

MATERIAL SELECTION AND ITS RELEVANCE TO HISTORY INSTRUCTION IN NIGERIAN SECONDARY SCHOOLS.

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Abstract

The Idea Of Material Selection Is A Crucial Aspect Of The Art Of Teaching History In Secondary Schools In Nigeria Which Most History Teachers Tend To Neglect. There Is, In Most Cases, No Conscious Efforts By Secondary School History To Carefully Select The Kind Of Materials They Will Utilize In The Course Of Teaching In The Classroom. Materials Such As Books, Instructional Materials Which Aid Instruction Immensely Are Not Given The Desired Attention By The Teachers Which Often Results To Poor Teaching And Learning. This Paper Made A Case For The History Teachers To Be Diligent In The Process Of Selecting Only Relevant Materials For A Particular Lesson. It Further Recommended That History Teachers Need To Under Go Intensive Training On How To Select Materials For Their Teaching, They Also Need To Acquire Higher Degrees While The School And Government Should Also Provide These Materials In Schools For The Teachers To Select From

Key Words: History Teachers, Material Selection, Instructional Materials, Poor Teaching

Introduction

Instructional Materials Provide The Basis For What Learners Will Experience And Learn. They Hold The Power To Either Motivate Or Discourage Learners. They Are Powerful Tools That Bring The Learner Very Close To The Reality Of The Lesson Or Subject To Be Learned. Considering The Abstract And Voluminous Nature Of The History Subject, It Is Very Important That Instructional Materials Are Employed By The History Teacher For Effective Lesson Delivery. This Therefore Means That, Instructional Materials Must Be Carefully Planned, Selected, Organized, Refined, And Used.

Instructional Materials Have Always Been Thought To Be Simply Those Physical And /or Tangible Components Of Materials Used To Facilitate Instruction By The History Teacher Such As Workbooks, Maps, Terracotta, Etc. In Today's World, However, The Range Has Broadened Considerably To Include, Materials Such As News Paper Publications, Academic Journals And Periodicals, Graphic Novels, Websites, And A Wide Range Of Visual, Audio, And Audio-visual Technologies And Information Communication Technologies (ict). The Focus Of This Paper, Then, Is Not On Selection In The Narrow Sense Of Textbook Adoption And Other Orthodox 'teaching Aids' As We Use To Know Them, But On History Curriculum And Program Planning That Entails Selection Of A Broad Spectrum Of Materials, Both Print, Digital, And Multi-dimensional That Can Be Used In The Classroom, Small-group Work, And By Individual Students In Extensive Study. These Instructional Materials Bring Life To Learning By Stimulating Students To Learn. Flemings

(1981) In Bozimo (2001) Opined That Pictures And Words Function Very Well Together, Compensating In A Way, For Each Other's Weakness. According To Sanda And Maigoro (2007), The Inability Of History Teachers To Use Appropriate Teaching Aids For The Presentation Of Their Lessons Makes The Subject Dull And Uninteresting, Thus Sending Student Away. The Use Of Instructional Materials In The Classroom For History Instruction Has The Potential To Help The Teacher Explain New Concepts Clearly, Resulting In Better Student Understanding Of The Concepts Being Taught. This Is By No Means To Say That They Are An End In Themselves, But They Are Means To An End (Kadzera, 2006). Instructional Materials Are Essential Since They Help The Teacher And Learners Avoid Overemphasis On Recitation And Rote Learning That Can Easily Dominate A Lesson. Resource Materials Allow Learners To Have Practical Experiences Which Help Them To Develop Skills And Concepts And To Work In A Variety Of Ways. The Work Of Sampath (1990) As Cited In Hilda & Bernard (2015) Further Explain That People Learn More Through The Senses Of Sight And Hearing Compared To Other Senses. Considering The Numerous Importance Of Instructional Materials In The Teaching Of History As Stated Above, The Focus Of This Discussion Is On The Selection Of Instructional Materials For History And International Studies Instruction In Secondary Schools.

Instructional Material Selection For History And International Studies Education Instruction

Selection Of Instructional Material Subsumes A Situation Whereby The History Teacher Carefully Chooses What Material To Utilize For A Particular Instruction (Maigoro, 2022). This Implies That Selection Of Material For History Instruction Must Be Done In A Manner That Serves The Very Purpose For Which It Is Required. The History Teacher Needs To Carefully Consider Most Importantly, His/her Stated Lesson Objectives Before Making The Choice Of Relevant Instructional Materials To Be Used, Which Will Help In The Successful Achievement Of Such Objectives. The System Approach Is Recommended In The Selection Of Materials And Equipment's In The Contemporary Classroom. Here, This Approach Considers The Available Resources And Media In Relation To Appropriate Techniques Of Teaching, Duration Of Lesson, Chronological And Age Range Of Students, And The Nature Of Topics Concerned. (Bozimo, 2001). These Instructional Materials Can Either Be Locally Sourced Or Commercially Acquired. In A Situation Whereby The History Teacher Selects Materials Sourced From Within, Such A Material Is Said To Be Locally Produced Or Improvised On The One Hand, While The Ones That Are Purchased Are Said To Be Commercially Produced. It Is However, Worthy To Note That The Task Of Selection And Acquisition Of Instructional Materials Is Not The Sole Responsibility Of The History Teacher Alone. It Involves The School Management, Parents And The Community As Well As The Students. Therefore, As Schools And Other Stakeholders Plan For The Selection And Acquisition Of Such Materials, They Should Consider Not Only Purchased Materials, But Also Materials That Are Provided Online (via The Internet) As Well As Those Generated By The History Teacher And Even The Students. Also, The Scope Of The Selection Policy Should Not Unintentionally Suppress Naturalness And Creativity In Teachers By Requiring A Formal Selection Process For All Materials Used For Instructional Purposes. Sometimes The Most Effective Learning Experiences Are Those That Make Use Of Unanticipated Instructional Materials Such As A Youtube Video Clip, Facebook Post, Or Even Tweets.

Responsibility For Material Selection

Selecting Materials For History Instruction Cannot Just Be Done By Everyone Because It Requires In-depth Knowledge Of The History Curriculum Content, Students' Backgrounds And Learning Experiences. According To Ntce (2014), It Also Requires The Understanding Of Their Abilities And Interests; Not Just Of Educational Objectives, But Of The Best Practices And Range And Quality Of Materials For Meeting Them; Not Just Of The Particular Work Being Considered, But Of Its Place

Within The Short, Medium, And Long Term Framework. In Short, Responsible Selection Demands Not Only The Experience And Education Needed To Make Sound Choices, But Also The Ability To Defend The Choices Made. Therefore, Although Administrators And School Boards Are Often Legally Charged With The Responsibility Of Selecting And Acquiring Instructional Materials, This Responsibility Should Be Delegated To Qualified History Education Teachers.

Material Selection Procedures

Selection Procedures May Vary From The Teacher And The School In Terms Of The Capacity Of The School To Provide Instructional Materials And The Ability Of The History Teacher To Improvise Where The School Is Not Able To Provide It. Selection Is Most Appropriately Done By The History Teacher Who Is The Closest Person To The Students—that Is, By Teachers At The Classroom Level. The Selection Group's Charge Must Be Clearly Specified And Understood By All. The Process Should Be Part Of The School's Annual Schedule While Adequate Time And Resources (finances) Must Be Set Aside For The Provision Of These Materials.

The Selection Criteria Should Be Made Public In Written Form To The Students. The Actual Materials Selected Will Become Known To Students Through Course Syllabi, Booklists Circulated To Students And Parents, And Various Assignments. But The List Of Materials Can Be Made Available For Comments By Students, Parents, And The Public At Any Time, With The Understanding That Further Informal Selection And Changes Are Sometimes Made As Teachers Perceive Numerous Opportunities During The Course Of The Year Or Instruction To Better Meet Students' Needs Through Other Materials.

Improvisation And Informal Selection Of Materials

Sanda (2008) Defines Improvisation As The Art Of Making Your Own Aid (instructional Material) From Local Materials, Sometimes Found Within The School Premises. These Improvised Materials Should Be Able To Convey The Same Instructional Message Just As The Original Ones. When Selecting Materials For History Instruction, It Should Be Born In Mind The Possibility Of Non Availability Of The Exact Material To Be Used. The Dearth Of Appropriate Material To Be Used For History Instruction Necessitates That The History Teacher Be Innovative To Be Able To Create Relevant Instructional Materials That Are Appropriate For The Level Of The Topics And Learners To Be Handled. When Such A Situation Arises, The 'creative' History Teacher Takes Advantage Of Opportunities To Use Materials Which Do Not Lend Themselves To The Formal Selection Process. Such Supplemental Materials May Be Selected By The History Instructor; But Again They Must Meet The General Selection Criteria Of Educational Relevance And Ability To Meet Student Needs.

Criteria For Instructional Material Selection For History And International Studies Education Instruction

Educators Need To Consider Criteria Against Which To Judge Instructional Materials. Teachers, Curriculum Designers, And Other School Personnel Can Use The Following Criteria To Evaluate The Design Of A New Curriculum, To Select Instructional Materials, Or To Adapt Instructional Materials For Professional Use. No Set Of Instructional Materials Will Meet All The Following Criteria. A History Teacher Will Have To Make A Judgment About The Degree To Which Materials Meet Criteria And About Acceptable And Unacceptable Omissions. Sanda (2008) Has Outlined Eight Criteria For Material Selection For Instruction As Follows:

Criterion1: Must Be Relevant To The Lesson Objective: For A Material To Be Selected For History Instruction, Such A Material Must Be Relevant In The Achievement Of Lesson Objectives. These Objectives Are Often Spelled Out In Measurable Outcomes In Order To Guide Lesson Delivery And Evaluation.

Criterion2: Should Be Appropriate To The Learner's Age: Instructional Materials To Be Selected Must Fit The Age And Maturity Of The Learner. What Is Appropriate For A Particular Age Group May Not Be Appropriate For Another. When Appropriate Materials Are Selected And

Used For History Instruction, It Becomes Easier And More Interesting For The Learner To Understand Difficult Concepts And Ideas.

Criterion3: Should Be Simple To Understand: Instructional Materials To Be Selected By The History Teacher Must Be Simple To Understand By The Learner. It Should Be Simple Enough In Explaining Just The Essential Details In The Lesson Or Topic To Be Taught.

Criterion4: Should Be Durable: In Material Selection, The History Teacher Must Ensure That Such Materials Are Durable. They Should Be Materials That Can Be Used For A Considerable Duration Of Time In Order To Cut Cost Of Production And /or Acquisition.

Criterion5: Should Be Readily Improvisable: This Entails That In Selecting Instructional Materials For His History Instruction, The History Teacher Should Bear In Mind The Possibility Of Having To Improvise For The Selected Material In Case Of Damage, Loss Or Unavailability. Only Materials That Can Be Replicated Using Locally Sourced Materials Are Recommended For Selection.

Criterion 6: Should Be Adequate In Size: When Selecting Instructional Material For History Instruction, The History Teacher Must Ensure That The Material Selected Is Neither Too Small Nor Too Large. Only Materials That Are Of Moderate And Appropriate Sizes Could Serve The Purpose For Which It Is Deployed.

Criterion7: Should Be Interesting To The Learner: When Selecting Materials For History Instruction, The Interest Of The Learner Must Be Taken Into Consideration. Materials Selected Should Arouse The Interest Of The Learner In Such A Manner That It Leaves An Indelible Impression In Their Memories. This Would Help In Internalizing Learning.

Criterion8: Be Possible For Collaborative Teacher Public Production: Selected Material Should Be Items That The History Teacher And Other Stakeholders In The School System Can Jointly Produce Or Procure. This Touches On The Availability Of The Selected Material. It Also Touches On The Importance Of Intellectual, Financial, And Moral Support From Those Within The Larger Educational System. This Support Includes History Teachers, Administrators, School Boards, And Communities.

Conclusion

In Conclusion, Material Selection And Its Appropriate Usage For History Education Instruction Help In Numerous Ways In Improving The Level Of Assimilation Of Historical Concepts, Themes And Genre Which Hitherto Would Have Been Thought To Be Abstract. Good Selection Procedures When Followed Can Help In Dispensing Adequate Knowledge To The History Students. It Is However Clear That, No One Curriculum Thoroughly Incorporates All The Criteria Outlined Above For The Selection Of Instructional Materials. There Are Always Trade-offs When Developing, Adapting, Or Adopting A History Curriculum. However, The Criteria Should Provide Assistance To Those Who Have The Responsibility Of Producing, Selecting, And Utilizing Instructional Materials Towards Improving The History Curriculum.

Recommendations

In View Of The Above, The Following Recommendations Are Hereby Put Forward.

1. Only Qualified History Teachers With Education Background Should Be Employed To Teach History In Secondary Schools For Quality Instruction
2. The Government And School Authorities Should Make Funds Available For The Acquisition Of Instructional Materials
3. The History Teachers On Their Own Part Should Learn To Improvise Instructional Materials For The Purpose Of Classroom Learning Where The School Or Government Cannot Provide
4. History Teachers Should Be Sponsored To Attend Workshops And Conferences Where They Will Have Current Information On The Rudiments Of Improvisation Of Instructional Materials

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