
**SOCIAL STUDIES TEACHERS' UTILISATION OF
21ST CENTURY SKILLS AT THE UPPER BASIC LEVEL
CLASSROOM IN YOBE STATE, NIGERIA**

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Abstract

The paper anchored on Social Studies Teachers' Utilization of 21st-century Skills at the Upper Basic Level Classroom in Yobe State, Nigeria. 21st Century refers to the current century of the Anno Domini era accordance with the Gregorian calendar. The twenty-first century learning centered on developing learning, literacy and life skills as part of the classroom experience. The 21st Century learning Skills encompass Critical Thinking, Creativity, Collaboration and Communication. The purpose of Such schemes is to make learners capabilities of understanding the proficiency need to enter in the global labour force successfully. Social Studies at the upper basic level aim at building capacity for students to learn and to acquire innovative skills necessary to the formation of a satisfactory professional life that is pride in the job and for sound judgment globally. Enhancing the 21st century skills in the Social Studies classroom, will significantly help the students to become future and readily competent workforce globally in the context of the fourth industrial revolution. Social Studies teachers' knowledge

of utilizing such skills would significantly improve their knowledge and skills in the classroom dispensing. The paper concludes that, 21st century skills emerged as a result of 20th century students are no longer viable in the global labour market. Therefore, global partnership for 21st century aims at equipping the students with the relevant knowledge and skills necessary for them to succeed in their future careers globally, also, Social Studies Teachers knowledge of utilizing such skills would never be overemphasis in teaching and learning process in the classroom.

Keywords: 4Cs, Social Studies Teachers, 21st-century Teaching, Learning.

Introduction

Education has been viewed as a systematic training and instruction designed to transmits knowledge and to develop among young individuals. However, Basic Education is the education given to children age 0-15 years. It is the education a child received immediately after primary education (Federal Government of Nigeria, 2013). The guardian newspaper (2014) reported that, 1 in 4 young people in developing countries are unable to read. Therefore, it is responsibilities of governments and the stake holders of the educational systems in developing countries to fill the existing gap. The direction of education in the knowledge era or 21st century has the following purpose: preparing young people in the dynamic and unpredictable world, fostering creative behavior, giving freedom for unique individual intelligence, and producing innovators (Astuti, Abdul Aziz, Sumarti & Bharati, 2019). These will enable the system not only to produce workers with the skills necessary to compete in today's job markets but also to produce competent students with chain of values and attitude.

The 21st century is witnessing innovations and transformation in virtually all spheres of human endeavour with a view to change for better skill development (Rakum, 2014). The global partnership

for the 21s' century education, advocates for change of approaches in the educational system globally, developed four categories of approaches known as C's to be acquire by the learners in the classroom to compete favourably in the global labour market. The classifications of Cs approaches include: the 3Cs,4Cs,6Cs and later 7Cs respectively (Jacob, 2020). The second 4 C's encompass critical thinking, creativity, collaboration and communication. The third 6Cs has the first four but added culture/citizenship and connectivity/character education and the 7Cs, it has the first four but has new dimension of cultural awareness, digital literacy and autonomy (Jacob, 2020).

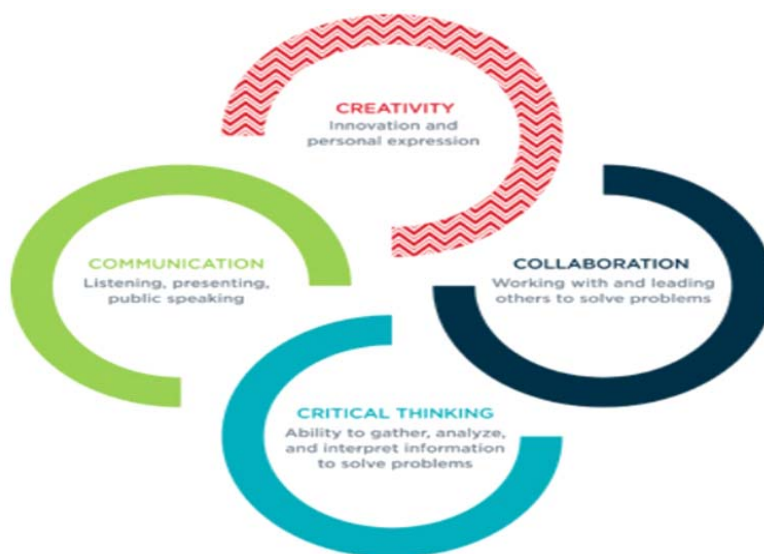


Figure 1: Conceptualisation of 4Cs approach

Source: Chiruguru (2020)

Social Studies is a core subject been offered at the Upper Basic level. Social Studies Teacher is someone who has been professionally trained in the discipline, in order to promote the development of intellectual skills among learners. There are wide range of knowledge, skills and attitudes that are expected to be

acquired by Social Studies teachers' and students in the 21s' century classroom (Rakum, 2014). However, Jacob (2020) described the conditions of the traditional Nigerian classroom as a places and spaces with students sitting in rows of desks and the teacher standing in front of the students. He added that, most teachers in these situation are busy writing on the chalk board while one hand has a stick for maintaining discipline in the classroom. So, impacting knowledge in this kind of classroom situation is a very difficult task to some teachers'. Therefore, Social Studies Teachers' in the 21st century Classroom are expected to acquire relevant knowledge, skills and attitude that would not only make them to teach well but also to enable them prepare their learners to face the challenges of the 21st century. Jacob (2020) categorically stated that, "Social Studies learning in the 21st century should not be about passively absorbing someone else's conception of the world, but rather it should be an exercise in creating a personally meaningful understanding of the world and how one might act to transform that world". So, 21st century Classroom should endure and encourage various approaches of learning, supporting both individual and for the group work, these includes demonstration, investigation and supporting interaction for the sense of community, and nurturing both formal and informal learning. To this end, this study examined the Social Studies Teachers' Utilization of 21st-century Skills at the Upper Basic Level Classroom with a view to offer suggestions for Classroom improvement.

Conceptual Clarifications

Critical thinking is a process of determine how creative thinking will be evaluated or achieved. However, from the scholars' views, Rubaii (2015) creative thinking is a method of perceiving speaking, thinking and hierarchy in knowledge: meaning creative thinking value knowledge not as a commodity, but as a collective process. Similarly, Plucker, Kaufman and Beghetto (2016) affirm that, critical thinking, is an important components of thinking process which includes: creative thinking through which ideas are generated. Conversely, Critical thinking is the ability to think clearly, rationally

and it allows students to appropriately apprehend and address issues effectively (Admin, 2017). More so, Snyder & Snyder (2008), instructs that, to produce critical thinking skills students, then require training, practice, and patience. Creative thinking skills utilize divergent thinking that wanders from a single point, where one must become fluent, flexible, and original, and to elaborate or to generate a statement (Inocian, 2015). This implies that Critical thinking centred on knowledge disseminations.

Why should learners need of developing critical thinking skills? In today's world. Chiruguru (2020) answered that, today's job market needs proficiencies such as critical thinking and the ability to interact with people from many linguistic and cultural backgrounds (cultural competency). So, critically thinking be capable of deepening students' academic learning and beneficial for successful interactions and relationships. Also, critically thinking, allowed students to evaluate knowledge, clarify concepts, seek possibilities and alternatives, and solve problems using logic, resourcefulness and imagination. A critical thinking allowed students to think broadly and set down the right path in facing today's challenges at school and beyond (Muic, 2019).

Developing critical thinking skills, involved a variety of active learning pedagogical methods. According to Snyder & Snyder (2008) suggest that critical thinking skills must be learned by actively engaging students in the investigation of information. Active learning is generally considered one of the best ways to facilitate learning. The pedagogical methods to develop in critical thinking skills includes: Group projects, experiential exercises, cooperative learning, learning-centered activities, class discussions, collaborative projects, case projects, simulations, role playing and debating are tools for active learning. However, Laverie (2006) also suggests that a team-based, active cooperative-learning approach with well-structured activities can assist in deep learning and skill development. The advocates' of 4CS recommend that, in organizing a critical thinking skills classroom, the teachers are to organize, compare and contrast, analyze, infer, support a statement, evaluate information, make generalizations and decisions (Inocian, 2015). A Critical thinking is a part of Social Studies process. Because

students in Social Studies are taught to evaluate others' decisions and make connections between influences and conditions. Young people get the opportunity to learn from others' mistakes through social Studies.

Creativity Thinking

From scholars' viewpoints, Turkmen & Sertnahya (2015) authenticity means giving unique responses and flexibility is a process of obtaining ability to adapt to changing conditions such as fluency and ideas. Ucus (2018) cited the national advisory committee on creative and cultural education (1999) defined creativity as an imaginative activity fashioned to build outcomes that are original and of value. Jeffrey and Craft (2004) viewed it, as a process of 'using imaginative approaches to make learning more interesting and effective,' p. 21 (2019) indicates that, originality is seen as the most important aspect of creativity because something must be narrative or unique in some ways to be considered creative. Weig (2021) cautiously advised that, "the very future of our civilization hinges upon the creative capabilities of young people, and that one of the most important things we can do in schools is to foster creativity." also, Ferry (2020) adds that, freedom to fail and create a healthy environment is an essential point in increasing creativity. the future of mankind solely depends on the ability to rearrange and put creativity and innovation at the forefront of the current educational system (Siswanto, Kaniawati & Suhandi, 2014). So, Creativity is the process of having original ideas that have value.

Why creative thinking in the 21st century classroom? Ucus (2018) put it that, creative thinking has a significant impact on children's holistic development, such as social, personal, and intellectual, by benefiting the students' preparation for the future. Creativity is possible in cultivating and boosting human activity in all areas human intelligence (Loveless, 2015). Creativity allows children to gain the necessary skills such as questioning and challenging, making connections, seeing relationships, envisaging what might be, exploring ideas, keeping options open, and reflecting critically on ideas, actions, outcomes (Craft, 2003, 2014; Loveless,

2015). Creativity encourages students to engage more fully in the learning process and to discover additional meanings in their work, which results in lengthened memory of knowledge in the classroom environment (Kirkendall & Krishen, 2016). Creativity is a prerequisite for innovations for lifelong learning.

Guidelines for Developing Creativity in the Classroom

Gregorya, Hardimanb, Yarmolinskayab, Rinneb and Limb (2018) identified the following steps for: Supply students with a wealth of information in specific content areas, and take steps to ensure that students retain that information, encourage idea generation by posing questions or problems that have more than one correct response, ask students to offer multiple ideas to any open-ended prompt and remind students to make each solution as varied as possible, For each potential solution that a student suggests, ask the student to think about implications and implementation, include group work opportunities when appropriate, give students a novel relationship and have them generate items that, when related, exemplify that relationship, Provide students with two or more unrelated ideas and ask them to find a novel relationship and include external mediators in certain group work situations.

Collaboration

Coming together is the beginning, keeping together is progress and working together is success Chandra (2015). Collaboration means getting students to work together, achieve compromises, and gets the best possible results from solving a problem. It also refers to working flexibly, effectively, and equitably with others in order to accomplish a shared task. Collaboration may be the most difficult concept in the four C's. The key element of collaboration is willingness. It refers to the quality or state of being prepared to do something; readiness. Therefore, the students are expected to be willing to sacrifice parts of their own ideas and adopt others ideas to get best results of the lesson.

The teachers' roles in collaboration includes, classify students in the classroom, using creative ways in making a group, monitoring

group activities require students to work together and negotiate and giving feedback to solve problems in group. By using collaboration in classroom, it will train the students to collaborate ideas. According to Chandra (2015) there are three principles guiding collaborative classroom first, the learner as is the primary focus of instruction, secondly, interaction and “doing” are of primary importance and working in groups is an important mode of learning. Astuti *et al* (2019) studied on preparing 21st century teachers: Implementation of 4C character’s pre-service teacher through teaching practice discovered that, collaboration among students promotes sharing of responsibilities and supporting others to achieve a common goal, demonstrating sensitivity to diverse cultures, audiences or contexts when working with others, exhibiting reciprocity and trust when sharing ideas or roles, valuing, compromise and the contributions of others to nurture positive working relationships.

Communication

Communication refers to the ability of individuals to communicate clearly; there are three aspects of communication skill, such as oral, written and interpersonal communication. The aspects of oral communication include: use of intonation and articulate the words clearly, speech volume, use language according to student’s level of understanding, language meaning, giving reward verbally, use tools and picture to give information verbally (Skills You Need, 2022). However, written communication has several aspects including, identify key points, facts and themes, and convey a written idea with long sentences and paragraphs, using proper spelling and grammar. More so, non-verbal languages (interpersonal) have several aspects, such as, body language, eye contact, facial expressions and sensitivity to the audience. It’s crucial for student to learn how to effectively convey ideas among different personality types. Without understanding proper communication, students in the 21st Century will lack a pivotal skill to progress their careers. But the four C’s are only the beginning (Stauffer, 2021).

Why building communication skills necessary in the 21st

Century classroom? Communication skills means sharing of ideas through oral, written or non-verbal media (Astuti, Abdul Aziz, Sumarti & Bharati, 2019). Jacob (2020) suggested that, to build effective communication skills among students, it is necessary for them to learn to communicate using digital media and environments to enhanced personal and group learning, share information efficiently and effectively, using appropriate digital media and environments and communicate thoughts and ideas vividly and effectively to different audiences using various media and formats.

Social Studies Teachers' and the 21st Century Teaching and Learning Skills

Teaching is a deliberate activity done in a professional manner to bring a positive change on the learner. The 21st-century teaching means, teaching as you have always taught but with today's tools and technology. So, the burden of preparing today's citizen depends to a larger extent on teachers. The teachers have the important task of not only enriching the students with requisite knowledge and skills but also equipping them with good attitudes, morals and character (Rakum, 2014). Therefore, teachers' are charged with the responsibilities of utilizing everything that is important in today's world so that students will be able to live and prosper in today's economy, as well as having the ability to guide students and to prepare them for the future. Learning involves changes in the behaviour patterns of an individual (Dorgu, 2015). Simply put, learning is the process of acquiring knowledge, skills and attitudes. Erdem (2020) point out the components that should be taken into consideration in the teaching of 21st century skills. the curriculum should be in harmony with respect to content and skills. teaching of these skills cannot be considered independent of human capital and the skills in the curricula requires new and more comprehensive or elaborate assessments. teachers should be trained with respect to these skills.

Social Studies as a problems solving discipline it emphasis that today's classroom teaching and learning should focus on activities which will lead the students acquire facts, rules, and action or

sequences (Woolfolk, 2010). Social studies connect students with the real world. In today's interconnected world, students must be prepared to interact with people of all cultures and communities, also, social studies have responsibilities to create the generation of the 21st century. Teachers must have digital skills (know and master the digital world), Responsive thinking abilities (be able to think multiple scenarios), interpersonal and communication skills (possess communication skills to argue), global skills (possess skills including foreign language skills, ability to adapt with foreigners who have different cultures, and have sensitivity to cultural values).

Conclusion

The paper underscored that; to prepare the students to face the 21st century. The burden exclusively depends to a larger extent on teachers. The teachers have the important task of not only enriching the students with requisite knowledge and skills but also equipping them with good attitudes, morals and character.

Suggestions

The 21st century is witnessing significant changes in all aspects of life, including education. The following suggestions were made: The teachers' are charged with the responsibilities of utilizing everything that is important in today's world so that students will be able to live and prosper in today's economy, as well as having the ability to guide students and to prepare them for the future. And The 21st century generation has the characteristics of multitasking, multimedia, and online info searching.

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