

Towards Effective Teaching and Learning of History in Nigerian Secondary Schools

AJAYI, AYOBAMI OLUTAYO

History Department, School Of Arts and Social Sciences, Emmanuel Alayande College Of Education, Oyo, Oyo State

Abstract: The paper examines the effective teaching and learning of history in secondary schools. Concept of learning, teaching and syllabus were also dealt with the study population consists of four secondary schools within Oyo metropolis. One hundred and fifty questionnaire were given out as a procedure for data collection and simple percentage and frequency counts were employed for data analysis. Secondary sources and descriptive method were also employed. Findings from the study revealed that government should include teaching of history in primary and secondary curriculum and it should be taught at all levels in secondary schools, and some recommendation were made.

Keywords: History, Effective teaching and Learning, Syllabus

1. INTRODUCTION

In the early years of secondary education in Nigeria, history was studied to the Cambridge senior level or school certificate by a very high proportion of Nigerian secondary school students University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate (UCLES's Annual Reports, 1910-1930). In present day Nigeria, reforming school history education is a matter of great social concern, in term of the modernization of the methodological system, which can be understood only in the context of the subject-matter of school history.

It is now clear that the process of history teaching and learning has become more varied and interesting, with a possibility for greater personal input. At the same time, it should be remembered that history education is based on a rich legacy. History teaching and learning in Nigerian schools has a long tradition. The indisputable achievement of the school history teaching system and the scientific methodological school have been recognized internationally. Here, the question of the relationship between tradition and continuity on the one hand and innovation on the other is highly relevant. It should be emphasized that history teaching and learning in schools has changed fundamentally in recent years. A new concept of modern history teaching is emerging. These changes have affected the structure of history education, the underlying structure of courses, the principles for selecting subject-matter and the instructional materials employed. Obanya (1983).

History as a discipline has many definitions. It could be viewed from traditional definitions of history, modern definitions of history, from layman point of view, etc. Advanced Learners Dictionary of Current English defines history as the orderly description of the past. This definition seems to be inadequate, it is true that traditionally, history has changed from mere narration to analysis of events. Modern historian would also disagree with the definition given by dictionary because it is not possible for historian to give complete account of the past. In other words, historians select their materials from the pool of materials available.

The layman can define history as the story of mankind or the activities of men and women in the past. Others can see it as the record of the life and work of people in the past, while some will relate the term to the study of man in his environment. In essence, people see history as the record of lives of the societies of man, all the changes which the societies have gone through, all the materials conditions which helped or hindered development and the conditions of the present as a guide for the future.

There is no doubt, that the term, history means different things to different philosophers of history. We therefore concluded that history is not merely a list of chronological events but a truthful integrated account of the relationships between persons, events, times and places which have been selected for analysis by the historian. All the above definitions have something in common about what learning is and what learning is not. In the first place, for learning to take place there must be change in the learner. The change in the learner implies that the learner has left the learning situation as a different person from what he was before he went into it. It must be expected that such changes that occur during the learning must be permanent.

History as a subject which is been taught in every senior secondary schools in Nigeria, is undergoing a lot of changes in terms of scope and coverage. The paper would looked into the problems affecting teaching-learning of history in secondary schools levels and how the government will include history teaching from primary to senior secondary schools in the curriculum. This would arose the interest of many students to study history in higher institutions, rather than the way it is been taught in senior secondary schools alone. And the enrolment of history students will increase in tertiary institution, government should promote history in their policy as they did to social studies and civic education in all primaries to secondary schools. If these is done pupils would be conscious of the Nigeria history, learn from the past mistakes to correct the future and be a good ambassador of Nigeria.

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The paper looks into the concept of teaching, learning and history. Various problems affecting teaching and learning history in all secondary schools. Such problems are, non-availability of recent textbooks in history, wider coverage of the syllabus, also poor foundation of the secondary school pupils and inability to speak simple English, this make it so difficult for pupils to cope in history classes. Lack of motivation on the part of parents and pupils, methodological problems and the emergence of new subject like social studies and civic contributed to the problem affecting teaching and learning history in secondary schools.

3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. Does the problems facing teaching and learning history in secondary schools is due to poor academic foundation of the students/pupil?
2. Do the syllabus of history is to wide for students to cope?
3. To what extent does the inclusion of history curriculum in primary and secondary schools solve the problem facing teaching and learning history?
4. Why is the teaching and learning of history in secondary schools is facing problem of low enrolment?

4. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study among others are:

- (i) To shed more light on the problem affecting teaching and learning of history in secondary schools.
- (ii) To itemize and discourse the problem confronted teaching and learning of history in secondary schools.
- (iii) To know the position of government on history and how government would help to include in the curriculum the teaching of history from primary schools to senior secondary schools.
- (iv) To proffer lasting solution to all the problems facing teaching and learning of history in all secondary schools.

5. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The findings of this paper will be useful in the following ways:

The paper will let all the stakeholders in history and the government to know the problems facing teaching and learning history in secondary schools.

It would encourage the teacher to use best teaching method when teaching history and this would increase performance of students in history classes.

The study would give reasons why history should be included in primary school curriculum up to senior secondary schools.

To proffer lasting solution to the problems facing learning and teaching history in secondary schools.

6. CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

Obanya (1983) defines teaching as a various activities undertaken by a more experienced and more knowledgeable person in order to enable others learn. He went further that for teaching to be successful, it must satisfy a number of requirements. Firstly, teaching must be methodical. Secondly, it must be well planned. Thirdly, it must result from resourcefulness on the part of the teacher. Fourthly, it must be activity-based. Lastly, it must be related to learners' experience.

Osokoya (1990) submitted that for teaching to take place there must be a change from the learner, resulting from experience. In addition, the change in behavior must be permanent before it can be regarded as learning, and learning can take place in the area of cognitive, that is knowledge, facts or ideas, affective as well as manipulative. In addition, the materials to be learnt must be related to the daily life of the learner in order to make learning meaningful.

Famoyin (1985) opined that, teaching of history is faced with many problems, they are non-availability of current editions of textbooks, to take care of the new syllabus, he also went further on the students over the complaints of wider coverage of history syllabus in the secondary schools for example Nigeria in the 19th century, Nigeria in the 20th century, Africa and the wider world since 1800 etc.

Ajayi (2007) is of the opinion that poor foundation of the secondary school students and inability to speak simple and correct English, most secondary school students find it very difficult to express in simple English and this made it so difficult for students to cope in history classes.

Osokoya (1990) submitted that lack of motivation on the part of the teachers and the parents can create problems in teaching and learning history in secondary schools, a good teacher should know the strengths and weaknesses of the pupils and know the method to adopt in motivating the pupils.

According to Bining and Bining (1952) says problem of principle guiding the selection of teaching methods in history is another problem confronting learning and teaching history in our secondary schools and classifying teaching method into eight categories; they are lecture, exercise, project, problem, supervised study, socialized recitation, laboratory and unit method. Gage (1976) classified teaching method into three; they are classroom discourse, lecture and discovery method.

Crookall (1972) classifies teaching method into six groups; story telling, questioning, exposition, note giving, assignment, and centre of interest. He also agreed that our teaching techniques, should vary depending on what we want to pass across to the students. Crookall says further that whatever method we choose in history teaching, it must be influenced by psychological considerations, starting from known to unknown and from simple to complex and finally the method should make it possible or teaching is relevant to the need of the pupils we teach.

Osokoya (1990) defined teaching method as the strategy of plan that outlines the approach which the teacher intends to take in order to achieve the desirable objectives. It involves the way teachers organize and use techniques of teaching, subject matter, teaching tools and teaching materials to meet teaching objectives. He therefore classified teaching method into ten;

- i. Traditional methods
- ii. Presentation method
- iii. Project methods
- iv. Inquiry methods
- v. Discussion methods
- vi. Problem solving method

- vii. Dramatization method
- viii. Socratic methods
 - ix. Excursions and educational visits
 - x. Simulation methods.

He went further that there is no single method that can suit all occasions in history teaching.

Adewale (2009) opined that emergence of new subjects like social studies and civic education affects teaching and learning history in secondary schools because this courses are being offered from primary to secondary schools level why history is being offered in senior secondary school only and Nigeria government did not even promote the study of history with the policy putting in place, as they are promoting the new subjects at the expense of history in secondary schools.

7. QUALITIES EXPECTED FROM AN IDEAL HISTORY TEACHER

The ideal history teacher should be an academic as well as a professional historian. He should therefore be interested in history as a subject and should keep his professional interest alive. In order to keep his professional interest alived as a historian, the teacher of history has to travel and read widely so as to be conversant with latest developments in history as an academic discipline. He should therefore keep abreast of latest researchers in history and historiography.

It is also important to note that the ideal history teacher does not confine himself to his pupils textbooks or the teacher's versions of relevant history books. Rather he should strive to collect his information from journals, newspapers, biographies, diaries and the like.

The ideal history teacher should belong to professional bodies like, Historical Society of Nigeria, Association of History Teachers, Comparative Education Association of Nigeria. In this way the ideal history teacher remains a learner for life. This would afford him the opportunity of exchanging ideals with colleagues at meetings and conferences. This also keeps his interest alive as he continually identify himself with the discipline, while gradually making himself conversant with contemporary developments in this scientific age.

Moreover, the ideal history teacher should not confine himself to the study of history as an academic discipline; he should have a taste of other subjects in the school curriculum. As a matter of fact, he should be familiar with development in other school including geography, religious education, political science, literature, integrated science and agriculture furthermore he should be able to relate history to these other subjects from time to time.

The ideal history teacher should strive to improve himself by attending courses of study leading to higher academic and professional qualifications in history. And he should not be contended in reading others peoples work without making his on contribution. He should therefore aspire to publish books and articles in his discipline history.

8. METHODOLOGY

A ten items structured questionnaire was used in collecting data on the study. Both primary and secondary sources were consulted. Population of the study consists four secondary schools within Oyo Metropolis. The senior secondary schools I, II and III of Ladigbolu Grammar School Oyo since the problems facing teaching and learning history in secondary schools is the same. 150 questionnaires were administered to the SS I, SS II and SS III and 120 questionnaires were returned. Descriptive and simple percentage methods were used for data presentation and analysis.

Presentation and Analysis of Result:

Table 1: Analysis of Respondents by Gender

Sex	No. of respondents	Percentage
Male	50	41.67
Female	70	58.33
Total	120	100.00

From the table 1, 50 respondents representing 41.67% of the total of male while the remaining 70 representing 58.33% of them are female.

Table 2: Age of the Respondents

Age	No. of respondents	Percentage
12-14	50	41.67
15-17	40	33.43
18 and above	30	25.00
Total	120	100.00

From table 2 above, 50 respondents representing 41.67% of the respondents falls within the age range 12-14 years and 40 representing 33.43% of them falling within the age 15-17 years. It is also revealed that 30 respondents which is 25% of the total are 18 years and above.

Table 3: To what Extent is Academic Background a Problem of Teaching and Learning of History

Class	Yes	%	No	%	Total
SS I	40	33.45	10	8.35	50
SS II	25	20.85	15	12.05	40
SS III	18	15.20	12	10.00	30
Total	83	69.60	47	30.40	120

It is obvious that 83 of the respondents supported Yes, which is about 69.60% of the total respondents, while 47 says No which is about 30.40% of the respondents. The above data indicated that the problem facing teaching and learning of history in secondary schools is due to poor academic foundation of the students or pupils.

Table 4: Do the syllabus of history is to wide for students to cope?

Class	Yes	%	No	%	Total
SS I	28	23.34	22	18.33	50
SS II	22	18.34	18	15.00	40
SS III	20	16.66	10	8.33	30
Total	70	58.34	48	41.66	120

Following from the table 4, it is cleared that 70 respondents supported yes which is 58.34%, while 48 supported No which is 41.66%. This indicate that the history syllabus is to wide for students to cope and this is among the problem facing teaching and learning of history in secondary schools.

Table 5: To what extent does the inclusion of history curriculum in primary and secondary schools solve the problem facing teaching and learning of history in secondary schools?

Class	Yes	%	No	%	Total
SS I	35	29.18	15	12.49	50
SS II	27	22.48	13	10.34	40
SS III	22	18.34	08	6.67	30
Total	84	70	36	30	120

From the above data 84 respondents supported Yes, which is 70% of the total respondents, while 36 supported No which is about 30% of the respondents. The data revealed that majority of secondary school students supported the inclusion of history curriculum from primary to senior secondary schools, this will arouse this interest of the students and will increase the number of students offering history in secondary schools.

9. CONCLUSION

From the data analysis in this study, the various problems affecting the teaching and learning of history in secondary schools have been identified. All stakeholders in history should come together and brain-storm on the way forward for the discipline because history as a course is dying gradually in all secondary schools in Nigeria. The government should rescue the history as a course and should include it in the primary and secondary schools curriculum so that it would be taught at all levels. A country that does not pay attention to her history refuses to grow and to overcome future challenges.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings from this study, the following recommendations are hereby recommended:

- Government should rescue history as a course and include history in primary and secondary curriculum to be taught in all levels.
- The syllabus for secondary school should be streamlined; local history should be made compulsory while African and the wider world should be optional.
- All the history teachers should be trained teachers, an academic as well as professional historian, who could bring humour and humility into their dealings with learners.
- The methodological issues in teaching history should be well-addressed, a good history teacher should know the best method to use that will suit the subject matter.
- Parents and teachers should motivate the children, and this will improve their performance in schools.
- Government should pay attention to Nigerian history, so that our past heroes will not be forgotten by the coming generations.

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