

An Inquiry on the Underlying Instructional Materials in Social Studies

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Abstract

The use of instructional materials is integral in all forms of the teaching-learning process, for its utilizations assure the efficiency of the delivery and attainment of the objectives. With the reputation of Social Studies as richly factual and conceptual, the selection of appropriate instructional materials is of absolute importance to account. The challenging times at this point that emerges the so-called online classes created a prompt to inquire about the instructional materials that teachers utilize to see possible gaps and for possible optimization. Results of this study through the quantitative descriptive method revealed that whiteboard, textbooks, workbooks, newspapers, and computers were the top materials that are frequently utilized, implying that regardless that these are categorized as traditional and commonly used, still they were perceived as efficient and effective as testified by the respondents. Hence, re-designing them further to adapt to the changing times is ultimately recommended.

Keywords: instructional materials, social studies, teaching-learning process

Introduction

The teaching process is always materialized essentially with the use of *instructional material*, making its selection and preparation carefully and critically designed to attain the teaching-learning objectives, more so in the *teaching of Social Studies*. As explained by certain scholars that lended its capability and optimization, it supplements, clarifies, vitalizes, and emphasizes instruction and learning in the process of transmitting knowledge, ideas, skills, and attitude, greatly implying the need for teachers to be resourceful and creative in the improvisation of '*local*' materials in place of '*standard*' ready-made materials that would make lessons more effective and hence improve learners' achievement. Masvaure (2019) in his paper eclectically expounded the perspectives of several authors indicating that instructional materials are essentially made as instruments in igniting and completing the teaching-learning process gearing towards the most perceivable learners' outputs dictating the most ideal outcome, correlating to how Ajoke (2017) referred to them as objects or devices which help the teacher to make a lesson much clearer to the learner.

Taking from these perspectives the role of instructional materials in carrying out the teaching-learning process is always fundamental, for it performs functions as the optimization of learners' classroom experiences, and acts as the fuel of the teacher in mobilizing the conduct of the lesson delivery.

In the time of the COVID 19 pandemic in which the teaching-learning has been greatly affected as the usual face-to-face instruction is replaced by online learning, it gives rise to the inquiry on the instructional materials that are frequently utilized in the teaching of Social Studies and the justifications therein. Perhaps by this inquisition, instructional designers would be able to have first-hand information as to the type of instructional materials to optimize for the teaching-learning process of Social Studies.

Contexts

Instructional materials may be human and non-human-provided that they facilitate the acquisition and evaluation of this so-called knowledge, skills, attitudes, morals, and values, as they are mere objects of help in the successful delivery of Social Studies lessons and other lessons generally; these materials are information repositories from where relevant Social Studies teaching information could be sourced for transfer to the learners during classroom instruction (Olayinka, 2016).

Scoping the Utilization of Instructional Materials in the Teaching of Social Studies

A study was conducted by Abdelraheem and Al- Rabane (2005) that captured the perceptions of 970 Omani students on the instructional materials being utilized in their Social Studies classes, which through a 14-item questionnaire containing all the available instructional materials, revealed that in terms of the extent of the utilization of instructional materials, the boards, maps, tables, illustrations, and graphs were the most frequently used media while globes, films, and computers were the least frequently used. These findings were in agreement with that of Ghanizadeh et al. (2020) who indicated that teachers rely mostly on the traditional classroom pedagogy rather than mediated instruction, even at a time when technological instructional materials were already flourishing. One may think if it was because of the availability or just directly the preference of the Social Studies teachers because the traditional materials were what they were used to; or that no instructional materials could ever level the efficiency and effectiveness of the mentioned traditional instructional materials in aiding the highly conceptualized nature of Social Studies content.

Technology as an instructional material has constantly been the subject of embracing and improving 21st-century teaching ever since computers started to flourish at the beginning of the new millennium. Heafner (2004) studied how such could motivate students to learn Social Studies, in which he notably observed that teachers assigned the students a project of creating a PowerPoint slide as a campaign advertisement of their senatorial bet for their state's election at that time. As soon as the teacher was through with the instructions, observably the class proceeded immediately to work on it, yielding students exhibiting a significant degree of self-confidence in their work and technological competence no less mastery of the topic content. More importantly, they began to look beyond the task comprehended the relevance of advertisement strategies in undertaking a campaign, alongside the creativity they exhibited by collaborating with their classmates in a cognitively stimulating exchange of ideas, making them more engaged in the subject.

In conclusion, students' active engagement was greatly factored by integrating technology on the task, as they were familiar with it; because it was familiar to them, it was in one way relatable to them, hence made them felt uneasy and enjoyed working it. It not only developed an interest within them in the subject itself but was a remarkable opportunity for them to make use of the skill and creativity that they knew and possessed by projecting it to their works, contrary to the common class scenario wherein students felt unmotivated to do classwork because subconsciously they treated it as a waste of time or uninteresting at all. Technology embarks on students' interest and emerges from there the motivation and interest to learn and perform, shifting the typical attitude towards Social Studies from boredom to excitement, intensified by confidence and demonstrating creativity and skill. Plus, the flexibility of it allows both the teacher and the students to look and work beyond what is expected, with varieties of possibilities.

With regards to the extent of utilization of instructional materials, the frequency of the use of instructional materials that are highly technological depends on the school environment it is in. The study conducted by Abdelraheem and Al- Rabane (2005) in Oman showed that the use of the computer (a specific example of a highly technological instructional material) as an instructional material is perceived to be least frequently utilized. However, Heafner (2004) revealed in her study in North Carolina, U.S.A. that incorporating such kind of instructional material increases the students' motivation to study Social Studies.

Methodology

A quantitative descriptive design was employed in this study in which respondents were selected through a purposive sampling procedure whereby 26 out of 41 faculty of the Social Sciences Department of a public-funded school in Bukidnon, Philippines (the school's name is withheld for privacy and confidentiality agreement) were involved.

The questionnaire used was a researcher-made instrument in form of a Likert scale that was adapted from varied sources and literature, containing the commonly used instructional materials in the teaching of Social Studies. A specific portion was also intended for other unique instructional materials that a respondent also utilized. The respondents then answered it by checking the level of their utilization- *5 if it is always, 4 if it is often, 3 if it is occasionally, 2 if it is seldom and 1 if it is never.*

In the analysis, frequency counts and mean had been undertaken to look into the interpretations. However, it slightly expedited the process as short interviews had been conducted to lens further the explanations of the respondents about their responses. This may sound unorthodox indeed for quantitative analysis, but it yielded a thorough understanding of the data gathered.

Ethical Considerations

The respondents involved were properly informed of the nature, intent, and direction of this inquiry, and were given ample time to decide whether or not they would like to participate. The consent form is given also contained their rights and privileges, and the mechanisms to ensure the privacy of their identities and confidentiality of their responses. An agreement then was sealed that the name of the school would not be mentioned throughout the paper.

Result and Discussion

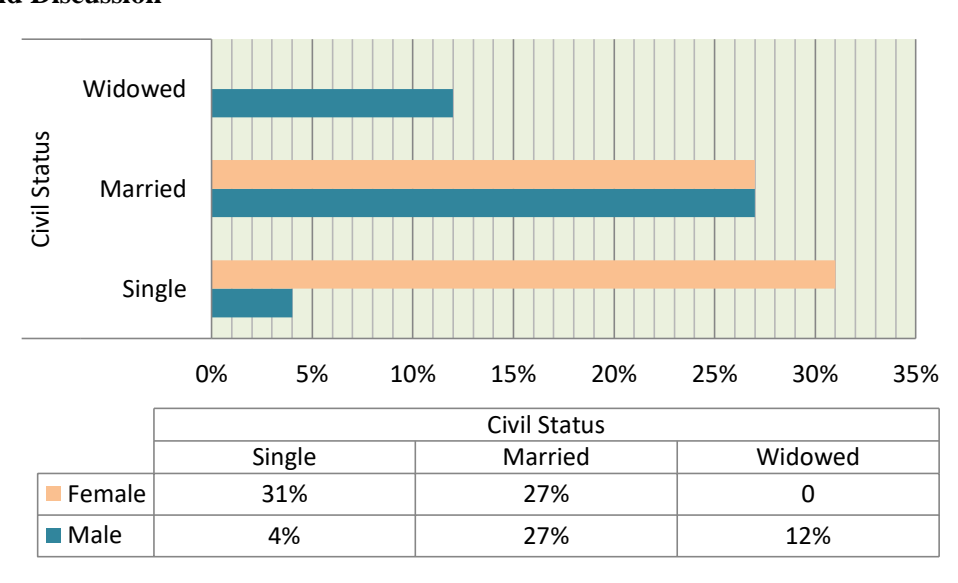


Figure 1. Profile distribution of respondents

By the use of purposive sampling guided by ethical considerations, only 63% (26) of the total number of faculty members of the department became the respondents, although it was originally planned that all faculty would be included. Whereas of the, 11 were male (42%), and 15 were female (58%). The profile shows that the majority (54%) were married and in terms of gender, the majority were female (58%).

Table 1
Descriptive statistics of the utilization of each instructional material

IM	Frequency of Utilization										Mean	Rank
	5	%	4	%	3	%	2	%	1	%		
White board	18	69%	5	19%	0	0	1	4%	1	4%	4.35	1
Textbooks	12	46%	13	50%	0	0	0	0	0	0	4.31	2
Workbooks	11	42%	6	23%	4	15%	2	8%	1	4%	3.69	3
News Papers	10	39%	7	27%	4	15%	2	8%	2	8%	3.69	3
Computer	6	23%	10	39%	8	31%	0	0	0	0	3.62	4
Videos	4	15%	12	46%	6	23%	1	4%	1	4%	3.42	5
Journals	6	23%	6	23%	8	31%	2	8%	3	12%	3.27	6
Illustrations	2	8%	12	46%	2	8%	2	8%	0	0	3.23	7
Tables	4	15%	10	39%	4	15%	3	12%	4	15%	3.15	8
Charts	3	12%	9	35%	6	23%	3	12%	3	12%	3.12	9
Periodicals	4	15%	8	31%	7	27%	2	8%	3	12%	3.08	10
Diagrams	3	12%	6	23%	9	35%	3	12%	4	15%	3.04	11
Magazines	4	15%	6	23%	8	9%	3	12%	2	8%	3.03	12
Photograph	3	12%	13	50%	4	15%	0	0	3	12%	3	13
CD or DVD	0	0	7	27%	12	46%	3	12%	1	4%	2.77	14
Paintings	2	8%	6	23%	5	19%	2	8%	7	27%	2.81	15
Graphs	3	12%	5	19%	6	23%	6	23%	3	12%	2.65	16
Maps	4	15%	5	19%	7	27%	2	8%	3	12%	2.62	17
Timeline	2	8%	7	27%	3	12%	7	27%	3	12%	2.42	18
Models	3	12%	3	12%	6	23%	6	23%	3	12%	2.31	19
Globe	2	8%	4	15%	5	19%	6	23%	5	19%	2.23	20
Sketches	2	8%	4	15%	4	15%	4	15%	6	23%	2.03	21
Overall											3.0836	

The topmost frequently used instructional materials were: whiteboard (4.35), textbooks (4.31), workbooks (3.69), newspapers (3.69), and computers (3.62). Significantly, the utilization extent of whiteboards and textbooks was interpreted as often. Despite being categorized as traditional instructional materials, it must be accounted that the nature of Social Studies content is richly factual and conceptual thus books are indispensable and if it is a book it follows with the idea that it underwent reviews and fact-checking, no less than when its content is being transpired to the learners it must be framed and illustrated as simple and actual as possible, hence the extent of utilizing the whiteboard. From videos down to the last, the extent was interpreted as occasionally to seldom, respectively, since arguably all these are now being found in one device as the ‘computer’ that got the 4th rank.

According to one respondent, one of the reasons why teachers choose to utilize instructional materials like textbooks and worksheets in teaching Social Sciences subjects is that because these subjects are abstract. Thus, the teachers have no choice but to stick to the traditional or the non-technological ones. It is however a consolation that computers and videos are used although not as frequently as the first three. The use of traditional instructional materials may also be explained by the non-availability of instructional materials that are highly technical. Or ever these are existent, not all the instructors and professors have one, e.g. computer, despite the growing population of people using high technological devices. Hence, due to limited income perhaps, the only devices in which teachers are willing to avail of those which were not high-tech.

The results of this study were comparable to the findings of Okobia (2011) which revealed that without any difference between Social Sciences specialists and non-specialists, teachers in Nigeria tend to utilize non- technological instructional materials like textbooks, chalkboards, maps and atlases, display boards, graphs and charts, and globes because of the failure on the part of all

stakeholders charged with the responsibility for the implementation of the curriculum. In this context, perhaps the condition of Nigeria is the same as the condition of the school.

Collectively the respondents were all in agreement to probable reasons that teachers utilized instructional materials that are traditional because of the cost of manufacturing and maintenance of the technological ones, or the reluctance of the teacher to improvise, lack of a resource room for storage, and also the teachers' knowledge about the materials. One respondent argued that teachers preferred to have effortless instructional materials such as the whiteboard, textbooks or workbooks, and computers because these were always available and easy to use and those technological materials would take a portion of time to learn; and despite the online classes going, the whiteboard is still frequently utilized through the applications embedded in virtual classrooms.

Conclusion

Despite being categorized as traditional and common respectively, whiteboard, text and workbooks, newspapers, and computers are frequently utilized and quite perceived as essential instructional materials in the teaching of Social Studies correlating to the nature of its content that is expected to be transferred well to the learners no less that almost everything is already embedded in the computer e.g. virtual whiteboard, even in the time of online classes. The data in one or another conveyed these tools, rather than being solely perceived by some as obsolete, must be optimized further to adapt to the changing fortunes of time to ensure more importantly the efficiency and efficacy of the teaching delivery to the learners.

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