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**SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL SOCIAL STUDIES TEACHERS
USE OF COMMUNITY RESOURCES IN
TEACHING AND LEARNING**

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Abstract

This paper investigates social studies teachers' use of community resources in order to enhance teaching and learning in Senior High Schools in Ghana. The population for the study consisted of social studies teachers in Senior High Schools in the Tamale Metropolis. A sample of 129 teachers was used for the study. Questionnaire was used for data collection. It consisted of four-point likert scale. The items sought to find out how often teachers used community resources in teaching social studies. The study revealed that most teachers did not use community resources to teach their lessons. Lack of the necessary pedagogical skills, funds, administrative support, inadequate time and lack of support from schools were some of the constraints that militate against the effective use of community resources in teaching social studies. It was also recommended that social studies teachers should try as much as possible to integrate the use of community resources in teaching social studies to improve the quality of instruction given in schools.

Key Words: *Use of community resources, social studies teachers and Senior High Schools*

Background to the Study

There is an increasing need for the use of community resources at all levels of the Ghanaian educational system. The use of community resources in the teaching of social studies will contribute to the efficiency of teachers in planning, organizing and operating the instructional system as part of the psycho/pedagogical principle underlining the understanding of subject matter content. Also, students would be able to develop required behavioural patterns to achieve intended educational outcomes (Iyewarun, 1984; Ogunsanya, 1984; Jekayinfa, 1993). When students use community resources, they develop skills that enable them to work in groups, forming questions, collecting data and observing the environment, which are inherent skills in social studies. Thus, through the use of community resources the experience of the students can be diversified and school lessons can be connected with daily life and real problems (National Academy of Science, 1996). By using local resources students are given the golden opportunity of seeing, in practical terms, what they have heard, read, or imagined. Through the use of community resources, students would be able to collect data, observe, record, and extract necessary information from the environment (Agbamu, 2006).

Community resources provide students with an enduring view of their physical, social, and political environment. They also open up opportunities for students to be acquainted with real situations, problems, and potentials, and thus bring about critical thinking and inquiry mind. This therefore makes social studies lessons move from mere teacher-centred verbal instruction to student-centred activity. Resources make students to be involved through practical activities (Ogundele, 1983).

Community resources are very useful in social studies instruction. The use of community resources will ensure the effective teaching and learning of the subject by both teachers and students. Since the classroom is a limited environment, the teaching and learning of social studies must extend beyond the four walls of the classroom. Contents of the social studies curriculum are not only relevant to the environment but are also derived from the daily experiences of any given society. Therefore, the physical environment in and around the vicinity of the school can be used as a living laboratory for the study of natural phenomenon, socio-cultural development, and economic activities of any given society. Whether the school is located in a rural or urban area, the resources in the environment can be used as resources for instruction (National Academy of Science, 1996).

Statement of the Problem

It has been shown by researchers that instructional materials are important catalysts for social re-engineering and change (Yusuf, 2007, Taylor, 2002). It is obvious that the teaching and learning of social studies cannot be well accomplished without the use of instructional materials. Those materials within the community are termed community resources.

The use of community resources makes teaching and learning practical and real and therefore enhances understanding and consequently better retention of knowledge. Their use also reduces boredom in class and makes the work of the teacher easier since he/she does not suffer much in explaining certain concepts to students. Community resources can be used in two ways, that is, either by sending the school to the community through field trips, social clubs etc, or by bringing the community to the school through the use of resource persons, mini-durbars etc. *The question that needs an answer is; do social studies teachers use community resources in teaching the subject in Senior High Schools in Ghana?*

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to provide an explanation to the concept community resources. More specifically, the study sought to find out how often social studies teachers use community resources in teaching the subject in Senior High Schools in Tamale Metropolis of northern Ghana.

Research Question(s)

1. How often do Senior High School teachers in Tamale Metropolis use community resources in teaching social studies?

Literature Review

Introduction

This literature review is organized under the following headings: The meaning of community resources, types of community resources and teachers' experience and use of instructional resources in teaching.

Meaning of community resources

Abolade (2004) contends that community resources are both human and non-human materials that are within the geographical milieu of teachers and the learners. Examples of community resources are religious institutions such as churches, mosques and shrines, commercial banks, historical places (e.g. museum, Zoo), industrial sites etc. These are places that students can visit and see for themselves those things they have learned in textbooks. Human community resources include teachers, learners, curriculum developers, parents, chiefs, etc in the society. Non-human resources also include instructional materials (audio, visual and audio-visual) equipment and facilities.

Ogundele (1983) also sees community resources as the various groups of things found in the community or outside it that appeal to our senses of hearing, seeing, touching, feeling and smelling, which greatly promote the teaching of social studies. These include; castles, chiefs' palaces, historical sites in the communities, museums, places of geographical interest, places of economic interest, places of civic interest, places of scientific interest, and various research institutions. They provide students with an enduring view of physical, social, and political environment of the learners. Also, community resources open up opportunities for students to be acquainted with real situations, problems, and potentials, and thus bring about critical thinking and inquiry mind. Therefore, social studies lessons move from mere teacher-centred verbal instruction to student-centred activity. Resources make students to be involved through practical activities.

Some scholars of social studies describe community resources as out- of-door activities. Baja (1983) describes out-of-door activities as "first hand experiences which arise from direct learning situations" (p.62). Hug and Wilson (1965) in their study of out-of-door education observed that; out-of-door education is the term used to define the effective use of the natural environment both to teach those parts of the curriculum that can be taught outdoors and to visualize other parts through firsthand experience (p.1).

Moreover, Hug and Wilson (1965) placed emphasis on the effective use of environment and the fact that only certain parts of the curriculum can be taught through the use of out-of-door activities. Balogun, Okon, Musaazi & Thakur (1984) on their part, saw out-of-door activities to involve a teacher taking pupils out of the classroom to the scene where what he wants pupils to learn about can be observed closely. This explanation draws the social studies teachers' attention to the fact that during out-of-door activities pupils' attention should be directed towards what they are expected to learn about.

The Encyclopaedia Britannica (1977) states that out-of-door activities involve:

A series of educational experiences designed to help the student to identify and solve real-life problems to acquire skills and appreciation with which to enjoy a lifetime of creative living, and to attain an understanding of human and natural resources (p.37).

This definition suggests that an out-of-door activity is not a sight-seeing tour but that its real purpose is the educational knowledge the pupils gain from it. Uche (1982) stated that the social studies teacher should encourage his/her pupils “to go out and gather or collect information” (p.32). Uche’s statement should constantly remind teachers of the importance of out-of-door activities in the teaching of social studies. This should be so, because, the trend in social studies education is definitely moving away from the expository teaching in which the teacher presents facts and conclusion to be mastered. Uche was therefore emphasizing the fact that pupils themselves should play an active role in learning about their environment by going out to see things for themselves and to interview experts on the things they want to know.

Types of Community Resources

Community resources are the various groups of things found in the community or outside it which greatly promote the teaching and learning of social studies. There are various places of interest in the immediate and wider environment where teachers and learners can visit for information. These places include:

1. Places of geographical interest – Boti falls, Mountain Afadzato, Volta river estuary, Abofour forest reserve etc.
2. Places of historical interest – Feyiase–Akayem, Bono–Manso, Assin Manso, Salaga slave market, Elimina and Cape Coast castles etc.
3. Places of economic interest – The banks, the offices of the main government revenue collecting agencies, (CEPS, IRS and VAT), market squares, etc.
4. Places of civic interest – The offices of the Electoral Commission, the Commission for Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ), Parliament house, etc.
5. Places of cultural interest – chief palace, the various cultural centres, the various Shrines, the Gambaga Witches camp etc. and
6. Places of scientific interest – The Kwabenya Atomic Energy Centre, Mampong-Akwapem Research into Plant medicine centre, the various research institutions or centres, etc. (Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, 2006).

Teachers’ Experience and use of Instructional Resources in Teaching

Instructional materials are a variety of materials in various formats which influence student's learning and instructor’s teaching. These have evolved in recent years to include computer and VCR player/recorder technology, textbooks, library books, periodicals, pamphlets, art prints, study prints, pictures, transparencies, films, filmstrips, slides, videodiscs, audio cassettes, sound recordings, compact discs, computer software, CDROMS, and electronic resources. Varrella (1989) stated that several available instructional materials will serve their purposes, if effectively accessed and efficiently used. Instructional materials enhance effective and appropriate developmental experience, quality of instruction, instructional methods and techniques (Young, 1999). The use of a variety of instructional techniques help to make learning more effective by appealing and maximizing the use of the senses for learning.

Little and Windeatt (1989) argue that materials have a hidden curriculum that includes attitudes toward knowledge, teaching and learning, relationship of teacher and student and the society. Materials have an underlying instructional philosophy, approach, method, and content, including both linguistic and cultural

information. Illustrations are important because many people form impressions based on the visual presentation of ideas. It is important that illustrations avoid portraying characters as stereotypes or caricatures. The effectiveness of instructional materials depends upon the manner and the degree to which they meet the needs of teachers and students. The level of experience of the teacher in the use of instructional materials plays a pivotal role in the teaching and learning process. Any evaluation must examine usage, scope of print and non-print collections, frequency of removal of bias and outdated materials, and procedures that promote ease of use and accessibility.

Instructional materials are selected based on the principles of provision of accurate, well-written materials that will enrich and support the adopted curriculum. Taking into consideration varied interests, abilities, and maturity levels of the students served; provision of materials that will stimulate growth in factual knowledge, literary appreciation, aesthetic values, and ethical standards; provide a background of information that will enable students to make intelligent judgments in their daily lives. Others are selection of materials on opposing sides of controversial issues to provide guidance and practice in critical reading and thinking; representativeness of the many religious, ethnic, and cultural groups and their contributions to heritage; and placing principle above personal opinion and reason above prejudice in providing high quality and diverse materials (Young, 1999).

Instructional materials are often depicted as audio-visual aids used by communicators to facilitate the understanding of learners by involving more of their senses, especially those that relate to hearing and seeing (Kitao & Kitao, 1997; Agbamu, 2006). Audio-visuals make learning relatively permanent, help to arouse and maintain interest of the learner, encourage learners' involvement in the learning process, stimulate self-activity, widen the range of probable experience, and help to add depth and variety to learning (Agbamu, 2006).

Despite the aforementioned qualities, there are several other inherent factors that affect the use of instructional materials, which can be classified as teacher, and technology related characteristics. Sahin (2006) noted that computer expertise, computer access, attitude, support, and faculty characteristics were major factors that affect the use of instructional computer technologies. Mumtaz, (2000) reported that a number of factors which influence teachers' decisions to use ICT as IMs in the classroom are access to resources, quality of software and hardware, ease of use, incentives to change, support and collegiality in their school, school and national policies, commitment to professional learning and background in formal computer training.

Methodology

Research Design

The descriptive design was employed in this study. The descriptive survey is qualitative in nature. Merriam (1998, p.16) states that the “descriptive research design’s key concern is for the understanding of the phenomenon of interests from the participants perspectives, not the researcher’s”. She further observed, that “descriptive studies are undertaken because there is lack of theory, or existing theory fails to adequately explain a phenomenon”. Best and Khan (1993) stated that descriptive research limits generalization to the particular group of individuals observed and that no conclusions are extended beyond this group. This design was used because it provides a meaningful picture of events and seeks to explain people’s perceptions and behaviour on the basis of information obtained at a point in time. However, the design cannot help a researcher to establish causal relationship between a teacher’s qualification or experience and the use of community resources in teaching.

Sample and Sampling Technique

The target population for this study comprised all teachers in all the second cycle schools in the Tamale Metropolis. There were 25 senior high schools in the Metropolis. However, the accessible population for the study was only social studies teachers who were 129, made up of 81 (62.8%) males and 48 (37.2%) females. The census

survey was used to conduct the study. According to Cooper and Schindler (2000), census survey involves the use of all members in any population of interest. They state that a “census is feasible when the population is small” (p.164). By this survey, every member of the group was contacted to collect data by way of answering the research questions.

Instrumentation

The questionnaire was used to solicit the needed information for the study. This research instrument made it possible for the researcher to obtain detailed information on the attitude of senior high school social studies teachers toward the use of community resources in teaching the subject. The questionnaire comprised open and closed - ended items.

The questionnaire was divided into four (4) sections, namely; A. B. C and D, to facilitate the collection of data on the various aspects of the topic. Section A sought for personal data of respondents which comprised the name of the school, gender, professional qualification and teaching experience of respondents. The second section consisted of a four-point Likert scale items that were structured to gather data on teachers attitude towards the use of community resources in teaching. Items in Sections C and D were structured as a four-point Likert scale. The items sought to find out how often teachers used community resources in teaching and the constraints teachers encountered in the use of community resources.

Data Collection Procedure

The questionnaires were personally administered by the researcher to the teachers in the various senior high schools in the Metropolis. Before the administration of the questionnaires, the rationale for the study was explained to the headmasters/headmistresses of the chosen schools. Copies of an introductory letter from the Director, Institute of Education, UCC, were given to the heads to study and if possible approve of it. This helped the researcher to gain the support and co-operation from the heads. The researcher was then granted permission to meet the various heads of departments for social studies and the teachers. The rationale and purpose of the study were again discussed after which copies of the questionnaires were given out to heads of departments to be distributed to the teachers to respond to through the various heads of departments. The researcher returned to the schools to collect the questionnaire after two days.

Data Analysis

The descriptive statistics was used to analyze the research question. Glass and Hopkins (1996), opine that descriptive statistics involves tabulating, depicting, and describing collections of data. They state that descriptive statistics provide very simple summaries about the sample of study and the measures. In this regard, the researcher used simple frequencies and percentages to analyze the data for this research question.

Results and Discussion

Discussion of Preliminary Results

This section basically gives background information about respondents. It deals with the gender, professional qualification and teaching experience of the respondents.

Table 1: Gender of Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	81	62.8
Female	48	37.2
Total	129	100.0

Source: Field data.

From Table 1, the result shows that 81(62.8%) of the respondents were males while 48(37.2%) were females. This means that there were more male respondents than female.

Highest Professional Qualification of Teachers

The data collected from respondents on item 3 on the questionnaires were analyzed to find highest professional qualification of the respondents. The information is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Professional Qualification of Respondents

Qualification	Frequency	Percentage
B.A Social Sciences	4	3.1
B. Ed (Social Studies, History)	67	51.9
B. Ed Economics	10	7.8
PGCE/PGDE Social Studies	14	10.9
Diploma in Social Studies	20	15.5
B.A Economics	7	5.4
B.A History	7	5.4
Total	129	100.0

Source: Field data.

Table 2 shows that majority of the respondents, 67(51.9%), were first Degree holders in Bachelor of Education (Social Studies, History), 20(15.5%) were Diploma holders in social studies, 14(10.9) holders in PGDE in social studies. This shows that majority of the teachers in the selected senior high schools in the Northern Region possessed the professional qualifications required for effective teaching of social studies. The results of the study indicate that the Teachers have obtained the skills, knowledge and competencies that are desirable to support the teaching of social studies.

Table 3: Teaching Experience of Respondents

Years	Frequency	Percentage
1-4 years	27	20.9
5-10 years	51	39.5
10 years and above	51	39.5
Total	129	100.0

Source: Field data.

The results in Table 3 revealed that 102(79.0%) of the respondents have taught for over 5 years. It can therefore be concluded that most of the teachers have enough experience in the teaching of social studies. Since most of them have been teaching the subject for over 5 years, it is long enough to conclude that they have gained much experience in respect of teaching social studies.

Main Findings

Research Questions 1: How often do social studies teachers use community resources?

Research question one sought to find out how often social studies teachers used community resource to teach. The results of the analysis related to this research question are as shown in Table 4.

Table 4: How often teachers use community resources in teaching social studies lessons.

Statement	Weekly	1-3 per month	Sometimes	Not at All
Use of invited guest in class	4 (3)	17 (13)	45 (35)	63 (49)
Use of resources outside the classroom but within the school compound	11 (9)	14 (11)	52 (40)	52 (40)
Organizing a workshop, discussion or debate as social studies topic	4 (3)	29 (23)	44 (34)	52 (40)
Organizing a workshop, discussion or debate as social studies topic	2 (2)	10 (8)	58 (44)	59 (46)
Visit to historical sites or museum	2 (2)	10 (8)	61 (47)	56 (43)
Visit to city streets to examine things or observe events	2 (2)	10 (8)	67 (52)	50 (38)
Observational visit to industrial concerns, artisan workplace	2 (2)	10 (8)	67 (52)	50 (38)
Educational visit to market and other business Concern	4 (3)	13 (10)	67 (52)	45 (35)
Use of instructional materials (artifacts, items, realia, etc.) collected from the environment	11(9)	12 (9)	38 (29)	68(53)

From the results in Table 4, it can be deduced that majority of the teachers do not use community resources regularly or do not use them at all in teaching social studies. This is because over 50% in all the items indicated that they sometimes or never used the resources in their instruction. The results imply that most social studies teachers do not often make use of community resources in their instruction. This finding agreed with findings of Goodlad (1983), Popoola (1980), and Taiwo (2000). These researchers showed that although community resources are recommended in social studies curriculum, they are rarely used or never used to enrich social studies teaching which makes social studies lessons dull.

Conclusions

From the findings of this study, the following conclusions were made; most senior high school social studies teachers did not use community resources in teaching, most of the teachers lacked the necessary pedagogical skills, there was inadequate in-service training for teachers, there was little or no administrative support, most teachers also lacked technological skills and there was low teacher morale.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made for the purpose of the successful use of community resources in teaching social studies at the senior high schools:

1. From the findings of the study, social studies teachers should try as much as possible to integrate the use of community resources in teaching social studies to improve the quality of instruction given in schools and also ensure the use of standard student centered approach to teaching as against teacher centered which teachers currently employ in teaching social studies.
2. School authorities, particularly school administrations should encourage teachers to use community resources through financial support, appropriate scheduling of standard time table and organization of regular staff development programmes to promote teacher efficiency.

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