

INSTRUCTIONAL EVALUATION IN SOCIAL STUDIES: TYPES, INSTRUMENTS AND PROBLEMS

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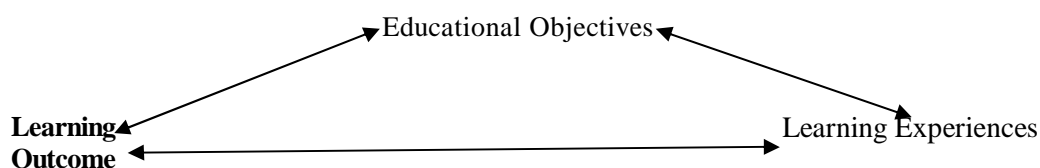
Abstract

This paper examines the concept of instructional evaluation in relation to the teaching of social studies in schools. It discusses methods, types and instruments of instructional evaluation a social studies teacher should apply before arriving at any value judgment about students and the lesson. It has been observed that the greatest problems of evaluating effectively in social studies are due to non-specification of instructional objectives, over-emphasizing the cognitive tests and lack of validity and reliability in evaluation instruments. The paper concludes that classroom dispensation demands that teachers explore the areas of social skills and social growth to their advantage and that of the learners.

Introduction

Evaluation is not a very easy concept to define because workers in evaluation tend to define the term in manners that reflect their various background differences. However, to evaluate, put simply, is to carefully consider something to see how useful or valuable it is. To Popham (1988) systematic educational evaluation consists of a formal appraisal of the quality of formal appraisal of the quality of educational phenomena.

There are evaluation models like the objective-oriented, the decision-management, and the judgment-oriented. The objective-oriented model was originally formulated by Ralph Tyler who conceived evaluation as the process of determining the extent to which the educational objectives of a school programme are actually being achieved. This is shown as follows:



This involves identifying objectives and using either standardized or evaluator-constructed instruments to measure the extent of their achievement. Discrepancies between actual behavioral outcomes and expectations would guide modification.

in the decision-management model, we have as most prominent Stufflebeam's Context, Input, Process and Product (CIPP) and Alkin's Centre For the Study of Evaluation model which has the same logic as (he CIPP model. Alkin (1970) therefore asserts that for the evaluation to be worthwhile, it must be viewed as the process of ascertaining the decision areas of concern, selecting appropriate information in order to report a summary of data useful for decision makers in selecting among alternatives.

Thus, evaluation in its generic definition is the systematic process of judging the worth, desirability, effectiveness or adequacy of something according to definite criteria and purposes. The judgment is based on a careful comparison of observation data with criteria standards. It includes obtaining information for use in judging (he worth of a programme, product, procedure, or objective, or the potential utility of alternative approaches designed to attain specific objectives. Ogbonna (1994:48) submits that the interrelated nature of teaching-learning, objectives and evaluation can be seen in the following sequence of steps in the instructional process:

- a) Preparing instructional objective;
 - b) Pre-assessing learner's need;
 - c) Providing relevant instructions i.e. monitoring learning progress and diagnosing difficulties;
 - d) Evaluating intended outcomes', and
 - e) Using the evaluation results to improve learning and instruction.
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Evaluating Social Studies Programmes In Elementary School

Evaluation is the final stage of classroom activity. It is an indispensable part of education. Okam (1994:46) submits that evaluation in social studies:

is upon broad personality changes and major objectives of an educational programme. These include not only subject-matter achievements but also attitudes, interests, ideals, ways of thinking, work habits and personal and social adaptability.

Evaluation has a lot of value. Anderson and Ball (1978) have identified six major non-mutually exclusive purposes of programme evaluation. They are :

- (i) To contribute to decisions about programme installation;
- (ii) To contribute to decisions about programme continuation, expansion or certification;
- (iii) To contribute to decisions about programme modifications;
- (iv) To obtain evidence for opposing a programme;
- (v) To obtain or provide evidence for supporting a programme; and
- (vi) To contribute to the understanding of basic psychological, social and other processes. Thus, Parnell (1973:263) puts it that:

Without evaluation, there cannot be feedback. Without a feedback, there cannot be good knowledge of results. Without good results, there cannot be a systematic improvement in learning.

Instructional evaluation therefore provides knowledge on students' entry behaviour. It provides a setting, defining and clarifying realistic goals for students; determines the extent to which set objectives have been achieved; provides a setting and refining instructional strategies; and encourages good study habits, avails feedback that highlights strengths and weaknesses.

Methods In Elementary School Social Studies Programme Evaluation

It is important at this point to say that social studies instructional evaluation should meet the following criteria:

1. It must be an all-inclusive process. That is, all available means of collecting relevant data bearing on students' learning need be exploited and utilized in the evaluation process. In this situation, written tests and all other forms of conventional tests may not serve our purpose. Reports, role playing, self reports, observed behaviour techniques should come in.
2. Evaluation in social studies demands that it has to be cooperative process involving teachers, students and parents. Much 'learning begun in the school can continue in the home environment wherever parents and students are properly attuned to the expectations.
3. The evaluation exercise has to be as comprehensive as possible. This requirement calls for an application of a variety of evaluation techniques.
4. Evaluation needs to be a continuous process. Ideally, it is expected that evaluation is an interrelated part of all teaching and learning processes. It is not something that only occurs at the end of a unit or school year.
5. There is a great need to select evaluation techniques in social studies in terms of the purpose to be served.
6. Evaluation has to be goal-oriented. In other words, the need to clarify and determine what is to be evaluated always has priority in the evaluation process.

Programme evaluators conventionally have identified two types of evaluation: formative and summative but Gronlund (1985) has further identified four classifications. These are: 1. Placement evaluation - which is concerned with pupils' entry behavior/performance at the beginning of instruction. It determines prerequisite skills, degree of mastery of course objectives and/or the best mode of learning that should be adopted. Some of the measuring instruments to help accomplish placement evaluation include readiness test, aptitude tests, pre-tests on course objectives, self-report inventories and observational techniques.

2. Diagnostic evaluation - which is concerned with spotting learning difficulties during instruction. Such causes could be physical, intellectual, environmental or emotional. This type of evaluation leads to formulation of a plan for remedial action. Evaluation instruments that can be used include published diagnostic tests, teacher-made diagnostic tests and observational techniques.
- 3- Formative evaluation - which is concerned with monitoring learning progress during instruction. This is aimed at improving the quality of instruction. This evaluation provides feedback to reinforce the acceptable patterns and to correct learning errors. Eisner (1979) submits that formative evaluation is therefore diagnostic in nature as it provides useful information for the improvement of classroom teaching. Formative evaluation can either be made up of essay type tests or objective tests. Other forms of instructional formative evaluation include quiz, mid-term examinations, term papers, seminars and projects (Esu, 1994).
4. Summative evaluation. This type of evaluation comes at the end of a course of instruction. It is concerned with determining end-of-course (unit) achievement, e.g. Junior and Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination, it is designed to determine the extent to which the instructional objectives have been achieved, and is used primarily for assigning course grades like Distinction, Credit, Pass or Fail, or certifying mastery of the intended learning outcomes (objectives). Although the main purpose of summative evaluation is grading and/or certification of pupil achievement, it also provides information for judging the certification of the course objectives, and the effectiveness of the instruction, and at times the instructor.

Instruments For Social Studies Instructional Evaluation

It is important to note at this juncture that a social studies teacher is expected to employ a variety of tools/instruments for the evaluation of instruction so as to cover the three domains of educational objectives: cognitive (change in knowledge and ability), psychomotor (development of skills) and the affective (change in attitude). To do this, such a teacher can use:

- 1) The sociometric test. This assesses the position and status of an individual as well as his interpersonal relationship within the group. With the instrument, it can be suspected whether the individual relates well with others. Results may warrant counseling. The concept of classroom learning as an interactional process involving the reciprocal interplay of person upon person is reflected on studies of the significance of sociometry and socio-drama for teacher-pupil rapport (Dysart, 1952). Sociometric devices help the teacher to appreciate the extent to which:
 - (a) Peripheral children have won greater acceptance by the group;
 - (b) Leadership roles have shifted;
 - (c) Preferences of children for one another have changed; and
 - (d) Strong in-groups have become more flexible (Amadi, 1994:79).
- 2) Projective Techniques: These include techniques that cause people to project their own personality. Projective techniques include:
 - (a) Association technique where an individual expresses his thinking without a second thought in response to stimuli.
 - (b) Construction technique e.g. the Thematic Apperception Test (TAT) in which a subject tells a story about a given picture.
 - (c) Completion technique: This includes tests like the sentence completion designed to study

- the intellectual functioning and personality.
- (d) Choice or ordering techniques: Tests like the picture-true-arrangement test where the subject chooses the stimulus he/she likes or arranges a series of pictures in a sequence to tell a story or arranges toys to create a scene.
 - (c) Expressive techniques: These embrace cathartic methods involving doll play, painting, psychodrama or other activities, which may stimulate emotional reactions.
- (3) Questionnaire: This is a set of pre-set items for students to respond to positively or negatively. Questionnaires aid the teacher to evaluate pupils' behavior traits. For questionnaires to achieve their purposes they must be well structured. The questions should be clear, simple and easy to understand.
- (4) Teacher-made-tests: A test is a tool/instrument or device employed for the purpose of determining the current status, growth, development or otherwise in a learner. The most commonly used techniques for evaluating knowledge and understanding in social studies include essay tests, multiple-choice tests, completion tests, true-false tests and matching tests.
- (5) Direct observation: This requires observing the student in as many situations as possible to establish regularity of the behavior before making any conclusion. Ukadike (1998:75) observes that:
- Observational technique is applied when it comes to noting of something, comparing students' attitudes, interests, feelings and particular behavior with peer group or peer group influence.
- (6) Rating scale: A rating scale consists of a set of qualities to be judged and some type of scale indicating the degree to which the attribute is present.
- (7) Anecdotal records: These are descriptions of specific incidents or situations regarding the behavior of individual students: such records enable teachers to form their opinion on issues under observation.
- (8) Practical tasks: The use of classroom discussions, debates, dramatization of activities, displays and exhibitions, projects and individual note taking are common features used for assessing pupil's thoughts and behaviors with reference to issues associated with the affective domain.
- (9) Questioning: Questions are asked while the lesson is going on to find out how far the students are coping with the teacher's instructions and at the end of the lesson, how the instructional objectives have been achieved. Inyang-Abia (2001:52) submits that:
- Questions could also be used for focusing, probing, guiding, summarizing and testing ideas, concepts and solutions to problems among other uses.
- Questions could be:
- (a) Cognitive: Those that are concerned with selective retrieval of previously learned material.
 - (b) Convergent: Questions directed to a single answer.
 - (c) Divergent: Questions that elicit a variety of answers or solutions to a given problem. They ginger the creative spirit in the learner.
 - (d) Evaluative: Questions that are value judgement oriented.
- (10) Interview: This is a method that yields data on the student through direct verbal interaction between the student and the teacher. The interview may be oral or recorded in a cassette and played back when required.
- (11) Checklist: This calls for a "yes" or "no" judgement. It is a method of recording whether a particular trait or characteristic is present or not. Learners can participate in checklists of their behaviour.
- (! 2) Writing reports after an excursion: Students should occasionally embark on field trips to some

resource centres in their locality. At the end of the exercise, they should write their individual reports. Such reports would reveal to the teacher whether or not the intended outcomes have been achieved.

Problems of Evaluating Social Studies Programmes

Instructional evaluation, Esu (1994), submits involves four stages: (i) Preparation for evaluation which involves adequate knowledge of a subject-matter and the identification of the problems in the class, (ii) Gathering of proper information. The information so obtained may give a pattern of behaviour indicating particular attitudes toward a given course or subject. (iii) Forming judgements. At this level, the teacher can form judgement about students' learning progress or achievement in social studies, (iv) Assessment of students performance. Teachers' judgements can then be used by such teachers to make decisions regarding individual students.

Programme evaluation in social studies is therefore not an easy task. There are problems in:

- a) Specifying the objectives in the affective domain, for example, it is difficult to inject meaningful standards into such social behaviours as greet, thank, praise and smile.
- b) Over-emphasizing the cognitive. Teachers often focus on the cognitive domain for certification; moreover, as traits like tolerance, moral values are not part of the certification process.
- c) Instrumentation. Here, there is the problem of validity and reliability. Validity means the extent to which any measuring instrument measures what it purports to measure and reliability of the instrument is the degree to which the instrument is consistent, stable, dependable or trustworthy in yielding data that were desired. It could be said to be the degree of consistency between two measures of the same thing. The observations of the evaluator in the affective attributes appraised, can produce a wide variety of results because of individual differences in perceptions. Additionally, the human personality is dynamic. Okam (1994:53) therefore opines that:
Teachers may find it difficult to determine if students are becoming more tolerant, courteous, empathetic, responsible, open-minded, sympathetic, etc. These terms are notoriously difficult to define.
- d) The time consumed. One major limitation associated with evaluating objectives that bear on the affective domain is that they tend to be time-consuming and difficult to keep up. Amadi (1994:78) therefore, alerts that "most of the time social studies teacher may not devote enough time To observe the pupil he is rating."
- e) Data analysis. The use of rating scale and checklists in evaluating attitude has been considered in this paper but this poses the problem of data analysis. Ofo (1994:77) asserts that:
The data yielded on a checklist are rather nominal categories and do not represent points on a continuum, Nominal judgements made from a checklist are often easier to make than making a judgement from rating scale. Although nominal judgements take less time to make by the respondent, they provide less information for the researcher and are often difficult to analyse.

Conclusion

This paper has examined the concept of evaluation, some evaluation models, types of evaluation, instruments or tools of evaluation and the various problems associated with social studies programme evaluation. In spite of these problems, classroom dispensation demands that teachers explore the areas of social skills and social growth to their advantage and that of the learners.

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