



An Appraisal of Evaluation in Social Studies Education in Nigeria

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Abstract

Social Studies education came into being in Nigeria in 1963 as an integrated subject. Its foremost objectives are promotion of effective citizenship and other values that promotes national consciousness cum personal development. The effectiveness of this subject in the performance of its roles calls for evaluation. The role of evaluation in the Social Studies curriculum is to determine the effectiveness of what is taught and learnt as a confirmation of attainment of desired objectives. This paper examined the various areas required to be evaluated in Social Studies education with a view to ensuring that teaching and learning had taken place. It also identified the various types of evaluation available to the Social Studies education curriculum.

Keywords: Evaluation, Effectiveness, Citizenship, Religion Education, Curriculum, Social Studies Education, National Consciousness.

Introduction

Evaluation plays important role in curriculum, teaching and learning. The way of evaluating what is learnt dictates the way in which learning takes place. Whatever the teacher stresses determines what the students will selectively address during learning for purpose of examination. Meanwhile, if a thoughtful reorganization of knowledge is emphasized during teaching, but the testing and grading are confined to the

mastery of facts, the later learning is reinforced. If creativity and thinking are stressed in evaluating learners' progress, factual cramming will be reduced.

According to Ogundare (2003), educational evaluation is a systematic process that determines the effectiveness of educational endeavour in the light of evidence. Evaluation is said to have two important roles to play in teaching-learning process, it gives



the teaching information regarding the level of students' learning, and it provides information that can be used in planning future lessons (Oyedeji, 1998). Various types of evaluation are deployed in evaluating the effectiveness of educational endeavour, which includes Social Studies education. But for proper evaluation of the effectiveness of educational endeavour such as Social Studies education, evaluation must cover the students' performance, the teachers effectiveness, relevance and adequacy of educational content and methods to the programme objectives.

The Nature and Importance of Evaluation

The place of evaluation in education is indispensable. All stakeholders in the education sector consider evaluation very important and valuable for conducting fair and reliable assessment of learners. In curriculum development, evaluation spread across the curriculum process and school programme, which involve the educational aims, goals and objectives, learning experiences and activities, content, methodology of instruction, organization of learning experiences cum content and the evaluation procedures itself. Evaluation in this regard is needed to determine the level of behavioural change and measure the actual outcome in order to ascertain if the stated objectives have been achieved. Therefore, it is the duty of all stakeholders in the educational sector to evaluate in order to determine whether learners are up to date with the stated learning objectives.

Evaluation is a process of gathering valid information on attainment of educational objectives, analyzing and fashioning information to aid judgement on the effectiveness of teaching or an educational programme (Oyedeji, 1998). It is also defined as the provision of information through formal means, which means that it is a process of ascertaining decision in areas of concern, selecting appropriate information and collecting and analyzing information in order to report a summary of data useful for decision makers in selecting among alternatives (Ogundare, 2003). It is said to involve judgement about nature and desirability of any demonstrated changes. This involve the assessment of the chosen learning experiences, content used and manner of their use with a view to determine their desirability or efficacy in bringing about the expected behavioural change (Sotonwa, 1995).

The roles of evaluation in the learning-teaching process cannot be ignored. In the view of Oyedeji (1998), it has two important roles; it gives the teaching information regarding the level of student learning and it provides information that can be used in planning future lessons. When carrying out evaluation it is important to assess relevant student behaviour, the background factors that can inhibit this behaviour, effect of the evaluation programme on learners' motivation and learning and also it is necessary to evaluate all phases of the curriculum process with a view of taking decision about educational objectives.



Evaluation is required in the three domains of learning to determine the attainment of the educational objectives which cover the cognitive skills, performance skills and to some extent attitudes or feelings. Therefore, the three domains, cognitive, affective and psychomotor need evaluation with different evaluation techniques because required information is different from each domain; hence, the need for types of evaluation.

Types of Evaluation

Evaluation is divided into three types and the teachers need all the categories to get continued feedback to plan, monitor and evaluate their instruction.

Diagnostic Evaluation

This is carried out to obtain prerequisite information about programme. The information is to assist in further evaluation. This evaluation is used to detect possible learning problems and to right place learners in the proper course. It gives teachers adequate information about learners' knowledge, attitudes and skills.

Formative Evaluation

This guides the development and implementation of programme. The main task of this evaluation is to identify possible problems and then describe and monitor all the activities. Formation evaluation is incorporated into the programme or curriculum right from the planning stage. Its major task is to ensure success of the programme. Therefore, it is a special attention on finding the mistakes in the programme

and providing monitoring and corrective mechanism.

Summative Evaluation

The purpose of this type of evaluation is to determine students achievement for grading purposes. The use of summative evaluation is to know if a student have passed or failed. Summative evaluation takes the form of quizzes, tests, term papers, reports, personal observation of students, class contribution or annual examination.

Evaluation in educational endeavour is continuum and involves all the three types of evaluation, diagnostic formative and summative. In most cases useful information is gathered about achievement motor skills or attitude before and during learning process. Whenever problem is discovered solution could be provided immediately to correct the situation especially when it is discovered that learners are not responding to questioning, which is possible when the concept is not comprehend.

The Social Studies Perspective

Ogunyemi (2008) opined that Social Studies education as a school subject means different things to different people. It is also seen differently by different countries. In its early days in Nigeria for instance, it was seen as an amalgamation of some parts of the older disciplines because it was regarded as bits and pieces of history geography, economics, philosophy, political science and civic. It was because of this impression that the social scientists regarded Social



Studies as a 'water down' simplification of their subject areas.

Meanwhile, social studies experts view the subject in the following ways;

- i. A separate subject
- ii. Citizenship Education and,
- iii. Reflective enquiry

(Ogundare, 2000)

To begin with, social studies as a separate subject is viewed basically as the study of social sciences as separate discipline with the aim of familiarizing the students with the simplified basic concepts of the disciplines. This is made possible by removing all the technicality in the social sciences to make assimilation or comprehension easier at the basic levels. This is the position of the social scientists who earlier regarded social studies as “water down” simplification of their subject areas.

Ogundare (2000) disagreed with the position of the social scientists when he posited that Social Studies in the secondary school is different from social sciences in four ways which are: (i) Scope (ii) Size (iii) Purpose; and (iv) Level of difficulty. In both scope and size, the social sciences are more extensive than social studies, therefore making scholars that represent the various social sciences disciplines to research into a greater diversity of social and human relationship and gather more data and information than it is needed for inclusion in the secondary school education programme.

Social science in the above regard is to

search and contribute new knowledge while in the other hand, the objective of the secondary school social studies is to guide and direct students in their learning of selected segment of what social scientist discovered. Hence, social studies materials are drawn from the literature of the social science but its objectives is not to report the new discovery made by the social scientist. The weakness of the argument that social studies is social science simplified for pedagogical purposes is the inadequacy of social sciences when taken alone, to fulfill the need of citizenship education. This does not mean that social science is not an important part of education for citizenship, but they are not enough bases for such education. Regarding social sciences as the sole basis of social education of citizens is to ignore the increasingly recognized fact that children and youths learn more of the social behaviours from the formal theatres of education, especially outside the regular course structure than they learn with recognized education itself. Again, regarding social science as the sole basis of citizenship is to place value and valuing process outside the place of social education. Social sciences appear to be value free therefore, they are not concerned with how people make social judgement, hence, the teaching of social science cannot be made the only source of citizenship education because such action will be to treat our problems in piece meal because social science taken alone describes us more than a fraction of human behaviour.



Social Studies as Citizenship Education

This is to enable individual to know his/her civic responsibilities and civic rights. It is devoid of social sciences but the basic thing is that they need knowledge about humans. It emphasis change in behaviour of individuals. Social studies is viewed as part of the school general education programme which concerns itself with the preparation of citizens for democratic society.

Social Studies as reflective enquiry: Social studies is seen as being for the development of creative citizens that will query, proof, ask questions and propose alternatives in the light of evidences available to them. Social studies is regarded as problem solving subject.

Social sciences is accepted here as parent disciplines of the new social studies. The study and knowledge of social science disciplines is a way of building social and civic literacy, understanding and way of life. The modern perspective of social studies presents four conceptions of its purpose as identified in Adewuya (2002). Social studies is meant to teach people how to think. Thinking in social studies comes in various ways, more important is creating the awareness that there are other people in the world occupying different environments apart from oneself and kinsmen. This way, one appreciates changes in the social order of things. Therefore, it is by creating a sense of reflecting over our problems that we can develop

skills of critical and reflective thinking as a framework for any solution.

In the view of Ogundare (2000), inquiry requires the sensing and identification of significant problems and the serious and consecutive search for satisfactory answer; answers that are drawn from data collected from many disciplinary sources. Therefore, the content of social studies is also the process: data clues and evidence.

From the foregoing, it is evident that Social Studies is viewed variously by different scholars and also different nations of the world uses it differently to achieve various purposes in accordance with the nations' culture, objectives and the subjects objectives. Evaluation in Social Studies Education In Nigeria the national education objectives is addressed through the Social Studies objectives. This is why nations of the world have one thing in common, which is the application of Social Studies to national development and it is used to address the social problems in every country that it appears.

In the determination of the position of evaluation in Social Studies education, it is necessary to take a look at the subject as it affects the national objectives of education. This will make us to take a cursory look at the philosophy of education in Nigeria as contained in the National Policy on Education (2004) where it is admitted that the subject is a veritable vehicle for the achievement of the national objectives.



The philosophy and objectives of the nation are as follows;

- a. A free and democratic society
- b. A just and egalitarian society
- c. A United, strong and self-reliance nation
- d. A great and dynamic economy
- e. A land of bright and full opportunity for all citizens

On the other hand, the national educational objectives are as follows;

- i. The inculcation of national consciousness and national unity
- ii. The inculcation of the right type of values and attitudes for the survival of the individual and the Nigerian society
- iii. The training of the mind in the understanding of the world around
- iv. The acquisition of appropriate skills, abilities and competences both mental and physical as equipment for the individual to live in and contribute to the development of his society.

A dissection of the aims and objectives brings out key words and phrases such as “national consciousness”, “national unity”, “values”, “attitudes”, “understanding of the world”, “skills, abilities and competences”. However, a formalized and systematized body of knowledge about the nation and unity which students are exposed would enable them to develop national consciousness and unity. For this to be realized, there is need for a school subject to help in teaching and learning the nature of the nation and the relevance of unity. Also efforts to teach the right type of values and attitudes

have to be made in designated school subjects.

As at today, social studies education is in a better position to achieve these objectives, though other subjects will definitely assist (Otelaja, 2008). The nature, content, and method of Social Studies puts it in a vantage point for nation building. Ogundare (2000) opines that among the existing bodies of knowledge or disciplines, Social Studies had the comparative advantage of being very suitable for the accomplishment of such objectives relating to national consciousness, national unity and inculcating of right type of societal values all of which will lead to effective nation building.

Having taken a cursory look at the national objectives and the national objectives of education, it is pertinent to look at what to evaluate in Social Studies education programme. The question now is; what do we evaluate in Social Studies education?

To ascertain if Social Studies education has achieved or is achieving the objectives of the nation as prescribes in the national objectives of education (2004) and also to determine if the learning-teaching process is effective in a way that Social Studies students can really use the subject to solve societal social problems as specified by the main objective of the subject as problems solving subject. There is need to look beyond the classroom evaluation of the subject to determine its effectiveness. Therefore, the following areas call for evaluation



process as well:

- i. The programme
- ii. The teacher
- iii. The student
- iv. Social studies materials

The Programme: The programme is one of the issues that constitute attainment in Social Studies, also important is the method. Programme evaluation is to determine the effectiveness of the programme in meeting its goals and objectives. It is a process of gathering and analyzing information about school programme in order to take a decision or communicate to other involved in the decision making process.

Programme evaluation is designed to sample students' comprehension and ability across groups and geographical locations to guide curriculum planning. It is also used to assess the cognitive, knowledge, affective and psychomotor domains. It can be conducted at two levels, relatively informally at the classroom level and more formally at the school division level. At the classroom level, programme evaluation is to determine the effectiveness of the programmes in meeting the needs and proscribed objectives. It is an ongoing programme that does not need to be conducted at the end of the programme. For example, if a particular lesson is poorly received by learners or if learners do not demonstrate the intended learning objectives from a unit of study, the problem should be investigated and changes made evaluating the programme at the classroom level

makes teachers become reflective practitioners. The information gathered in programme evaluation are used in making decisions for improvement.

The Teacher Evaluation: The achievement of the learning objectives is the responsibility of the teachers and is the main constituent of evaluation. According to Ogundare (2003), Social Studies encourages acquisition of many kinds of abilities, understanding and skills. He posited that, for the classroom teacher these abilities and skills are those that are related to the topic and content areas, which teachers and students choose to study.

Teacher evaluation has the purpose of improving teacher effectiveness in the classroom. It is based on characteristics of good teaching performance and takes different forms. The most common which is practiced by every committed teacher is teacher self-evaluation. This is where a teacher consider what has taken place within a lesson and determines how it might have been improved. In Social Studies education programme, teachers should assess their strengths and weaknesses, and identify areas where improvement is needed.

The Student Evaluation: The central learning processes and activities in Social Studies education is concerned with exploration of questions raised by the teacher and to some extent the learners, which include definition, observation, classification, generalization, verification and



application. All these are as essential as the subject matter. The student's evaluation therefore, can be in the following areas as presented by Ogundare (2003).

- i. **Information:** Knowledge and understanding of facts and terms.
 - ii. **Concept and Principles:** These involve grasping of key concepts and principles.
 - iii. **Methods, Techniques and Skills:** These involve an understanding of certain methods, techniques and skills and an ability to use them. For instance, ability to interpret data such as graphs, tables and document and ability in method of inquiry such as carrying out an experiment or conducting social survey or other types of fieldwork.
 - iv. **Application:** An ability to apply all the above understanding and skills in the context of new situation. This will involve reasoning and critical thinking and may engage the thinkers in the realm of analysis, synthesis and evaluation.
 - v. **Attitudes and Change in Attitudes:** This is a difficult area but not an impossible task. Since there are moral and value issues involved, the assessment procedures for evaluating attitudes become technical.
- Social Studies Materials:** These are the materials or objects that help teachers to simplify lessons. They make teaching effective and lively and

allow students to comprehend fully. Materials transmit information, ideas and notes to the students and disseminate information in a way that will change their aptitude, habits and practice. Effective decision making is based on an outline of criteria for evaluating prospective materials, if planners take time to specify the factors that are most important in choosing materials before beginning the review process. Attention needs to be focused on characteristics to be able to differentiate between useful and non-useful materials. Criteria for this purpose may come from different sources and can raise a number of significant issues. The importance of each issue will be related to the primary needs and concerns which have developed from the planning process. Criteria would most certainly be founded in decisions made up to this point. For example:

- (a) Do materials fit within the planned rational scope of the programme?
- (b) Will their use help to ensure the programme?
- (c) Is the achievement of objectives created for this programme possible with the materials?

The above questions and many others will be asked. When available materials look inappropriate, planners will find out that they can often adapt them to their needs or extract points or ideas which are considered important.

Conclusion

Social studies education is a problem solving subject. Countries of the world have used the subject to solve social



problems as applicable to them. Therefore, efforts should be made in Nigeria to take the subject beyond classroom instructional level by introducing experiential learning; a situation that will bring concrete into reality, as done in the United States of America. Therefore, proper evaluation of the subject is needed to be done by experts and a review of the programme carried out to meet its objectives of solving societal problems.

Recommendations

Effective evaluation in Social Studies education aside from being based on clearly formulated curriculum objectives that Social Studies professionals have developed and adopted, efforts should be made to evaluate the ways by which the subject can achieved the stated curriculum objectives in tandem with the nation's objectives and educational objectives in such a way that the production of effective citizens will be achieved. An effective citizen is one that can think on his/her own and for himself/herself in order to be able to affect the society positively, through contribution of his/her quota to the development of the society.

Therefore, it is recommended that priority must be given to the programme, methodology and the teacher to impart the knowledge must be Social Studies experts. The students' comprehension of the learning objectives should be evaluated and efforts should be made to ensure that what is learnt in the classroom is transferred to the larger society to solve social problems through experiential learning. The

effectiveness of resource materials should be determined and ascertained for the attainment of stated objectives.

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