



ISSN: 0975-833X

RESEARCH ARTICLE

EFFECTIVENESS OF THE INTEGRATED GROUP BASED MASTERY LEARNING APPROACH IN THE TEACHING OF SOCIAL STUDIES IN JUNIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN BENIN METROPOLIS

^{*}¹Dr. John Egharevba and ²Osayande Iyobo Eric

¹Department of Curriculum and Instructional Technology, Faculty of Education, University of Benin

²Department of Health, Safety and Environmental Education, Faculty of Education, University of Benin

ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Received 27th September, 2015

Received in revised form

10th October, 2015

Accepted 17th November, 2015

Published online 21st December, 2015

Key words:

Social Studies Achievement Test (SSAT),
Nigerian schools,
Traditional expository method.

ABSTRACT

The quest for the effective methods of teaching social studies in Nigerian schools is a continuous one. This research is designed to investigate the effects of integrated group based mastery learning Approach in the teaching of social studies in Junior Secondary Schools in Benin Metropolis. The problem of **learners'** poor performance and underachievement in social studies has been a major issues of concern and interest in the Nigeria educational sector. Two research questions were raised with two corresponding hypotheses to guide the study. A quasi-experimental design of non-equivalent control group was adopted. Two mixed secondary schools were purposively selected from Benin City, out of which, two in-tact classes were selected. The instrument used for the data **collection** was the Social Studies Achievement Test (SSAT). The data collected were analyzed using t-test of independent sample. The result showed that there was a significant effect of treatment on social studies students achievement. This means that the integrated group based mastery learning model was more effective than the traditional expository method. It is recommended that through in-service training, seminars or other forms of on-the-job training to employ mastery learning models.

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Citation: John Egharevba and Osayande Iyobo Eric, 2015. "Effectiveness of the integrated group based mastery learning approach in the teaching of social studies in junior secondary schools in Benin metropolis", *International Journal of Current Research*, 7, (12), 23773-23776.

INTRODUCTION

The recent socio-political and economic changes in the whole global world have also sought about changes in our educational aims, objectives and goals and greater challenges for social studies. The schools are called not only to equip the individual with the basic knowledge in social studies contents but also with higher cognitive skills such as problem solving and reflective skills that allow for self-development and self-reliance. To meet up with these challenges, there is a movement away from the behaviourist method of direct teaching such as in the lecture method, note taking and dictations, where the learner is given content to memorize.

In order to implement the National Policy on Education (2013), the government at all levels became more interested in the schooling process in terms of educational outcomes, learning activities, instructional resources, instructional strategies and evaluation procedures. In view of this emphasis has been on the need to:

- Make educational activities centre on the learner for maximum self-development and self-fulfillment.
- Structure the educational system to develop the practice of self-learning (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2013). The **implications** of these for class teachers is that, they should develop a teaching approach which encourages the learners full participate in the learning processes.

Despite the efforts of government in restructuring the educational system to develop the practice of self-learning, the dominant approach to instruction in schools has been the expository type especially since the inception of Western Education in 1983. For instance, since 1960, curriculum planners have emphasized the inquiry approach by claiming that carrying out investigations is the most promising method by which students will master inquiry skills and become literate in social studies (Yager and Lutz, 1994).

Quite a number of studies have been conducted to investigate the causes of students under achievement in junior secondary school social studies (Onasanya, 1985; Ogbu, 1993; Iroegbu, 1998; Adegbite, 1999; Adeyemi, 2007; Lynn, Douglas and Gerald, 2009). The most reoccurring factor in all is the inadequate teaching method used by social studies teachers. Consequently, learners' individual needs, preferences and

**Corresponding author: Dr. John Egharevba,
Department of Curriculum and Instructional Technology, Faculty of
Education, University of Benin.*

interest cannot be met by most strategies utilized in the traditional, expository method of teaching. This is one of the reasons the researcher is interested in trying out other method such as mastery learning strategy. If the objectives of social studies education are to be met, then the need to look for an alternative teaching paradigm in the form of an improved and effective teaching strategy that is result oriented becomes necessary. The teaching of social studies is therefore an activity that involves both the **teacher and the learners in other to ensure that learning takes place**. While learning involves a behavioural change in the learner, social studies teaching involves the transmission of the relevant body of knowledge, attitudes, manner, dispositions, skills and values that enable the individual to survive in a growing and dynamic society. On this premise, the need for mastery learning as an instructional strategy becomes indispensable.

According to Lynn, Douglas and Gerald (2009), mastery learning is an instructional process that provides students with multiple opportunities to demonstrate content mastery. Initial instruction is presented at a fast pace to engage all learners. Students who do not demonstrate mastery are given additional instruction specifically designed to correct their misunderstandings. Re-teaching should involve strategies that are different from the original instructional methods. For example, if the original material was presented in a lecture format with visuals, the re-teaching process might involve hands-on activities and cooperative learning strategies. A retest is later given to these students to allow them to demonstrate content mastery. The teacher must be an effective facilitator who thoroughly processes his information of social studies content and present it in an orderly and comprehensive manner. There must be an established feedback mechanism, so as to enable correction of lapses in instructional methods which can thus bring about improvement in the teaching and learning of social studies.

Summarily, to instruct for **mastery**, the following guidelines are to be followed:

- Clearly state the objectives representing the purpose of the subject matter without any ambiguities.
- The curriculum should be divided into smaller learning **group**, each with modeling, practice, formative evaluation, re-teaching, reinforcement, and summative evaluate strategy inclusive.
- The results of the formative tests are used to provide supplementary instruction, or corrective activities to help the learner overcome problems.

Carroll (1963) supplied the impetus for the emergence of mastery learning. He argued that the focus of instruction should be the time required for different students to learn a given material. Bloom (1968) perfected the Carroll model and described the traditional method of instruction as being very wasteful and destructive, reducing motivation for learning and the destroying the ego and self concepts of students.

The Keller's approach to mastery learning is also known as the personalized system of instruction (PSL).

It is based on the individual and each students learns independently. Both Carroll's and Bloom's model are group-based mastery learning techniques while Keller's model is personalized. Bloom's model, therefore has been viewed as the partial mastery learning technique while that of Keller's is seen as the full mastery learning model because there is little difference from that of Bloom's in that is totally individual based and advocate 100% performance.

Statement of the Problem

The problems of students' poor performance and underachievement in social studies have been major issues of concern and interest in the Nigerian educational sector. The need for intervention is not only recognized but also acknowledged by all stakeholders. Quite a number of studies earlier cited provide enough evidence on the poor performance of students in social studies teaching. This problem has been acknowledged to be a major factor in students' achievement. In spite of the need for innovation approach to social studies teaching the expository instructional approach continues to dominate the teaching of social studies in Nigerian schools as revealed in literature. This method to a large extent neglects human, cultural, social and effective dimensions of social studies. This has continued to attract criticisms and as a result, researchers have continued to stress the need for learner-centred methods, one of which is the mastery learning models. Is this instructional approach not likely to enhance students' achievement in social studies?

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

- Will there be a difference in the achievement of social studies students taught using the integrated group based mastery learning models and those taught using the traditional model?
- Will there be a difference in the learning achievement of male and female students taught using the integrated group based mastery models?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated to give the study a direction:

- There is no significant difference in the achievement of social studies students taught using the integrated group based mastery learning models and those taught using the traditional method.
- There is no significant difference in the achievement between social studies male and female students taught using the integrated group based mastery learning model.

METHODS AND MATERIALS

This study adopted a quasi-experimental of non-equivalent control group design. This design was adopted because it was not possible to have complete randomization of subjects.

In fact classes were used (and not students) for the two groups, and the two existing groups were pre-tested, administered treatment and posted test (Omorogiuwa, 2011). The non-equivalent control group design involved a pre-test and post test. The population of this study comprised all junior secondary school (JSS II) students of Government Secondary Schools in Egor Local Government Area of Edo State, Nigeria. The sample of this study was hundred (100) Junior Secondary school students selected from two mixed secondary schools. In-tact classes were used for the study. This was done by randomly selecting two mixed schools and from two of the schools selected a class each was randomly selected and all the subjects in the class were used.

RESULTS

Hypothesis One

There is no significant difference in the achievement of social studies students taught using the mastery learning models and those taught using the traditional method.

Table 1. t-test of independent samples of students achievement in social studies by mastery learning and traditional teaching methods

Method of Teaching	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	P-value Sig (2 tail)
Mastery learning	30	66.60	10.14	7.281	.001
Expository Method	30	9.35			

$\alpha = .05$

Table 2. t-test of independent samples between male and female students on learning retention in post-test

Method of Teaching	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	T	P-Value Sig (2 tail)
Male	19	66.95	10.76	.609	.810
Female	11	66.00	9.36		

$\alpha = .05$

Table 1 showed a calculated t-value of 7.281 and p-value of .001 testing at an alpha level of 0.5. The p-value is less than the alpha level, so, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in the achievement of social studies students taught using the integrated group based mastery learning model and those taught using the expository method is rejected. Consequently, there is a significant difference in the achievement of students taught using models of mastery learning and those taught using the expository method. Since the mean score of students using the models of mastery learning strategy of (66.00) is greater than the (49.34), therefore, the students achieve more when taught with the models of mastery learning strategy than the one taught with the expository method.

Hypothesis Three

There is no significant difference in the achievement of social studies between male and female students taught using the integrated group based mastery learning model. Table 2 showed a calculated t-value of .609 and p-value of .810.

Testing at an alpha level of .05, the p-value is greater than the alpha level.

So, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in the difference in the achievement of social studies between male and female students taught using the models of mastery learning is accepted or is retained. Consequently, there is no significant difference in the achievement of social studies male and female students taught using the models of mastery learning.

DISCUSSION

The result of the study shows that there is a significant effect of treatment on social studies students achievement as those taught with integrated group based mastery learning models were better than those taught with the traditional expository method. This finding is in line with Adeyemi (2007) who opined that using mastery learning as a quality of instruction brings the desired result. The results found that there was a clear-cut conclusion on the effectiveness of integrated models of mastery learning approach performed better in social studies compared with the conventional method. Method is a major variable that boasts learning outcome.

According to Onyabe and Prokupek (2000) method of instruction is a major variable that affects the students' performance in social studies.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusion were made. Method of instruction is a major variable that affects students achievement in social studies. An appropriate method of instruction would usually boost achievement. Mastery learning model is an effective learning strategy that helps the learners not only to understand the concepts but also increase their creative skills of being able to understand the concepts but also increase their creative skills of being able to understand the social interaction which occurs in class. Students think and talk about their experiences, they suggest and try out new ideas. Social studies teachers should be encouraged through in-service training, seminars and other forms of training-on-the-job to employ mastery learning models. They are to enhance teaching through comparative learning and regular assignments in order to increase the level of social studies learning outcome. Teachers should be equipped with necessary skills as mentioned above to minimize the use of expository method, this study showed that it is the least effective method compared to the mastery learning models that was administered.

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