown exponentially as a result of rural urban migration, accessibility, urbanization and settlement (Nmorsi, 2016). The study was based on descriptive research design, which intends to examine the situation as it is without manipulation of variables. The study sample was made up of 120 students and 10 geography teachers from 5 secondary schools in Boji Boji urban, Delta State. The researcher adopted a questionnaire, observation and documentary analysis as the main instruments which were guided by the nature of the data to be collected as well as the objectives of the study and time limits. After data collection, the responses to the questionnaire were coded, and the data entered into the computer with statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) for the analysis. Also percentages were used for descriptive statistics.

Analysis and Discussion of Results

Teaching Methods Adopted by various Geography Teachers in Boji Boji Urban, Delta State

The main objective of the study was to determine the teaching methods used by various teachers in secondary schools in Boji Boji Urban, Delta State. To realise the objective, several questions in the questionnaires were geared to establish this information from the students and teachers. Three main approaches were used by teachers in the course of teaching Geography to students in Boji Boji urban, that is 74.6 percent of teachers taught Geography using methods classified under interaction approach, while 22.4 percent used methods under collaborative approach and only about 3 percent used the transmission approach. The experimental or facilitation approaches were hardly used by sampled teachers.

Interaction approach: This methods involve the exchange of ideas between the teacher and the students or among the learners themselves. The methods under the approach include discussion, brainstorming and question and answer.

Collaborative approach: This involves learners sharing ideas in group and working together to solve a problem, examples of these methods include project and fieldwork methods.

Transmission approach: This is where the teacher dominates the lesson by use of oral-transmission of information, example lecture techniques.

Teaching Methods used and Students' Preference for them in Boji Boji Urban

The researcher enquires from the teachers and students on the methods used in teaching Geography Boji Boji urban. The findings revealed that the use of question and answer method by teachers is at 83 percent while students preference for it is 46 percent. The use of fieldwork by teachers is at 55 percent while its preference by students for it is at

78 percent. The use of lecture methods by teachers is at 58 percent while its preference by students is at 50 percent.

Discussions is at 57 percent while preference is at 40 percent, and the use of project method by teachers is 33 percent, while its preference by students is 65 percent. This analysis revealed that the methods students prefer to be used to teach them are fieldwork 78 percent, project 65 percent while lecture method is 50 percent.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The first conclusion in this study is that the performance level of students in Delta State secondary schools has been below expectation. The level of performance in Geography as a subject has been low for quite some time. Some teaching methods and students preferences for the methods have also been found to be significantly related to performance of students in geography in the sampled area. It is therefore concluded that these factors are critical factors in students academic achievement in geography.

Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that the state Government should recruit more skilled and specialist Geography teachers. Finally, the states' ministry of Education should intensify more efforts in the inspection and monitoring of schools especially in Boji Boji urban, Delta State, to ensure that teachers use the appropriate teaching method that would enhance the effective teaching of geography.

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