

Reviews

Policy, philosophy and pedagogical initiative to HIV/AIDS education in the Nigerian secondary school's social studies curriculum

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This paper attempts a review of the Nigerian National Policy on Education, in the context of the overall philosophy of the Nigerian national life as reflected in the objectives of Social Studies – a subject in the Nigerian Junior Secondary Social Studies curriculum. Its main objective is to make justification for the teaching of the subject-matter of HIV/AIDS as an emerging national problem in the school, and to provide some paradigm by which its learning content could be taught, using Social Studies as a carrier subject. The paper thus reviews policy provisions and philosophical background to Social Studies teaching, and provides some guidelines by which curriculum developers could design relevant content-valid curricula; and also provides a possible guide to classroom teachers in planning and implementing teaching plans. It also suggests some ideas that are likely to guide and facilitate the development of textbooks that may integrate the learning content of HIV/AIDS within the Social Studies curriculum.

Key words: Policy, philosophy, pedagogical initiative, HIV/AIDS' education, Nigerian Secondary School, Social Studies.

INTRODUCTION

Teaching secondary school students for knowledge acquisition and attitudinal change in Social Studies is supported by a set of policy and philosophy on education in Nigeria. Curriculum developers, book authors, and all stakeholders therefore have to be acquainted with the basic understanding of the policy and Philosophy that provide the pivot upon which the pedagogical approaches to the teaching of the subject matter of HIV/AIDS in the classroom rests. The policy, philosophy and pedagogical initiatives are therefore hoped not only to guide classroom teaching, but may also assist curriculum developers and textbook authors in providing curricular details that will equally guide the learners toward the understanding of the subject matter of HIV/AIDS as a societal problem.

The policy and philosophical background to social studies education in Nigeria

The content of education in Nigeria has only undergone

few changes in the last ten years; although, the school curriculum has also witnessed many changes both in variety and intensity before this period and over some decades. What brought a radical change into the school curriculum were the advent of the National Policy on Education in 1977, with emphasis on functional education, and with new content that has touched on the socio-cultural, as well as the political economy of the country. Also there have been series of national curriculum development and review efforts from independence.

The National Policy on Education (NPE) developed in 1977 has been reviewed on several occasions that is, 1980, 1991, and 1997 with series of curricular changes that are aimed at further improving the education system to fit into the dynamics of current events and of the immediate future. Issues that are raised among other things include that of life skills, and value education (Ivowi, 2000).

Education has also been generally identified as an instrument of national development. It is useful in the sense that it assists to achieve the main national goals of free, democratic, just and egalitarian society; united, strong and self reliant nation; great and dynamic economy that will make Nigeria a land full of bright opportunities for all citizens. Sequel to this, were the need to for-

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multate ideas to be integrated for national development, and the interaction of persons and ideas. These ideas are expected to foster the worth and development of the individual for each individual's sake and for the general development of the society. Nigerian education also aims at the provision of equal opportunities to all Nigerian children irrespective of any real or imagined disabilities. Emphasis is also placed on functional education for the promotion of a progressive united Nigeria (NPE, 1998).

Following from above the NPE stresses that school programmes should be relevant, practical and comprehensive. Among the school programmes, Social Studies appears distinguished, because of its direct relevance to the Nigerian life, as its pedagogical objectives have a common identity with the philosophy of the Nigerian education. Its emphasis on development of "life skills" and "values" is more or less a direct interpretation of Article 8 of Section 1 of the National Policy on Education which states that the quality of instruction at all levels has to be oriented towards the inculcation in an individual the values of worth and dignity; ability to make rational decisions; moral and spiritual principle in inter-personal and human relations; shared responsibility for the common good of society; promotion of the physical, emotional and psychological development of all children; and acquisition of competencies necessary for self-reliance.

Specifically, Social Studies should be viewed as a series of processes and experiences purposely designed to develop the intellect and mind of the individual learner so that he can acquire an understanding that would lead him/her to a self-realized, capable and talented personality; knowledgeable about the environment; appreciative of diversity of cultural values and mores of the society; loyal to the society's aspirations; and has unlimited opportunities for maximum development of his/her abilities and potentials, so as to make the individual a most useful citizen in any field of choice for survival and of the society at large (Akinlaye et al., 1996).

The trio (Akinlaye et al., 1996) also remark, that Social Studies in the school curriculum should help all types of students, at all levels to develop the ability to adapt to the ever-changing environment, and further to;

- (1) Inculcate national consciousness and aspiration towards national cohesion, unity and progress.
- (2) Make learners become good citizens capable of, and willing to contribute to the development of the society.
- (3) Inculcate the right types of attitude skill and values in the learners.
- (4) Make learners acquire basic knowledge, feeling and skill, as essential pre-requisites to personal development, as well as to a positive contribution to the better quality of life of man in the society.
- (5) Develop in the learners' intellectual capacity and ability, self-confidence, self-expression, self-realization, initiative, reflective thinking, and resourcefulness for the

socio-political order.

All the above have direct bearing with the formal definition provided by the United States' National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS), which states, "Social Studies is the integrated study of the social sciences and humanities to promote civic competence." In the opinions of the NCCS, "the primary purpose of Social Studies is to help young people develop the ability to make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens of a culturally diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world." The council concluded on this definition when it regards Social Studies, as a subject, within the school programme, that "provides coordinated, systematic study, drawing upon such disciplines as anthropology, economics, geography, history, law, philosophy, political science, psychology, religion and sociology as well as appropriate content from the humanities, mathematics, and natural sciences". Social Studies in essence, promotes knowledge of, and involvement in civic affairs, with specific emphasis that "civic issues, such as health care, crime and foreign policy are multidisciplinary in nature, and the understanding and development of resolutions to them require multidisciplinary education" (NCSS, 1994).

The challenge of school-based HIV/AIDS education intervention

Apparently, of the numerous civic issues identified above, health care was first mentioned either deliberately or inadvertently. The author thus wishes to regard this arrangement as a reflection of the global relevance, and importance of good health to humanity, and the survival of the human race and society that is now being threatened by HIV and AIDS. It is however no more a news that HIV/AIDS is an issue of health concerns. It is a perennial problem that affects all aspects of humanity (economic, social and political) and perhaps threatening the existence of the human race. "It has become a critical development issue, and the developmental implications of this pandemic, on the global economy and social relations are dire", because "It is expected to reverse the gains made in social and economic development, and every individual and group will be affected" (Nelson-Twakor, 2003).

Nelson-Twakor (2003), goes further that "morbidity among young and middle-aged adults is expected to increase, with increasing HIV/AIDS prevalence . . ." It "will not only translate into loss of man-hours in productive activities, but increased health expenditure by the government, community and households and pressure on the medical and health personnel and facilities." "A lot of burden will also be borne by women who often play the role of care providers." Nelson-Twakor emphasizes. In the light of these effects, there is an obvious dire social consequence for any country that fails to address it appropriately and timely; and that includes Nigeria.

By and large, it has been observed that HIV/AIDS spreads rapidly in Nigeria because of lack of proper sex and sexuality education especially in the schools with the largest number of sexually active youth. This may be due to socio-religious and cultural biases that regard discussion of sexual matters as taboos and too sensitive and personal (Ojo, 2000; Odebiyi, 1991; Ogunyemi, 2000). But, where it exists at all, the focus is always on abstinence; “simply saying that sex among the youth would not happen if we say “don’t do it”. “Whereas preventing teenage sexuality does not exist, is not only naive but irresponsible; and it is out of step with reality” (Salt Lake Tribune – SLTRIB, 2003).

The SLTRIB (2003), stating the American experience remarks that, “in the two decades following the first diagnosis of AIDS in 1981, the disease was attacked by intense education and safe sex campaign that helped bring the incidence of new cases under control.” It remarks that the latest statistics reinforced the need to continue educating Americans, especially young ones, with no memory of the initial epidemic, and the danger attached with it. The SLTRIB stresses that, “it will be very deadly to “misinform youngsters, who need to understand the basics”. It identifies the basics as, “how the disease is spread, how it is prevented and the linkage between drug use and infection.” It concluded by stressing that, “potentially life-saving information should be taught in the school.”

In a similar vein, a review of curriculum and content of education in Nigeria as contained in the UNESCO (2000) appraisal of the “The State of Education in Nigeria”, share the same idea as indicated above. UNESCO explains that, “just as national pressures on curriculum developers led to a number of new subjects being included in the school curriculum, international trends also led to the inclusion of new subjects.” The following subjects are identified – Population and Family-life Education, Drug Abuse Education, Environmental Education, and Science and Technology and Society (Ivowi, 2000). The subject matter of HIV/AIDS (as understood by the author) also fits into all these emerging “international-trends”: the content, concepts and subject matter, which the school must try to teach the students.

However, in attempts to teach the students, efforts must be made to avoid overloading of the school curricula. This may only be achieved using an integrated approach through the process of infusion of the relevant components of this new subject matter into existing school subjects; although a critical problem that may evolve in this process may result in a complex mix of the issues of overloading, poor achievement, inadequate human and material resources as well as timetabling. Nonetheless, the most current effort towards this is an address of these phenomena. The recommended approach is the redesign of the school curricula. The emphasis is also on using thematic approach to content selection. The provision of options in the school subject

content, with a view to conforming to democratic principles and practices in education as they affect the selection of learning experiences at the secondary and tertiary levels of education are also stressed (Ivowi, 1997; Ivowi, 2000).

APPROACHES TO HIV/AIDS EDUCATION IN SOCIAL STUDIES

While an attempt is made to plan the Social Studies instruction in relation to HIV/AIDS education, it is necessary to understand the structure of Social Studies and resolve the problem of defining the scope and determining the sequence of content. The question of structure has been addressed earlier in this paper. The next line of action is the actual selection of content.

Selection of HIV/AIDS learning content for social studies instruction

In a mimeograph on Social Studies teaching methods, Tiamiyu (1991) explains that the selection of Social Studies content at any level of education can be made from any of;

- (1) The experience of the learner.
- (2) The experience of the people in the immediate community of school.
- (3) The experience of the people in other communities distant from the school environment.
- (4) The relevant academic disciplines of the Social Sciences, among others.

In the opinions of Akinlaye et al. (1996), the way and the manner that teachers are presented with ready-made syllabuses or schemes of work of what to teach is an “unsatisfactory state of affairs”. This is just because he/she (teacher) was not involved in the selection and organization of the content presented by the syllabus or scheme of work. This makes it difficult for him/her, to analyze and evaluate it in order to understand the underlying principle of such content. Akinlaye et al feels that it is very important for the teacher to know the content of his subject very well. He/She should as well be versatile in those principles that have guided the selection of content. The teacher can only establish a rational relationship between his objectives and the goals of the educational system with reference to the content or subject matter that he teaches. A full knowledge of the nature of the content to be taught could then assist the teacher to contrive meaningful activities, for effective learning by the students.

Lawton and Duffor (1976), while defining the curriculum as “a selection from the culture of the society,” stated that such a selection should be “based on what is particularly

valued by the society, so that its transmission is not left to chance, but entrusted to special instructions and specially trained teachers". From the author's perspective the value of life is generally not compromised at any level – be it local, national or global. However, nowadays, life appears threatened by the deadly scourge of HIV/AIDS. Hence efforts are made at various quarters to prevent it by informing various people including youths, about it, especially through curricular development efforts. However, no nationally approved curriculum is operationally available in Nigeria yet; and it may not be possible to introduce a new subject called HIV/AIDS with a separate curriculum, going by the complex mix of overloading, inadequate human and material resources and time-tabling earlier raised by Ivowi (2000). Nonetheless, there are attempts to give information to the youths through school-based programmes. The teacher (Social Studies teacher in the context) thus has a very significant role to play, especially in content selection, if the "unsatisfactory state of affairs", stated earlier by Akinlaye et al, will not prevail.

The teacher thus has to be careful in her/his content selection, as cases are made for teaching to be determined by the teacher, so that the learners are not misinformed, as emphasized earlier by the SLTRIB (2003) that "misinformation could be very deadly." The teacher is therefore faced with the question as to what selections are to be made, and the criteria for selection. As stated earlier in this paper, "youngsters... need to understand the basics; how the disease HIV/AIDS, is spread, prevented and the linkage between drug use and infection" (SLTRIB, 2003).

An effective HIV/AIDS education programme from the foregoing therefore seeks to benefit young people by providing them with opportunities to find out more about their own growth and development. The opportunities to question, explore and assess their sexual attitudes, change their negative attitudes concerning relationship with the opposite sex and to understand their obligations and responsibilities to others should be the content of an ideal HIV/AIDS education programme.

Nonetheless, the Social Studies teacher is faced with determining which aspect of the available HIV/AIDS information (learning content) will create the much-desired "value for life". The value for life (as earlier stated) has been spelt out in the national policy on education, philosophy and objectives of school subjects and curriculum (more importantly Social Studies). However, now that various school-based curriculum intervention efforts are made on the subject matter of HIV/AIDS, concerned authorities, government and curriculum developers also depend on the school and indeed the teachers for valid information to guide in curriculum planning. Thus in selecting curriculum content and indeed on the subject-matter of this study, (HIV/AIDS Education) the teacher (Social Studies teacher) should take care of;

- (1) Aim and objective of HIV/AIDS Education.

- (2) Learning experience (content).
- (3) Evaluation procedure.

Tyler (1950) describes education as a process in which three different foci that have direct bearing with the programme of HIV/AIDS education could be discussed. These are;

- (1) Educational objective.
- (2) Learning experience.
- (3) Examination of achievements.

Objectives of HIV/AIDS education for social studies instruction

Parker and Jarolimek (1997) support the NCSS (USA) definition of Social Studies as, "the integrated study... the primary purpose of which is to help young people develop, to make informed and reasoned decisions...." They remark that children are assisted to know about and experience a deep sense of application of the social trends that shape their future. Parker and Jarolimek thus identify three dimensions of learning: knowledge, attitudes and values, and skills. They say that knowledge is a thematic statement aimed among other things to make students know about basic "human institutions", such as the family, education, religion, government, economy, human environmental interaction, and current events and enduring public issues. (It should be noted that "Health Institution" where issues of HIV/AIDS education could be easily infused falls under the concept, "Human Institution" in the Nigerian Junior Secondary School curriculum.

Attitudes and values are also directed, less at rational knowledge and more at the affective domain - realm of emotion and feelings that will aid the development of reasoned commitment to public values of the society. According to Klausmeier and Ripple (1971) attitudes and values are among the most vital outcomes of learning in school, because they are important in determining how the individual reacts to situations, and also what he seeks in life. They are also the mediators of responses and act as motivational forces. Klausmeier and Ripple explain Attitude has three interrelated components, cognitive (information), affective (feelings), and an action-tendency (behaviour predisposition). Thus when the attitudes that children and youth should learn in school have been identified, and agreed on, a programme of instruction can be organized that will result in the efficient learning of attitudes.

To Klausmeier and Ripple, the Social Studies teacher in planning the HIV/AIDS learning programme could facilitate the learning of attitudes by being an exemplary model, emotionally pleasant and be very good at extending informative experiences, using group techniques, arranging for appropriate practice, and encouraging independent attitude cultivation.

The third, and by no means the least, is that Social Studies seek the development of skills among students. This is because after the learner has read Social Studies materials in order to get the main idea, on a public issue, and problem and has drawn analogies from other times and places, he/she would be able to infer cause-effect relationship, and then acquire relevant skills necessary to face the challenges of life.

The Population Report (1999) has identified the following, as the aims and objectives of any HIV/AIDS education which may be of use within the Social Studies curricular framework:

- Raise levels of knowledge, change attitudes and increase condom use among the youth (Baldo, 1966; Guttmacher et al., 1997; Kirby, 1995; McCauley and Salter, 1995; Schuster et al., 1998).
- Help youth to delay sex initiation, and precisely till marriage (Baldo, 1966; Kirby et al., 1994; McCauley and Salter, 1995; Sellers et al., 1994).
- Reduce sexual activities, and decrease the number of sexual partners, among the youth (Sellers et al., 1994; Schuster et al., 1998).
- Address unintended pregnancy as well as STIs (Sonenstein and Pleck, 1997).
- Responds to young people's interest in information and guidance about sexuality and relationship; and (Brown et al., 1997).
- Help youth to have a clear focus on changing risky behaviour (Barnett, 1997; Kirby, 1995; Okie, 1998).

The paradigm discussed above provides an avenue to distinguish between educational and behavioral objective. Educational objectives provide definite guidelines for developing an educational programme for all students in a school system or in a building. Its primary purpose is to inform. However, a behavioral or instructional objective provides guidelines for making decisions about the instructional programme of a student or a particular group of students' (Klausmeier and Ripple, 1971). Klausmeier and Ripple go further that the outcomes incorporated in educational objectives merely provide broad indications of what students may learn; whereas the outcomes incorporated in instructional objectives are precise descriptions of the processes, and contents that students are expected to learn. While educational objectives are stated in general terms, instructional objectives are statements of the explicit detailed behaviour that students should demonstrate on attaining the objectives.

Further, as the paradigm of aims and general objectives provided above addresses what is to be referred to as educational objectives, a possible paradigm of instructional objectives that will assist Social Studies' teachers on HIV/AIDS education, and also guide curriculum developers in their efforts should also be provided.

Learning objectives in teaching HIV/AIDS in social studies

Arends (1988) identifies what could be regarded as important ingredients of good learning objective. He suggests that it should:

- a. Identify what the student is supposed to learn,
- b. Define the testing situation; and
- c. Describe the acceptable level of performance.

Arends remarks further that "when writing objectives, the teacher must specify the learning components in measurable terms". In the opinion of Mager (1962), "teachers plan their lessons around specific statements that describe what the students will be doing when demonstrating its achievements and how you will know he is doing it". The statements are referred to as behavioral (or performance) objectives; because they single out the observable, measurable behaviours that learners should be able to demonstrate after successfully completing the learning experience (Maxim, 1999).

Mager (1975) remarks that behavioral objectives have three parts:

1. What the student is expected to do?
2. The conditions under which the student's behaviour is to occur, and
3. What is the acceptable level of performance?

According to Mager, "behavioral objectives use verbs that describe the observable behaviours, such as define, list, add, explain and demonstrate" (Crowl et al., 1997). What establishes the complimentary relationship between an overall instructional goal for a unit of study, are the three parts of behavioural objectives proposed by Mager (1975): as listed above. Maxim (1999) and Crowl et al. (1997) explain that such objective (general) is stated as, e.g. the students will understand how HIV/AIDS is contracted; whereas in a behavioural objective, student explains how HIV/AIDS is transmitted. The ability of the student to "explain" indicates that the student actually "understands". This also explains the link between learning condition, specific behaviour and criterion for success. For instance the teacher can state, at the end of the lesson on HIV/AIDS, students should be able to explain four ways by which HIV/AIDS is contacted. The first clause, "at the end of the lesson on HIV/AIDS", is the learning condition; 'students should be able to explain – the specific behaviour'; and "four ways" by which HIV/AIDS is contacted is the criterion for success (Maxim, 1999; Crowl et al., 1997).

Thus, a Social Studies teacher could state the following specific objectives (suggested among others by the researcher), when developing a lesson plan on HIV/AIDS education, viz.

At the end of the lesson (on HIV/AIDS) students should be able to:

- State the full meaning of the acronym HIV and AIDS.
- Mention and explain 5 ways by which a person contracts HIV.
- Discuss when HIV becomes AIDS.
- Identify three types of HIV.
- List five symptoms of HIV/AIDS.
- Mention five ways by which AIDS could be prevented.
- Explain why HIV/AIDS counseling is essential
- Enumerate five types of attitudes that the society should develop towards people living with HIV/AIDS etc.

It should be emphasized that properly stated (in “measurable terms”) performance objectives make the process of evaluation easy (Arends, 1988; Mager, 1962).

Learning experience in HIV/AIDS education

“If the teacher has a full understanding of the teaching / learning situation, he will be able to provide suitable activities or learning experiences that will help the learner to achieve the desired kind of learning as effectively as possible”. This is the opinion of Dada (1999); and it has a link between understanding the aims and objectives of a programme of learning and the learning experience per se. Dada (1999) goes further that learning experiences are kinds of activities that learners engaged in, that would contribute to a change in their behaviour towards desired goals. Dada emphasized that the activities could be mental (involve thinking), receiving verbal information, storing information in the memory, sorting out facts, comparing and contrasting etc.

Thus, in the context of HIV/AIDS education, learning experiences which are meant to assist youth to have adequate knowledge of HIV/AIDS and develop the right type of attitudes and values, are expected to provide answers to seven basic posers:

- What is/are the full meanings of acronym, HIV / AIDS? AIDS’ related behaviour? ; types of AIDS?; the roles of contraceptives in HIV / AIDS prevention?; HIV / AIDS counseling?; the consequences of voluntary counseling and testing or its refusal?; AIDS vaccines and their purposes?
- When - does HIV become AIDS and lead to death?
- How - is HIV transmitted? ; does one contract HIV/AIDS?; Is HIV/AIDS prevented? How costly are the vaccines, and are they accessible and available? Should the society treat people living with HIV?
- Why - should one go for HIV test? ; should a person go for voluntary counseling and testing?
- Where - can one get the vaccine?
- Who - are the HIV positives?; are the most vulnerable to HIV/AIDS infection?
- Is - there cure for HIV/AIDS ?

Answers to these and many more are expected to constitute the content of any meaningful learning experience of an HIV/AIDS education programme, more importantly within the context of Social Studies programmes.

Similarly, such question as above, may therefore constitute measures by which the objectives of the lesson have been achieved, and would finally serve as the basis for the evaluation of the overall teaching and learning about HIV/AIDS through Social Studies that is, at the end of each lesson, the teacher will ask questions from the students in relation to the earlier stated objectives and the students may be asked to react both in written and oral forms. This last exercise (assessment) is the concluding part of any teaching/learning process; and it is the third aspect of the Tyler (1950) model of evaluation. It is expected to assist learners to learn effectively as they are informed of how they are doing. The teacher will also be equally informed of what students know, feel, and can do; and by this be able to build on his/her knowledge: since this serves as a measure of teachers professional competence.

Conclusion and Recommendation

This paper has so far attempted to give meaning to the teaching of the HIV/AIDS learning content in the context of Social Studies – an integrated subject in the Nigerian Secondary School curriculum aimed at assisting students to acquire knowledge; develop desirable attitudes; and acquire life skills (Akinlaye et al., 1996).It is thus hoped that curriculum developers, classroom teachers, textbook developers and authors especially in Social Studies will take a leave from the ideas suggested here, in order that that may meet the health and Social needs of the learners who are leaders of tomorrow ,through valid curricular details, that may guide the learners towards the understanding of the subject matter of HIV/AIDS as a societal problem.

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