



Teaching Skills for Effective Teaching of Geography in Nigeria Schools.

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Abstract. The study examined the basic teaching skills that necessitate effective teaching-learning of Geography in Nigerian schools. The basic teaching skills are identified and vividly explained to stress their importance for the teaching in the schools. These teaching skills were illustrated with relevant examples in the geography teaching and learning process. The problems militating against effective use of the skills were also stressed and solutions were proffered. However, it was concluded that teaching Skills usage are very essential for effective teaching-learning processes of geography as a subject. It was however suggested that geography teachers should be given adequate training in the identification and use of the relevant teaching skills in order to aid effective teaching-learning process in the school system.

Keywords: Teaching skills, Teaching-learning and Geography.

1. Introduction

Geography as a school subject is viewed by students as being very difficult. This is because of the wide range of topics the

subject covers. This situation is affecting the attitude of students to the subject. For instance, while many students will want to offer subjects like government, economics, commerce and business methods, etc., the reverse is the situation for geography. In most schools, public or private, geography class is highly deserted by the students. The commonest reasons they usually give is that the subject is very wide. The students also complained that more effort is normally needed to pass geography at credit level than economics or government. They are bold to say that geography is made up of several sections such as physical geography, regional geography and human geography, and each of these sections is very wide and requires extra time and efforts to read them if one wants to pass the subject in a very colourful grade.

The possible solution for improving on these attitudes of the students towards enrolling for geography is for the geography teachers to be very skillful in this very wide subject area. A skillful geography teacher will teach the subject most interesting and effectively, this will make the students to be interested in choosing the subject at the secondary school level or even at other higher levels. It is therefore very essential for a good

geography teacher to be highly skillful in his/her subject area if the subject is to be efficiently and effectively taught and to equally encourage more students to offer the subject.

2. What is a Skill?

A skill is the competence for doing a thing perfectly after a specific training has been under-gone by someone. According to Longman Active Study Dictionary, 5th Edition, skill means an ability to do something well, especially because you have learned and practiced it.

Teaching skill will therefore mean the ability to teach well, especially because one has learned and practiced it. What this infers is that for teaching to be effectively done, there is the need for the teacher to possess the ability to teach well especially with the training they had received at the different levels of teacher training programme and the practices they had been involved in over the years in terms of teaching experience.

3. Application of Teaching Skills for Effective Teaching of Geography

Teaching like any other occupation or vocation has specific skills for executing it. These skills should be the major target of all teachers most especially geography teachers who have to master the skills in order to teach the subject effectively. Application of some of these skills will be briefly discussed in line with effective teaching of geography. Specific skills to be discussed are the following:

3.1 Set Induction Skill

This is a major teaching skill. It involves all the activities the geography teacher put in place to arouse the interest of the students and create curiosity and motivation in a classroom situation. Set induction equally encompasses the different stimulating, interesting and motivating

ways in which different topics in geography lesson are introduced to the students. If the geography teacher is able to stimulate, arouse and sustain the students interest through his/her captivating introduction throughout the lesson, the students will definitely perform better in the subject.

3.2 Explanatory Skills

According to Abifarin (2012), a good teacher needs to adequately possess this skill for him/her to be able to convey his/her ideas to the students most intelligently, effectively and efficiently. For a lesson to be explicit to the learners, the major points of a topic to be taught have to be well presented to them in most precise and orderly manner. Therefore, it is inimical for a good geography teacher to possess adequate skill of explanation in order to teach the subject very effectively and efficiently. This is because whatever topic to be taught in geography needs to be presented to the students in most precise, logical, interesting and stimulating way in order for the students to comprehend such topic very deeply and comprehensively.

The following guidelines are very important if a geography teacher is to be adequately skillful in explanation:

- The geography teacher should have clear idea of the topic or concept he/she is teaching.
- The geography teacher should be able to explain his/her idea or topic in a short and unambiguous sentence.
- The geography teacher should be able to convince the students on any issue, topic or concept he/she is explaining without stress.
- The geography teacher should be able to put the idea he/she is trying to pass to the students into a suitable code, such as language, gesture, signs or symbols which is adequately understood by them.
- The geography teacher should be able to put across the message to the students without interference. Such

interferences could be as a result of inadequate preparation for the lesson to be taught by the teacher.

- The geography teacher with adequate skill of explanation should be able to talk to the students in a steady manner without rushing or stammering when talking.

3.3 Discussion Skills

Discussion involves a situation whereby the teacher and students share ideas, compare and contrast views on a given problem, a question, or a situation (Abimbola, 2009). Therefore, topics in geography such as vegetational zones in Nigeria, economic activities in Northern Nigeria, pollution in Niger Delta area and the likes involve a lot of discussion. A good geography teacher has to master the skill of discussion if he/she is to be effective on the job. He or she should be able to express his/her views clearly, orderly, precisely and without any form of ambiguity. He should be able to stimulate discussion among the students, he/she should be able to guide the students as they discuss and he/she should be able to assist the students to generate topics or issues of discussion on their own. In order to make discussion skill very effective, the geography teacher has to follow the following steps:

- He/she should ensure that the learners are familiar with the topic of discussion.
- Where the learners are not familiar with the topic or issue of discussion, the geography teacher should provide clues for the students on the topic or issue.
- The geography teacher should lead the discussion or guide the procedure of the discussion.
- He/she should ensure that the discussion generate high level of interaction between him/her and the students and even among the different categories of students in the class.
- The geography teacher must allow the students to express their views,

emotions and experiences on the topic of discussion freely without any form of hindrances or intimidation.

- The geography teacher can also appoint volunteers to speak in the course of the discussion.
- The geography teacher can also make comments on different opinions of the discussions and summarize all the views given by the members of the discussion group.
- Finally, the geography teacher should encourage the discussants to speak in a short and well-constructed sentence during their discussion.

3.4 The Skill of Demonstration

Demonstration is one of the major teaching skills that is very useful to a geography teacher. Demonstration is a process of presenting or establishing facts or principles. It is a procedure of doing or performing something in the presence of others either as a means of showing them how to do it themselves or to illustrate principles of doing a thing (Omoosow, 2009).

Demonstration can be done by the teacher or the students during geography lesson. The teacher should always encourage students' demonstration in the class in order to promote high level of interactivity among them and to increase the level of students' activities during the lesson.

To ensure effective and efficient demonstration skill, the following clues have to be noted:

- The geography teacher should display certain maps and diagrams in the class in order to teach a particular concept in the presence of the students.
- The learners should watch the geography teacher while carrying out the demonstration.
- The geography teacher should conduct the demonstration in a

sequential manner, usually from the simplest to the most complex task.

- The teacher has to explain each stage of the demonstration to the students in order to make it very explicit to the learners.
- The geography teacher can also stop at any stage of the demonstration and asks the students to carry out the rest steps of the demonstration which he/she has already performed before them.
- The students can specifically be asked by the geography teacher to demonstrate how erosion affects farming practices in eastern Nigeria or the nature of a particular waterfall in their locality.
- The geography teacher should ensure that the students have understood the procedures of demonstration before he/she calls on any of them to re-demonstrate the action(s) he had earlier demonstrated.
- The geography teacher should note that, if a particular student cannot complete a particular stage of demonstration, his/her class mate could be called upon to assist him/her.
- The geography teacher should always ensure hazard-free practice throughout the demonstration period in the class.

3.5 Planned Repetition Skill

Repetition simply means one saying a thing over and over again. Nnadozie (1995) defines planned repetition as a continuous effort to say what is to be said over and over again. Planned repetition involves a teacher repeating important points whenever he is teaching a particular lesson. The repetition may be preceded by phrases such as: once more, in addition, as earlier mentioned, in summary and some other similar phrases. Abifarin (2012) asserts that it is important for the teacher to allow plenty of time for repetition of what has been learnt in order to ensure that lessons

earlier learnt are remembered.

It is very important for the geography teacher to adequately be skillful in planned repetition since the skill is very essential for adequate and efficient handling of whatever lesson he/she wants to teach in geography. It could be processes of landforms, formation of rainfall, courses of river, formation of ox-bow lake etc. could be discussed with the students and the salient points in each of the topics could be written on the chalkboard or the teacher asks the students to mention the important procedures for formation of rain after the topic has been discussed with them. The geography teacher can apply the skill in the following ways when they are teaching:

- He/she can repeat salient points of the lesson.
- The teacher can also ask the students to repeat the major points of the lesson after him/her severally.
- The teacher can write the major points in the lesson on the chalkboard for the students to copy.
- The teacher can instruct the students to memorize the important points listed on the chalkboard.

3.6 Questioning Skill

According to Derville (2007), it is no exaggeration to say that the success of a teacher in any particular lesson, and in learning in general, depends on his ability to question well. The question stimulates the child, and, if skillfully used, can also direct his learning. It is therefore very important for a geography teacher to be skillful and well groomed in the art of questioning. He should understand that the efficiency of teaching to a large extent, depends on the kind of questions asked and the skill with which he/she framed such questions. 'It would be impossible to consider adequate methods of teaching without recognizing questioning as an essential element in all teaching' (Abifarin, 2012). It is very imperative for geography teachers to cultivate the idea of asking sequential and logical questions. For

instance, the questions on any topic in geography must be asked in an orderly manner, usually from the simplest to the most complex ones. Geography teachers should always think quickly of questions which will make their students think for themselves when they find them unexpectedly blocked by some difficulties. They should also be able to think quickly of easier questions which will enable weaker students in the class reach or attain the point where they want them to get to. The geography teachers should be trained on the type of questions to ask. For instance:

- They should be trained on how to ask questions that will acquaint them with how much the students know.
- They should know how to frame questions to direct attention to something in which the students are interested or liable to be interested.
- They should ask questions which can lead the students from one point to another, therefore, making them to think for themselves.
- The geography teacher should frame questions that may be used to test learners' ability to use their knowledge.
- They should be trained in the art of framing questions which will lead the students to see whether they have really understood what they are doing or not.
- They should ask questions that will make the students think for themselves or to use the knowledge they have acquired on their own.
- They should ask questions at any point during the lesson when such questions are essential, necessary and very relevant.

The following clues will assist geography teachers to ask good and relevant questions during the lesson:

- They should not call the name of any student before asking their questions.
- Their questions should be well

distributed among the categories of the students in the class.

- They should not ask questions that will suggest the answer.
- They should accept inability of any student to answer a question when it is clear that the student really cannot think of the answer.
- They should grade the type of questions they ask their students. For instance, fact finding questions and critical questions should be asked at different time.
- They should frame their questions clearly without ambiguity.
- They should direct questions to inattentive students in the class.
- They should always know how to vary their questions to the students, P.56

3.7 Illustration and Use of Examples

Illustration is an oral or graphical expression which is intended to make clearer a concept or a particular point of discussion one is trying to put across to another person or group of persons. It is another important skill a good teacher of geography should use to his/her advantage for effective teaching. The geography teacher will find this skill very useful when teaching topics on economic activities in particular area e.g. coal mine at Enugu, fishing activities in Niger Delta, lumbering in the coastal area of Nigeria etc. All these topics could be illustrated with appropriate maps, diagrams, video clips and documentary films. The teacher should always ensure that relevant illustrations and examples are selected within the experiences and environment of the students. Locally based illustrations and examples should be used for students especially those of them that reside in the rural areas where exposure of such students is limited. To make judicious use of the skill of illustration and examples, the geography teachers need to understand the students they are teaching properly. They have to understand their background,

experiences, needs, likes and dislikes.

3.8 Instructional Materials' Utilisation Skills

Abimbade (1997) defines educational media as a broad range of resources which can be used to facilitate effective and efficient communication in the teaching and learning process. Instructional media is also referred to as instructional materials or learning resources.

There are different ways instructional materials are categorized. But the commonest way is to classify them into visual aids, audio aids, audio-visual aids and realia. The geography teacher should understand the concept of instructional materials and the different categories. This is because, the topic each of the categories can be relevantly used is different. For instance, maps, pictures, diagrams and other relevant posters can be best used for teaching of landforms, types of rocks, vegetational zones, human activities in different regions of the world and so on. While audio-visual materials such as video and television can be best used for teaching wild animal habitats, ocean waves, coastal landforms, economic activities of man in different vegetational zones of a country or the world in general. Realia is used when real thing is brought to the class by the teacher. For instance, types of soil such as sandy, clayey and loamy soil can be practically shown to the students in the class. The geography teacher can also take the students out on excursion to dams sites, lakes, industrial estates etc. for the students to see things for themselves physically and practically too. It is very important for geography teachers to be very skillful in the use of instructional materials in order to make their teaching practically oriented, interesting and very effective.

3.9 The Skill of Using Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

The latest of the instructional media available for the geography teachers is ICT.

ICT has turned the whole world to a global village. This is because, information is now very much available to him/her in any aspect of his/her discipline through the internet. He or she should be able to upload and download useful materials in his/her subject area from the internet. This will be better done if the geography teachers master all the relevant search engines on the internet such as google, twitter, yahoo, facebook etc. The geography teachers should be able to use these search engines in order to gather more recent materials on climatic change, the world industrial zones and modern ways of transportation that will be useful for their students on regular basis through the internet.

4. Conclusion

There are several teachers' characteristics that affect effective teaching. Teaching skill is one of such characteristics. There is no way there will be effectiveness in teachers' teaching if he/she does not possess the necessary teaching skills. This is because teaching skill as teachers' characteristic is very central and highly inevitable if effective teaching and learning is to take place. It is therefore very essential for geography teachers to groom themselves in the use of necessary teaching skills that will make them very efficient teachers and highly effective experts in their professional callings. There could not be effective teaching and learning of geography at whatever level of education if the geography teachers are not having necessary skills and competencies for teaching the subject. The geography teacher could be very good in his/her subject area but may not be able to teach others effectively especially when he or she is deficient in the appropriate and relevant teaching skills which are the propeller for effective teaching and learning. It is therefore very important for all geography teachers who want to be efficient and effective in teaching to master the necessary teaching skills and how to use them to teach different topics in geography.

5. Suggestions

The following suggestions are made towards the effective use of relevant teaching skills for effective teaching-learning of Geography in Nigerian schools. The suggestions are training of teachers on the various teaching skills in the teaching-of-geography. The training received by the teachers will develop their knowledge towards the use of relevant teaching skills in the schools.

Also, practical orientation or approach should be used in teaching of basic concepts in geography. For instance the teachers should introduce the technical concepts like map reading, geomorphology, elementary surveying etc should be introduced using practical approach during teaching-learning process of Geography.

Furthermore, the adopted teaching skills should be complemented with educational media and facilities. The effective use of educational facilities will make the use of teaching skills to be effective.

Finally, effective classroom management should be encouraged, so that teaching skills adopted will be successful. The classroom management through good method, classroom arrangement, conducive environment, teachers' students rapports and all efforts that will aid effective use of teaching skills in the school system.

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