
BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN THEORY AND PRACTICE; TEACHERS' UTILIZATION OF INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES IN TEACHING SOCIAL STUDIES IN BASIC SCHOOLS IN WEST MAMPRUSI DISTRICT IN NORTHERN REGION, GHANA

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ABSTRACT: *This research work examines the extent of teachers' utilization of instructional resources in teaching Social Studies in Basic Schools. The study also examines the various instructional resources that can be utilized by Social Studies teachers' for teaching purposes within West Mamprusi District in Northern Region, Ghana. The researcher used qualitative method for data collection and analyzing. The researcher elicited information from respondents using structured interviews. The research focused on Basic Schools within West Mamprusi District. Two research questions were formulated for the research. The descriptive research design was used for the study. The targeted population consisted of head teachers, teachers and pupils in basic schools within West Mamprusi District. Ten (10) Basic Schools were randomly selected for the study. Twenty (20) Social Studies teachers and twenty (20) pupils, two (2) each were selected from the ten (10) schools using purposive sampling. All head teachers from the ten (10) basic schools were also interviewed. The study found out that teachers do not use instructional resources in the teaching of social studies from the interviews conducted. The causal factors for not using instructional resources in teaching from the interviews include; waste of time in preparing and organizing instructional resources to teach a particular topic, difficulty to obtain and expensive to buy by either the teacher or school, financial constraints, teachers lack of identification of materials and human resources, lack of knowledge by the teacher of what type of raw materials and resource persons to rely on for use in order to enhance the learning capacities of his/her students, and teachers basing their lack of instructional resource use to their many years of experience in teaching the subject. Based on the findings, recommendations were made that Social Studies teachers need to be given orientation on the need to always teach the subject using instructional resources through in-service training, workshops, and seminars, Ghana Education Service and Parent Teacher Association (PTA) should support schools in terms of procuring the needed instructional resources to enhance the teaching of Social Studies, Teachers should also be initiative and creative enough to improvise their own instructional resources within the environment to promote effective teaching and learning to enhance students understanding, and internalization and application of lesson content, The government must take the lead in terms of financial and production of these resources for all schools, The education resource centers of the country should also be commissioned to identify, relocate, collect, store and distribute instructional materials and ideas to institutions of learning, Such resource centers should have a common directorate and research unit, which will help coordinate its activities and seek ways of improving its services.*

KEYWORDS: Instructional Resources, Social Studies, Citizenship Education, Resource centers, Effective teaching of Social Studies, Basic schools, utilization

INTRODUCTION

Social studies according to Quartey (2011) is an integrated subject that is geared towards equipping an individual with relevant knowledge, skills, desirable attitudes and values needed in guiding him/her in solving personal and societal problems that threatens mans' survival.

Blege (2001:11) supported the above definition when he said that Social Studies is "citizenship education". This means, social studies as citizenship education is the study aimed at inculcating desirable skills, attitudes, values and relevant knowledge among learners to enable them participate effectively in the civic life of their communities. Ross (1997) also regard social studies as "the preparation of young people with the knowledge ,attitudes, skills and values necessary for active participation in society, certainly involves the studying aspects of social sciences, it implies a complex outcome that goes beyond simply requiring young people to master the content of those subjects" cited in Yaw Ofosu-Kusi (2008:5). The importance and relevance of social studies education, as a discipline in the Ghanaian educational system right from the basic education level through to the tertiary level, cannot be over emphasized .Its relevance lies in the fact that, it indeed, develops in the learner the relevant knowledge, attitudes, skills and values required for their personal enhancement as well as societal national development and progress. Thus, the main focus of social studies is citizenship education. This means that learners are equipped with need tools necessary for solving personal, contemporary and societal problems that threatens man's survival. The purpose of teaching and learning social studies is to develop informed and responsible citizens. Martorella (1994:10) states the purpose of social studies education succinctly as "to develop reflective, competent and concerned citizens".

Ayaaba (2005) stated that a principal task of every social studies teacher is to ensure that students understand and make meaning out of whatever they learn in class. Most teachers would agree however, that conveying information to students is not all that easy. Although understanding lies at the heart of every teaching endeavor, most of the time, learners are unable to conceptualize what they learn. Several teaching techniques and strategies have been adopted and utilized in teaching and learning of Social Studies since the introduction of the subject in the Ghanaian Basic Schools. One important way of helping students to understand concepts, theories and ideas in social studies is to use relevant instructional resources in the teaching and learning process.

A study conducted by Tyler (1949:63) cited in Ayaaba D. (2005) points out that "learning takes place through the active behavior of the student". He stresses that it is what the learner does that he /she learns not what the teacher does. These views essentially place a great premium on the use of relevant instructional resources in order to evoke the learning capacities of learners. Okunloye (2011) asserted that instructional resources are people, events, places or materials that are used to enhance learning, usually by simplifying a difficult situation or making uninteresting learning attractive for learning. This probably explains why Dewey (1967) asserted that a gram of experience is of greater value than a kilogram of theory. The demand for instructional resource use in the teaching and learning of social studies therefore, becomes more urgent in an effort to help learners develop their educational, personal and social aspirations. Aggarwal (2001:242) contends that the school community provides "concrete, seeable and tangible resources which are extremely dynamic, interesting and meaningful for teaching and learning of Social Studies". These research evidences amply suggest that effective teaching and learning of social studies requires the use of relevant instructional resources. The use of instructional resources is especially important and relevant because, topics like

democracy, constitution, leadership, family, rights, responsibilities to mention but a few, are concepts which are a bit abstract, and therefore require the use of relevant instructional resources to adequately teach them.

By using instructional resources, the teacher attempts to excite as many senses in learners as much as possible to bring them into complete involvement in the learning situation. A multiple approach, through hearing, seeing, touching, smelling and tasting, makes for more complete understanding of the lesson. According to David & Lawrence (2007) an undisputable teaching approach has been the use of instructional resources in explaining issues, concepts, ideas, theories, hypotheses and principles. This view was corroborated by Aggarwal (2001) when he opines that instructional resources permeate through all fields of learning because of its application to learning of subjects and courses in any curriculum. Instructional resource therefore is an essential catalyst for enhancing the assimilation, comprehension, retention and application of concepts, theories and hypotheses in every learning engagement. The demand for instructional resource use in the teaching of social studies in basic schools within West Mamprusi District becomes more urgent in an effort to help learners develop their educational, personal and social aspirations. It therefore behoves all social studies teachers to be well at home with the utilization of instructional resources in social studies instruction.

Despite the obvious benefits of instructional resource utilization in the teaching and learning of social studies, research findings indicate that myriad of reasons are given by teachers for not using these resources in teaching (Talabi 2003, Farrant 1980). The pertinent questions to address, therefore, are to examine the extent of teachers' utilization of instructional resources in teaching of Social Studies in Basic Schools within West Mamprusi District, what instructional resources can be used by Social Studies teachers' for teaching purposes. The purpose of the study therefore is to identify answers to these pertinent questions in order to assist stakeholders of education to develop appropriate strategies and interventions to improve the use of instructional resources in social studies instruction and other subjects in basic schools within West Mamprusi District.

Statement of the problem

Social studies is one of the core disciplines in the basic school curricular. Implied in the above exposition is the fact that social studies have its unique focus being citizenship education. This view was upheld by (Quartey, 1985) cited in (Quashigah, 1994). He opined that the discipline seeks to create an efficient citizenry through cognitive and distillate knowledge, development of relevant skills, encouragement of desirable attitudes and commitment of vital responsibilities. In simple terms, social studies among others prepare the individuals to be participatory, concerned, competent, and democratic citizens: capable and willing to contribute their quota towards the development of society. This view is shared by Ayaaba and Odumah (2007:3) when they indicated that "Social Studies is the study aimed at inculcating desirable skills, attitudes, values and relevant knowledge among learners to enable them to participate effectively in the civic life of their communities". Arising from this definition is the primary purpose of social studies, which is to help young people develop the ability to make informed and reasoned decisions for public good as citizens of a culturally diverse, democratic society in an independent world. NCSS (1994:1).

This can be achieved by exposing learners to myriad of instructional resources so as to observe, process, record and construct knowledge based on their own experience. This confirms the assertion by Dewey (1964) long ago when he said that "the eye gate is more powerful than the

ear gate". On the account of this, there is the need on the part of Social Studies teachers to plan and use instructional resources in the teaching and learning process bearing in mind the essence of continuity and sequence to foster, reiteration and widening of scope as well as catering for the depth of affective elements to be acquired (Tyler (1949) cited in Tamakloe (2008:46). Khan and Weiss (1973) posited in agreement that school related attitudes must be altered in a positive direction, and indicated that whatever else may transpire in the school, the teacher has the most central role to play in the development of student affective responses. But this depends on the teachers' perception of what Social Studies is or ought to be as well as how it should be taught.

Instructional resources, no matter their nature and composition, constitute a very important and relevant component of successful teaching and learning. Many social studies educators and educationists agree that the use of teaching and learning resources go a long way to help in students understanding and remembering of what they have been taught. Mehlinger (1981) observes that while it is possible to teach without instructional resources, it is easier to teach when they are available. Research on learning and remembering indicate that all the senses influence the reception of messages during a communication encounter. These evidences suggest that effective teaching and learning of social studies requires the utilization of relevant instructional resources.

However, a critical observation of Basic Schools within West Mamprusi District revealed that teachers of Social Studies do not use instructional resources in teaching the subject. It is in the light of the above that this study is embarked upon. This is done by taking a critical study of some selected basic schools in the District. The pertinent questions to address, therefore, are to examine the extent of teachers' utilization of instructional resources in teaching of Social Studies in Basic Schools within West Mamprusi District, what instructional resources can be used by Social Studies teachers' for teaching purposes. The present study therefore sought to identify answers to these pertinent questions in order to assist stakeholders of education to develop appropriate strategies and interventions to improve the use of instructional resources in social studies instruction and other subjects in basic schools in West Mamprusi District.

Research questions

For the purpose of this study, the following research questions were formulated;

1. What is the extent of teachers' utilization of instructional resources in teaching of Social Studies in Basic Schools within West Mamprusi District?
2. What instructional resources can be used by Social Studies teachers' for teaching purposes?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this research hinges on the theory of learning as described by cognitive psychologists. Cognitive psychologists posit that in attempt to learn anything a child must pay attention to it. It also involves exploration of the visual field, fixing the eyes successively on different parts of rating and these parts are anticipating phenomenon that are not yet clearly perceived (Akanbi, 1989). The researcher is of the opinion that social studies

teachers should use instructional resources that would enable students to easily perceive learning situations in a positive way. This position is supported by Farrant (1980) when he said that the inability of the teacher to utilize appropriate instructional resources to teach certain concepts will affect the student negatively in the subject.

Instructional resources as a concept

According to Talabi (2003) instructional resources include a wide range of resource materials and devices designed to enhance realistic imagery and substitute experience to enrich curricular experiences of many kinds. Instructional resources are materials used to improve learners' knowledge, abilities and skills, to monitor their assimilation of information, and to contribute to their overall development and upbringing (Soviet encyclopedia, 1979). As pointed out by Tamakloe, Amedale, and Atta (2005) instructional resources are any resource which the teacher uses to enhance learning, understanding or the acquisition of concepts, principles and skills by students. Instructional resource is, therefore, any material which is employed in the teaching and learning process, either by the teachers or the students to promote understanding, and the internalization and application of lesson content. Odumah (2002) describes instructional resources in teaching and learning as those various resources available in and outside the school environment which he uses to make the teaching and learning interesting, meaningful and effective for students. Ericson and Curl (1972) upheld the view above when they asserted that instructional resources are equipment that may be used to convey meaning without complete dependence on verbal symbols. This view point was corroborated by Awoyemi, (2003) when he said; instructional materials are those materials available to a teacher in educational setting, which he uses to make his teaching very meaningful and effective for students understanding. This was further corroborated by Okunloye (2011) when he asserted that instructional resources are people, events, places or materials that are used to enhance learning, usually by simplifying a difficult situation or making uninteresting learning attractive for learning. Instructional resources abound in both human and non-human materials for the use of the teacher, and social studies is the subject that has the monopoly of achieving the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains of knowledge through the reliance of the use of different types of instructional resources. The above definitions imply that, the professional social studies teacher can no longer depend on the mere theories and principles of the traditional method of teaching. An up to date teacher, versed in educational conventional resources is needed in this fast growing and technologically advanced society.

Classification of instructional resources

By classification, Das (1993) identified four (4) categories of instructional resources, namely;

1. Non projected
2. Projected visual aids
3. Projected audio aids
4. Audio aids

According to Das (1993) the non projected aids do not need any projection onto a screen. They include chalkboard, real objects, models, photographs, pictures. The projected visual aids consist of objects printed. The enlarged images of which are projected onto a screen by means of suitable machines called projectors. The third category, the projected audio visual aids are

those which are projected and pictures are seen and sound heard. Examples include cinema, television, and video. In a joint research conducted by Dubey and Barth (1980) they classified instructional resources into teachers as resource persons, other resource persons, resource places, and resource materials.

Banks (1990) categorization includes: reading materials, visual, audio and audio-visual materials, role playing, creative dramatics and simulation; and the community as a learning resource. Aggarwal (2001) puts instructional resources into two broad groups, namely projected and non-projected materials. The projected materials include films, filmstrips, slides opaque and overhead projections. The non-projected materials constitute five groups:

1. Graphic aids: cartoons, charts, maps, etc.
2. Display boards: chalk board, bulletin board and flannel board.
3. Three dimensional materials: diagrams, models, and realia (real objects).
4. Audio materials: such as radio, recordings and television.
5. Activity resources: computer-assisted instruction, demonstrations, drama, fieldtrips, teaching machines, programmed learning.

A study conducted by the African social and environmental studies programme (ASESP, 1990) grouped instructional resources into four, namely;

1. Display boards: these include chalk board, flannel board, poster and collage.
2. Three dimensional materials, made up of realia, models, mobile, sand table, diorama.
3. Graphic materials: maps, globes, diagrams, charts, graphs.
4. Electronic aids: radio, television, tape recorder/player, opaque projector, overhead projector, and computers.

In another study carried out by Parker (2001) he classified instructional resources into reading and non-reading materials. The reading materials include textbooks, encyclopedias, periodicals, reference books, magazines, newspapers. Non-reading materials include pictures, films, filmstrips, recordings, fieldtrips, simulations, maps, globes, and community resources of all types. In his view, together, the two groups provide the information base for the teaching and learning of social studies. In spite of the classifications, instructional resources may be grouped as visual, audio, audio-visual resources.

1. Visual resources: These are resources that transmit information and could be coded and decoded by the sense of sight. They include; pictures, filmstrips, globes, maps, transparencies, charts, bulletin boards news papers and magazines. In the opinion of Banks (1990) visual resources are often used in social studies to introduce concepts, reinforce learning and extend understanding.
2. Audio resources: These are those whose information can only be decoded by the sense of hearing .they include the tape recorder, radio, sound broadcasting, language laboratory and gramophone these resources are useful in enriching the teaching and learning of social studies.

3. Audio-visual resources: They are those resources which cater for both audio and visual reception. Aggarwal (2001:178) describes audio-visual resources succinctly as “technological media that help the teacher clarify, establish, correlate and coordinate accurate concepts, interpretations, and appreciations and enable him to make learning more accurate effective, interesting, inspirational, meaningful and vivid” Cited by Ayaaba (2007). Multi-media resources include; films, television, computers, videotapes and sound strips. Banks (1990:246) points out clearly that resources which combine with sound and pictures and motion, are effective in helping students to experience “powerful concepts, value dilemmas and decision making opportunities”. The teaching and learning of social studies therefore requires the use of relevant resource materials to promote internalization and application of lesson content.

The community as a learning resource

The community is the best of learning resource to the social studies teacher. Learning experiences that take place in the community museums, institutions, and organizations, historical and cultural sites as well as in the natural environment addresses different learning styles of students as well as enhance motivation and connect classroom learning to real world

Educational trips beyond the regular classroom are intended to add meaning, vitality and interest to classroom experiences. They encourage students to become active learners, and provide a way of related theoretical study to practical problems in the real world. This enhances the learning experience. The teaching and learning of social studies should not therefore be confined to the four walls of the classroom because every community, however, small, has resources that can be used to strengthen social studies education (Talabi, 2003). As Parker (2001:289) points out “it is in the local community that the teacher sow the seeds of a life-time study of human society”. It is in the local community that the children gain the opportunity to observe at first-hand the social processes that function around him. He/she is introduced to the problems of group living, government in operation, the production and distribution of services and to the rich cultural heritage of the people who live in the community. The social studies teacher may use community resources in two basic ways. One is to bring some portion of the community into the classroom. For instance, the social studies teacher makes use of community resources when he/she asks children to bring materials from home like dyes, paints, clay, empty tins, newspapers, magazines, pieces of clothe, wood, kitchen utensils, bottles, oil among other items for bulletin boards, collage construction, mobile construction, slide construction, chalkboard construction or for the construction of their projects. The personal experiences children have in the community and share with the class are likewise a common use of community resources in teaching and learning. Resource Persons/Guest Speakers could also be invited by the social studies teacher to the classroom. A vital community resource for effective teaching and learning of social studies is the resource Persons or Guest Speakers. These are usually people in the community with rich experiences and expertise in specialized fields of human endeavour .Such people include; Persons with special skills such as weavers, posters, blacksmiths and drummers, Persons with interesting hobbies--youth organizations, care for flowers, and singing, Members of service organizations--the police, military, national fire service, commission on culture, and commission on children’s rights, Early inhabitants of the community, Professional persons--Doctors, Teachers, Engineers, Imams, Pastors, Bankers, and Lawyers, Government officials--District Chief Executive, Director of Education, Head of Aids Commission, Legislatures--Members of Parliament and District Assemblies, Chiefs. The other is to take the class out of the school to some place or a person of importance in the community as in field trips.

Need for instructional resources utilization in social studies instruction

According to Walker (1982) if students rely only on what they hear, they will not achieve much as only one quarter (1/4) will be remembered after forty eight (48) hours has elapsed. This means therefore that learners should be supplied with sufficient relevant instructional resources to provide good and conducive atmosphere for learning. It is based on this that Awoyemi (2003) opined that several reasons call for instructional resource utilization in educational setting. These include;

1. Instructional materials aid the teachers effectiveness in teaching because the materials make his/her lesson interesting and more attractive, students tend to pay attention more to his instructions.
2. Instructional materials do help to explain abstract instructions to students.
3. Through the use of these materials, learning becomes more meaningful and permanent.
4. They develop a continuity of thought and supply a concrete basis for conceptual thinking.
5. They offer a reality of experience which stimulates self activities and participation on the part of the learners and develops continuity of thought as events may be produced to reflect performance.

Research on learning and remembering indicate that all the senses influence the reception of messages during a communication encounter. A study by Alcorn, Kinder and Schunert (1973) revealed that:

- 1 percent of what we learn comes from the sense of taste,
- 1.5 percent from the sense of touch,
- 3.5 percent from the sense of smell,
- 11 percent from the sense of hearing, and
- 83 percent from the sense of sight

This confirms the assertion by Dewey (1964) long ago when he said that "the eye gate is more powerful than the ear gate". The ASESP (1990) put together findings from many researches with students, and concluded that people learn and remember:

- 10 percent of what they hear,
- 15 percent of what they see,
- 20 percent of what they both see and hear,
- 40 percent of what they discuss with others,
- 80 percent of what they experience directly of practice, and
- 90 percent of what they attempt to teach others.

These two research evidences amply suggest that effective teaching and learning of social studies requires the use of instructional resources. The use of instructional resources is especially important and relevant because, topics like democracy, constitution, leadership family rights, responsibilities to mention but a few, are concepts which are a bit abstract, and therefore need the use of resources to adequately teach them.

Aggarwal (2001) outlines the essence of resource materials in the teaching and learning of social studies education as follows:

1. They are potent motivators.
2. They lend reality to classroom teaching, and link instruction with real life.
3. They provide a concrete basis for conceptual thinking and hence, reduce meaningful word responses of students.
4. They have a high degree of interest for learners as they are interested in things that they can hear, see, touch, taste, plan, make, do, and try.
5. They provide the necessary basis for developmental learning, and hence, make learning more permanent.
6. They offer reality of experience which stimulates self-activity on the part of learners.
7. They develop a continuity of thought; this is especially true with motion pictures.
8. They contribute to increase retention as they stimulate the maximum response of learners to the learning situation.
9. They help in the right type of images in the minds of learners, which facilitates learning.
10. They focus attention, arouse interest and motivate learners to action, and stimulate mental and physical activity.
11. They save time and make learning concrete, permanent and durable.
12. They act as a reservoir for information which can be accessed and used by learners.

The above expositions justify why it is important to use instructional resources during lesson delivery. Most teachers will agree that, instructional resources no matter their nature and composition constitute a very important component of successful teaching and learning, and, go a long way to help in students understanding and remembering of what they have been taught. This therefore, calls for the proper selection of relevant resources to enhance teaching and learning. Mehlinger (1981) for instance observes that while it is possible to teach without instructional materials, it is easier to teach when they are available.

Selection of instructional resources

In selecting and using instructional resources, certain factors according to Dynneson and Gross (1999) have to be considered: The availability of the relevant resources is of paramount consideration. Generally, teachers and students find it easier and cheaper to select those resources that are readily available in the immediate, and sometimes, distant environment. That is why the school environment is often regarded as a child's laboratory for the extending of

frontiers of knowledge. Consideration should be given to the cost of the resource. The resource selected for use should be within the financial reach of the school. Where the teacher and /or students have to provide these resources, the teacher should ensure that the cost does not bring untold hardship to him/her self, the class or the school, whatever the case may be. Durability is another factor that should be considered in engaging the attention of the class. A material that can easily spoil should be avoided .it is essential to select and use resources that are fairly durable so that they can be re-used when desired.

The effectiveness of the resource is another consideration. Generally, the resource selected for use in a social studies lesson should be capable of contributing to students cognitive, affective and psychomotor development, arouse their interest in the topic, and promote critical thinking and problem solving abilities. The instructional resource should be capable of providing varying points of view on issues, especially on controversial issues. This is essential in promoting divergent rather than convergent thinking in learners. The resources should be current .quite often; teachers select and use out-moded resources in their lesson delivery. This is unacceptable especially in social studies, which deals solving contemporary and societal problems of man's survival. The reality is that the teacher should be abreast of time in the selection and use of resource materials. This does not only call for creativity on the part of the teacher, but also wide and constant reading. The resource selected for use in any social studies lesson should help in achieving the objectives of the lesson. Every teacher outlines in advance certain objectives that must be realized at the end of the lesson. Therefore, it is important to select only those materials that are capable of contributing to the attainment of the set objectives of the lesson. Learners' particularly young children are naturally curios. So it is important to select resources that will satisfy their curiosity so that the desired learning outcomes can be achieved.

Utilization of instructional resources in social studies

The above assertions on instructional resource selection, therefore, call for the proper utilization of instructional resources in order to meet the individual needs of learners in the teaching- learning process. The use of instructional resources in social studies is paramount in order to; Solve value and decision problems in social studies, information must be collected analyzed, and data evaluated from a wide variety of resources. Information data from any one source are insufficient to help students solve problems that they encounter in social studies. Furthermore, students learn in different ways. Textbooks for example are efficient ways to teach facts, but may be deficient in affecting values or developing skills. It must be stressed that all the senses are involved in learning. Students must see, hear, touch taste, smell, if need be. Learning can occur by studying pictures, listening to radio, constructing a project, visiting a museum or helping solve a community problem. Each activity offers students a unique way of learning. Thus, while variety is not in itself a virtue, using a range of instructional media can arouse interest, instruct and reinforce learning previously acquired and provide opportunities to students to apply knowledge and skills they have acquired (Talabi, 2003).

The resource chosen for instruction should be appropriate to the stated objectives, content of the course and learners developmental level. Whether or not the resources are appropriate depends largely on how they are used. Excellent resource design for one purpose or objective proves wholly ineffective when used to achieve another. For example, dramatization and role-play are effective ways to build empathy; but less effective in conveying generalizations. The resource material chosen should also be linked to the subject matter of the lesson. They must also fit the maturity level of learners' .by way of illustrations, whereas pictures about animals

appeal to younger children, they hold less appeal to older youth. Again, whereas older children are more capable of relying on verbal symbols, younger children need various kinds of pictures, models, drawings and other concrete objects to guide their understanding of the subject matter. The same instructional resources can be used to support different teaching techniques. Instructional resources by themselves do not dictate how they can be used. It is the teacher who decides on the method to be employed. For example guest speaker can be invited to the social studies classroom to provide current firsthand information about the topic being studied. Alternatively, the guest speaker can be used as an expert witness who responds to students questions based on their previous study of the topic. Thus, instructional resources provide the devices for instruction, but ultimately the teacher must select the technique of using them. Instructional resources should be evaluated according to a set of criteria in order to determine their impact and future use. The following questions might be asked when making judgments about instructional resources: is the material consistent with agreed-upon educational goals and instructional objects? Did the materials contribute to students' cognitive growth and effective development? Did the material arouse student interest in the topic? Did it promote the critical thinking and problem-solving abilities of students? Did the material present varying points of view on issues, especially on controversial questions? Is the material appropriate for the age of the students? Is the material accurate, up to date and related to the course content? Is the material easy to obtain? (Ayaaba 2005)

Nature and objectives of social studies in the basic school curriculum

According to the Teaching Syllabus for Social Studies for basic schools (2007) Social Studies is a study of the problems of society. The subject prepares the individual to fit into society by equipping him/her with knowledge about the culture and ways of life of their society, its problems, its values and its hopes for the future. The subject is multi-disciplinary and takes its sources from geography, history, sociology, psychology, economics and civic education.

Essential elements of the knowledge and principles from these disciplines are integrated into a subject that stands on its own. As a subject, Social Studies helps pupils to understand their society better; helps them to investigate how their society functions and hence assists them to develop that critical and at the same time developmental kind of mind that transforms societies.

Social Studies at the Basic School level is concerned with equipping the pupil with an integrated body of knowledge, skills and attitudes that will help the pupil develop a broader perspective of Ghana and the world. The integration is achieved in the three sections of the syllabus each of which focuses respectively on.

1. The Environment
2. Governance, Politics and Stability
3. Social and Economic Development

Additionally, the purpose and content of this course is closely related to citizenship education which is cherished in many Ghanaian societies. According to the Teaching Syllabus for Social Studies (2007) the course has been designed to enable pupil to:

1. Understand the interrelationships between the social and the physical environment and their impact on the development of

Ghana

2. Appreciate the impact of history on current and future development efforts of the country.
3. Appreciate the various components of the environment and how these could be maintained to ensure sustainable development.
4. Recognize the major challenges facing Ghana and be able to develop basic knowledge and skills for dealing with such challenge.
5. Understand the dynamics of development in the world and their impact on development in Ghana.
6. Develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed for personal growth, peaceful co-existence, and respect for peoples of other nations.
7. Develop a sense of national consciousness and national identity.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The approach to this research is a qualitative study. Hossain (2011:145) asserts that qualitative researchers study people in their natural settings, to identify how their experiences and behaviors are shaped by the contexts of their lives such as the social, economic, cultural and physical contexts. Qualitative studies aim to gather an in-depth understanding of human behavior and the reasons that govern such behavior. Descriptive research survey was used in an attempt to describe some aspects of a population or an existing phenomenon by selecting unbiased sample of individuals to take part in the interview. According to Boyle (2004:18) “surveys are good for asking people about their perceptions, opinions and ideas though they are less reliable for finding out how people actually behave”.

The population for the study consisted of all the basic schools within West Mamprusi District in Northern Region, Ghana. However, the targeted population consisted of head teachers, teachers and pupils in basic schools within West Mamprusi District. Ten (10) Basic Schools were randomly selected for the study. Twenty (20) Social Studies teachers and twenty (20) pupils, two (2) each were selected from the ten (10) schools using purposive sampling. All head teachers from the ten (10) basic schools were also interviewed. Two main types of data were used in this study. These are primary and secondary data. The primary data included those that came from the interviews which formed the basis for the analysis. The secondary data involved data that were collected from the review of relevant books, journals magazines, newspapers and websites. Data was collected using interview as major instrument. Several strategies were used to ensure data quality. The researcher provided remote guidance on data quality assurance by examining the data that had been collected from the field. The researcher ensured that data can be verified and changes to the data collection can be implemented when necessary. This ensured that primary information is collected for in-depth analysis of the problem. A better analysis can be done through the detailed questions that are asked during the interview for high responses, especially when the interviewee is probed further.

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

From the interviews conducted by the researcher on the extent of utilization of instructional resources in teaching social studies in basic schools in West Mamprusi District, the outcome was clear from the respondents that teachers do not use instructional resources in teaching the subject. The causal factors contributing to the problem includes the following:

Waste of time in preparing and organizing instructional resources to teach: A Junior High School one (1) teacher in one of the basic schools during the interview said “in my school we always desire to use instructional resources in lesson delivery, however, preparing and organizing instructional resources to teach is simply too difficult and time wasting as a lot of effort and time is needed to go through the process. He added further that in his view, the time allocated on the timetable is also too “small” for them to always prepare and use instructional resources in the teaching-learning discourse as they may not be able to cover all the topics in the syllabus ” Mumuni Imam (not real name). A female pupil in Junior High School form two (2) said she can count the number of times instructional resources were used by her teachers in the teaching- learning process in her class. She further said ”if our teachers use these teaching resources frequently, it will help to enhance our learning capacities and improve upon our performance not only in social studies but in the other subjects as well”. She suggested that teachers should be encouraged to always use these resources in their lessons to help pupils understand better whatever is being taught in class instead of always teaching without them.

Difficulty to obtain and costly to buy instructional resources: In another school, a social studies teacher Alidu Zakari (not real name) when he was asked the extent of instructional resource utilization in his class indicated that not only are instructional resources so difficult to prepare, they are also very costly to purchase in the market by the teacher or the school. This view support the works of Farrant (1980) when he said that the most common excuses made by teachers for not using instructional materials are that they are difficult to obtain and expensive to buy. He went further to advice that these objections can be overcome if teachers make their own aids, suggesting that a few simple materials, a moderate imagination and a lot of care are all teachers need to set up in business as their own visual aids producers.

Financial constraints: Financial constraints were cited by Madam Maria Alhassan (not real name) a social studies teacher in one of the basic schools as a reason for not using instructional resources for social studies instruction. To her, Ghana Education Service that is supposed to help in this direction is always complaining of lack of funds to procure teaching and learning materials. He quizzed further “if the organization we work for is unable to provide the needed materials for teaching and learning, who can?”

Lack of knowledge of the type of material and human resource to rely on: Another teacher Mohammed karim (not real name) told me during the interview session that cumbersome processes were required to get the services of a resource person(s) to help explain certain topics, concepts and or theories and principles for the understanding of the students, so, “we often do our own thing to help in that direction”. His view is in line with Talabi (2003) when he posited that the problem may arise due to lack of identification of materials and human resources which can be got locally to do the job. Talabi (2003) stated further that the type of raw materials and skilled personnel which or who can be utilized for such avenue may not be known. Some of the teachers said that the subject is so easy to learn and understand so therefore little or no instructional resources are required in teaching it.

Teaching based on experience: One other teacher Yaro Atamba (not real name) said “I have taught social studies for well over ten years now. I have gained enough experience in teaching it and so do not need instructional resources in my lesson delivery”.

From the assertions of the respondents from the interviews, it can be concluded that teachers do not use instructional resources in teaching social studies in basic schools in West Mamprusi District in Northern Region, Ghana.

Respondents’ opinions were sought again on what instructional resources can be used by social studies teachers for teaching purposes. Some teachers mentioned globes, charts, bulletins, card board illustrations, textbooks, maps and field trips as examples of instructional resources that can be used for social studies instruction. A student Alima (not real name) suggested that they can be sent to the community to learn about some of the things that cannot be brought into the classroom. She cited the circuit court, chief palace, police station as examples of resources in the community that can be utilized by social studies teachers for teaching purposes. Other students suggested that photographs, films and charts as well as the mobile phones could be used in the teaching – learning process.

A number of teachers also gave examples of instructional resources that can be used to teach social studies as television, video, radio, projectors, chalkboards and computer. Another female teacher Azaratu Karim (not real name) said audio, visual and audio-visual resources are all types of instructional resources for social studies instruction.

It is clear from the second research question that social studies teachers are aware of some of the instructional resources that can be used to teach the subject to enhance students understanding and internalization and application of lesson content. Yet, social studies teachers do not use instructional resources in teaching the subject in basic schools within West Mamprusi District where the research was conducted.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Following the findings from the research, the following recommendations were made;

1. Social Studies teachers in the basic schools within West Mamprusi District need to be given orientation on the need to always teach the subject using instructional resources through in-service training, workshops, and seminars
2. Ghana Education Service and Parent Teacher Association (PTA) should support schools in terms of procuring the needed instructional resources to enhance the teaching of Social Studies.
3. Teachers should also be initiative and creative enough to improvise their own instructional resources within the environment to promote effective teaching and learning of Social Studies as well as enhance students understanding, and internalization and application of lesson content.
4. The government must take the lead in terms of financial and production of these resources for all schools.

5. The education resource centers of the country should also be commissioned to identify, relocate, collect, store and distribute instructional materials and ideas to institutions of learning. Such resource centers should have a common directorate and research unit, which will help coordinate its activities and seek ways of improving its services.

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