

THE USE OF VISUAL AIDS IN THE TEACHING OF THE NEW TRADE SUBJECTS IN SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN EBONYI LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF EBONYI STATE

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ABSTRACT: *Visual aids are any visible materials which the teacher uses to make his or her lesson clear, interesting and understandable. This study focused attention on the use of visual aids in the teaching of the new trade subjects in secondary schools. Five research questions were formulated and administered to the trade subject teachers in secondary schools in Ebonyi Local Government Area. On the whole, 50 trade subject teachers drawn from the selected secondary schools responded to the questionnaire. The data collected were analyzed using percentage and frequencies. The result from the analyzed data showed that: most vocational subject teachers use demonstration method as visual aids when teaching, only primitive and out dated visual aids are available in secondary schools. Most trade teachers do not use visual aids on a daily basis. Finance constitutes the greatest problems confronting the use of visual aids in Ebonyi Local Government Area. Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made; vocational/trade teachers should use field trip as visual aid in teaching, ministry of education should provide adequate visual aids for teaching, government should provide funds etc.*

KEYWORDS: Visual Aids, Trades Subjects, Senior Secondary School, Demonstration Method, Trades teachers.

INTRODUCTION

Visual aids are any materials or equipment which are employed while teaching to aid learning, by stimulating the senses particularly that of sight (Okeke, 2013). In welding and fabrication for instance, visual aids which ranges from the real object (chipping hammer, electrodes, lighter, metal profiles, hacksaws etc. to representation of materials such as photographs, diagrams or charts are used. Today civilization has made nations to become exposed to assessment and to be classified as either developed or underdeveloped on the basis of their level of economic, social and technological advancement in congruency with her position in international arena. To achieve this need, vocational or trade education is being emphasized at all levels of the nation's educational system especially in the secondary education level.

Inyiagu (2009) defined Vocational or Trade Education as the education for youths and adults interested in preparing for progress in a career in some type of satisfying and productive work or occupation. Visual aids include pictures, textbooks, charts, models, television, films, radio maps, tape recorders, slides, video tapes, strip projectors and overhead projectors. Physical facilities include classrooms, theatres, laboratories, resource centres, etc. As a matter of fact, vocational or trade subjects have advantages in terms of suitability for visual aids because substances and processes are common and can easily be seen and demonstrated.

The trend for the youths of nowadays to become self employed accounts for the popularity of vocational/trade subjects in schools. In 2011, NERDC developed a new curriculum structure for senior secondary school in Nigeria. The New Senior Secondary Education Curriculum (SSEC) is systematically connected with the contents of the Junior Secondary Education Curriculum (JSEC). The curriculum is so diversified that it is made to cater for the differences in talents, opportunities and future roles of individuals. It is developed to provide trained manpower in the applied sciences, technology and commerce. Technical knowledge and vocational skills necessary for industrial and economic development were also greatly considered in the development of the curriculum. In addition, the curriculum is learner centered and activity based. The high points of the new curriculum structure are among others, the inclusion of general mathematics, English language, civic education and trades/entrepreneurship as compulsory, cross-cutting subjects (FGN, 2008).

The new senior secondary education curriculum according to FGN (2008) was developed to comprise the following:

- A group of 4 compulsory, cross-cutting core subjects that must be offered by all students.
- Four fields of study: This is a group of subjects representing a students potential area of specialization.
- A group of 34 trades/entrepreneurship subjects which are vocational based subjects.
- Elective subjects.

Based on the content of the curriculum, according to FGN (2008), students are to offer 4 compulsory cross-cutting core subject, and 3-4 subjects from their field of specialization (humanities, science, technology and business studies). Students are also to choose their compulsory trade/entrepreneurship subjects from the list of 34 trades and elective subjects outside their fields of specialization. In all students are to choose a total number of 8 or 9 subjects (David, 2012).

Specifically, the curriculum reflects depth, appropriateness and there is inter relatedness of the contents of the curriculum. With this curriculum, every senior secondary education graduate is expected to be well prepared for higher education and able to acquire relevant functional trade/entrepreneurship skills needed for poverty eradication, job creation and wealth generation by being self reliant. Also, the introduction of trade subjects as compulsory cross-cutting core subjects that provides required strategic skills for job creation, poverty eradication as well as making students to become globally competitive.

Having described the structure of the new senior secondary education, the current study will be concerned with how to use visual aids to achieve effective teaching of the new senior secondary school trade subjects, mainly the industrial or technology areas. These include:

- Auto body repair and spray painting.
- Auto electrical work.
- Auto mechanical work.
- Air conditioning and Refrigeration.
- Welding and Fabrication.
- Electrical Installation and maintenance.
- Radio, TV and electrical work.

- Block laying and concrete work.
- Carpentry and wood joinery.
- Machine and wood working (NERDC, 2008).

In order to attain the objectives of these trades component of the curriculum, guidance of learners through planned activities that will enable them gain rich knowledge as well as produce a change in their behaviour is very necessary. Also, the practical nature of the trade subjects makes it unique in content, thereby requiring special care and orientation so that the graduates could either be employable in industries or be self reliant and possibly become employers of labour.

To be able to achieve this laudable aim of the new curriculum, the trade or vocational teachers need to adopt the use of some effective visual aids in teaching these trade subjects. It is therefore important to give the aspirants to this laudable goal an all-round theoretical and practical education which will equip them to face the challenges and opportunities which are inherent in vocational\trade subjects (Olaitan, 2004).

Visual Aids are materials which are employed while teaching to aid learning by stimulating the senses (Imogie and Agun, 2008). It is therefore not possible to study vocational or trade subjects without the use of visual aids. Teaching and learning of vocational\trade subjects like metal work technology was done in the past informally, but this has been improved upon these days by the use of Audio Visual Aids and as teaching and learning are graphic and increases the tendency of the learner to inquire about the environment. Unfortunately, the present secondary school vocational\trade programmes tend to neglect the use of visual aids in teaching vocational\trade subjects. As a result of this, secondary school students study vocational\trade subjects without making use of visual aids.

According to Okorie (2009) vocational subjects are not adequately handled in our Secondary Schools. Students are not being taught with the required strategies necessary to arouse their interest in vocational\trade subjects. In view of the above, therefore, there is the need to investigate the use of visual aids in the teaching of vocational\trade subjects in secondary schools.

The main purpose of this study was to find out the extent to which visual aids were utilized by teachers in teaching trade subjects in secondary schools in Ebonyi Local Government area.

Specifically, the study aimed at finding out:

1. The type of visual aids used in teaching of trade subjects in secondary schools.
2. The frequency of use of the visual aids in the teaching of trade subjects in schools.
3. The reasons for using visual aids.
4. The factors that influence the use of visual aids in the teaching of trade subjects in secondary schools.

METHODOLOGY

The population of this study was all the trade subject teachers teaching in all the secondary schools in Ebonyi Local Government Area. Preliminary data collected from the state Education Board revealed that there fifty three (53) trade\vocational teachers in the study area. On the whole, the 53 trade subject teachers were used for the study. The questionnaire was the major instrument used for the collection of data.

The respondents were required to select the option he/she considered to be the most appropriate answer or statement to the question asked. In all, 50 questionnaires were returned duly filled and were used for data analysis. Data analysis was based on 50 duly completed and returned questionnaire of the secondary schools. The data collected was analyzed using percentage and frequencies.

RESULTS/FINDINGS

The findings of the study are presented in Tables 1, 2, and 3,

Table 1: Responses on the type of visual aids used in teaching

S/N	Visual Aids	Number of Response	Percentage
1.	Demonstration	14	28%
2.	Graphic Materials	10	20%
3.	Field trips	3	6%
4.	Motion Pictures	11	22%
5.	Real objects	12	24%
6.	None of the above	-	-
Total		50	100%

From the above table, majority of the vocational\trade subject teachers use Demonstration with 14 respondents, giving a total of 28%, with Graphic materials 10 vocational teachers responded giving a total of 20%; field trips 3 respondents with 6%, Motion pictures 11 respondents with 22%; and real objects with 12 respondents giving a total of 24%.

From the above analysis, majority of the vocational\trade subject teachers use demonstration, followed by real objects, motion pictures, graphic materials, field trips in that order.

Therefore, field trips as visual aids was least used by vocational\trade subject teachers in teaching. This is in support of Okorie (2009) which states that students are not taught with the required strategies necessary to arouse their interest in vocational subjects. Ajetunmobi and Bashorun (2009) stated that the teaching strategies adopted by the teachers and other related factors largely determine the performance of the students.

Table 2: Frequency of utilization of visual aids

S/N	Frequency	Number	Percentage
1.	Daily	14	28
2.	Weekly	34	68
3.	Monthly	-	-
4.	Termly	2	4
Total		50	100

From Table 2 above 14 vocational\trade subject teachers use visual aids on a daily basis representing 28%, 34 respondents use visual aids on a weekly basis representing 68%; while 2 respondents use visual aids on a termly basis representing 4%. From the analyzed data, it shows that most vocational\trade teachers use visual aids on a weekly basis, with the highest number of respondents (34) and the highest percentage of 68. Therefore only few vocational\trade teachers 14 use visual aids on a daily basis representing 28%. According to Martins (2007) he stated that instructional materials such as textbooks, aids, journals, newspapers, magazines must always be incorporated into teaching to generate student's interest.

Table 3: Reasons for using visual aids

S/N	Reason for using Visual Aids	Number of Response	Percentage
1.	To foster motivation	6	12
2.	To facilitate retention in learning	18	36
3.	To save time and simplify learning	20	40
4.	To promote teacher/student relationship	3	6
5.	To stimulate thinking	3	6
Total		50	100%

In table 3 above, 20 respondents representing 40% indicated that the reason for using visual aids was to save time and simplify learning. This is followed by 18 respondents representing 36% who indicated that to facilitate retention in learning *was* the reason *for* using visual aids. Following this was to foster motivation with a total respondent of 6 representing 12%. To promote teacher/student relationship and to stimulate thinking had a total of 3 respondents representing 6% each.

From the data obtained, it means that the majority of vocational\trade subject teachers agreed that the reason for using visual aids is to save time and simplify learning. This is in agreement with the findings of (Eshiet, 2006 and Dale, 2003) who reported that proper use of teaching materials (visual aids) will positively enhance teaching and learning process.

Table 4: Factors influencing the use of visual aids

S/N	Factors	Number of Response	Percentage
1.	Finance	37	74
2.	Availability	9	18
3.	Storage	4	8
4.	None	-	-
Total		50	100%

The table above shows that 37 respondents representing 74% indicated that Finance was the major factor affecting the use of visual aids in the teaching of vocational\trade subjects. This is also followed by availability of aids with 9 representing 18%. Storage as a factor of visual aids in teaching vocational subjects has a total of 4 respondents with 8%.

From the data obtained, majority of the respondents (74%) agreed that Finance was a major factor influencing the use of visual aids in teaching vocational\trade subjects in schools. This is in support of (Ajetunmobi and Bashorun 2009) who opined that material resources and finance were some of the constraints to the teaching and learning of vocational subjects.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The study revealed that most of the vocational\trade subject teachers use Demonstration method as visual aids when teaching. This finding supports Olaitan (2004) who stated that the teaching methods and techniques most relevant to the teaching of vocational\trade subjects include Demonstration, project and field trips. The study also revealed that only very few (6%) vocational\trade subject teachers use field trips as visual aids. Taiwo (2013) emphasized the use of field trips to include the offer of opportunities for a wide range of experiences and for students to see things for themselves.

The study revealed that most vocational\trade subject teachers do not use visual aids for teaching on a daily basis. Majority of the vocational teachers (74%) agreed that finance was a major factor influencing the use of visual aids in teaching vocational\trade subjects.

It is very proper to state here categorically, that in order to attain heights in teaching-learning process in vocational\trade subjects, multidimensional approaches involving the visual aids, vocational\trade subject teachers, the government and non- governmental organizations as well as their ingenuity, resourcefulness and dedication must be adopted. Vocational teachers must emphasis demonstration teaching methods, regularly utilize relevant aids especially concrete objects and improvise the scarce materials (Ajetunmobi and Bashorun 2009).

Ibe (2002) has emphasized that the ability of a teacher to improvise any instructional material must begin from the level of his creativity, resourcefulness, as well as the knowledge of the subject matter. Therefore, improvisation of instructional materials by vocational\trade teachers is very imperative.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Vocational/trade subjects therefore are aimed at promoting the acquisition of skills and knowledge required in the struggle to mobilize resources for the economic well being of the nation. It is therefore necessary for vocational\trade subject teachers to make adequate use of visual aids when teaching.

Based on the findings and results from the study, the following recommendations were made:

- The vocational\trade subject teachers should as much as possible use Field trips as visual aids for teaching vocational subjects.

- The Ministry of Education should increase efforts in providing schools with the necessary visual aids, especially up-to-date and efficient visual aids.
- Seminars and in-service training should be organized by the Ministry of Education for vocational\trade teachers. This will enable the inexperienced teachers to understand what visual aids are all about, how to make use of them and their importance in teaching, while the experienced teachers are reminded of the need for frequent use of the visual aids in teaching.
- The Ministry of Education should establish resource centre for vocational subjects. Teachers should be encouraged to visit the centres as well as borrow materials from them.
- The government should provide enough funds to secondary schools to enable them purchase-teaching materials (visual aids).

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