

Excursion or Field Trip: An Alternative Approach to the Teaching of Social Studies in Secondary Schools

A. A. OGUNJEMILUA (Ph.D)

Department of Social Studies, School of Arts and Social Sciences, College of Education,
Ikere-Ekiti, Ekiti State, Nigeria
Phone No: +2348038185740

Abstract:

This paper examined the Excursion or Field Trip as an Alternative Approach to the Teaching of Social Studies in Secondary Schools. The examined the concept of excursion, field trip and social studies in secondary schools. The paper also discusses the preparation for excursion or field trip. The paper also examined the importance of of excursion and field trip and the problem associated with excursion in the teaching of social studies and probable solutions to the problems.

Keywords: Excursion, Field Trip, Social Studies, Teaching.

Introduction

The process of teaching and learning has assumed a new dimension in recent times with the introduction of new strategies and innovations. One of these strategies is the use of excursion or Field as effective tool for teaching Social Studies in secondary schools.

Field Trip is any learning activity that is carried out by students in group outside the classroom, under the guidance of the teacher (Osokoya, 1996). He expressed further the field trip is a form of inquiry method of teaching.

Fadeiye (2004) defines excursion as an educational journey to places of interest. He emphasized that traveling is part of education and a means of increasing the learner's level of understanding and knowledge of a subject.

Jayeola (2004) defined excursion of field trip is an important aspect of learning not only for Social Studies but all other subjects in the school or college curriculum. Excursion has an educational visit or journey to places of interest goes a long way to promote the level of understanding of the students and other people taking part in the exercise.

Ogungbemi (2001) surmises that the excursions are organized not only to places of interest but also to places where relevant materials, information or knowledge are better teaching and learning of a particular subject scope.

To employ this method for teaching, students can go on excursion to places that are within one's immediate environment and even beyond. Excursion to immediate environment could take one to places like the shrines, museum, king's palace, school compound, archives, the blacksmith workshop, the local village stream mosque and old churches. Distance trips could be made to Kanji-dam, zoological garden, game reserves, natural spring water, and waterfalls and other places of historical importance for the purpose of first hand observation and study.

Preparation for Excursion or field trip

Excursion or field trip is a good technique of teaching, when a capable of arousing the interest and curiosity of the students in learning of Social Studies. The quality of preparation will determine the level of its success. Hence, any excursion needs to be well prepared for before it must be carried out.

How then can we prepare for a successful Excursion or field trip?

In preparing for an excursion, it is important to note that three major categories of people need to be well involved and adequately informed. Ogunjemilua (2004) opined that there is need to make preliminary arrangement with the school authority, parents and officials in the areas to be visited, schools authority need to be informed by the subject teacher or head of department that wants to organize such an excursion, while parents consent need to be sought for. This will go a long way to determine the student's participation.

There is need to seek the approval of the place of visit before any excursion could be embarked upon. This could be done by sending letters requesting for their consent of making an educational trip to the place.

The organizer should want and see the reply of such letter before them so ahead in their visit to that place. In a situation where there is no approval from the place of visit and the organizer embarks on such excursion, it will make it end in futility.

An excursion must have purpose before it is embarked upon, such a purpose or objective must be well stated in order to have a successful trip. The stated objective of an excursion will help the students to identify what to look for when they arrive at the place of visit. It will also help them know the type of questions they would ask their host. The teacher and the student must discuss and select the relevant places of interest where relevant

information are available for better teaching these places must be relevant also to the stated objectives. The teacher should not force on students the places of visit.

There is need for adequate provision for the welfare and logistic of the students and other people that are going with them in such an excursion. In a long distance trip that will last more than a day sleeping and feeding arrangement must be made.

Likewise, transportation to and fro must be made available students must be well informed to take with them clothing materials, eating utensils and enough money they should also take along with them writing materials.

It is not a gainsaying that “nothing good can come out of the camp of an indisciplined people”. The teacher should therefore instill discipline in the minds of the students when planning for an excursion. This will enable them to behave like a well disciplined group of students in the place of visit. This will enable them not to misbehave. More equally, it will encourage them to utilize their sense to achieve their desired goals of such an excursion.

The teacher should set up guidelines for the students to ensure smooth and successful trip. On the day of excursion, all the students should gather at the school premises, while the teacher takes the attendance of the students in order to ensure the number of students that turnout for the excursion. Apart from this, the teacher should check the materials and dressing of the students whether they meet the condition of where they are going for excursion.

Other things that are necessary to check before the take off are the condition of the vehicle, the condition of the driver, that is going to drive and the particular of the vehicle (Ogungbemi, 2001).

At the place of the visit, the following things must be taken note by the teacher.

- (1). Teacher who leads the students should keep the time schedule to avoid delay.
- (2). Teacher should note that a delay in one place of visit may result to disappointment in another place of visit.
- (3). Teacher should encourage students to jot down points at each place they visit.
- (4). Teacher should equally encourage students to ask questions.
- (5). Photographs could be taken in a place visited for reference purpose. At times, the permission of the host should be sought before photographs are taken. For instance, in care of sacred spots or locations, for fear of committing sacrilege.
- (6). At the place of visit the teacher should endeavour to take the roll call of the students to ensure that their number is still intact.

There are lots of things to do by both the teachers and students after the excursion had been successfully carried out.

The teacher should report the feedback of the excursion to the school authority while a copy of the report should be kept for record purpose. It is the duty of the teacher that organized and led the excursion to write letters of appreciation and send it to the places visited. The teacher should also ask students to write their reports of the excursion and he should enable the students to make use of the knowledge gained during the excursion in any history lesson.

The Importance of Excursion or Field Trip

Excursion method is good for the teaching of Social Studies in any level of education. It provides experiences that cannot be brought into the classroom. It affords the learner the opportunities for direct observation of physical and human phenomena (Ogunjemilua, 2004).

Ogungbemi (2001) surmises that travelling is educative and it teaches observation. Motivation to observe, investigate and learn new ideas about the world around are gained and developed through excursion.

Excursion help to broaden students' horizon and imagination learners are encouraged to be objectives and see varied dimension and respects of ideas where knowledge and information is not given to them in the classroom environment.

The learner's outlook will be broadened and their experience indented because they will have direct observation of what they have been taught and heard in Social Studies.

The teacher too will definitely be fellow learner and discover with his students. The teacher acts as guide and friend he leads to delve more deeply, observe more closely, unmerited more fully and learn thoroughly (Ogungbemi, 1992). Excursion method helps to sustain the student's interest in Social Studies and makes learning permanent. What students see practically will remain long in their memory that what they were taught theoretically or what they have read about. Through excursion students would be able to see physically, touch, feel, and smell what they have been taught in the classroom. For instance, through historical excursion, students have the privilege of seeing the staff of Oranmiyan, the Museum of Antiquity, the pot-shed movement at Itayemoo, the Excavation as Wumonije Compound, the Ornmian groove, the Museun of natural history at the Obafemi Awolowo University, the Ooni Palace. Oduduwas' Blacksmith workshop at Ile-Ife, Olumo Rock at Abeokuta and Kiriji War Theatre at Igbajo.

Through historical excursion, both the students and the teacher will be able to correct erroneous impression, avoid prejudice and narrow mindedness which might have previously heard or entertained. Opportunities to ask thought-provoking questions from the expert that they visit will be opened through excursion. Questions that the teacher may not be able to answer satisfactory by the experts visited.

Excursion method is one of the best ways to apply the psychological principle of teacher to the teaching-learning of Social Studies students understand better when teaching progresses from known to unknown, concrete to abstract and from simple to complex, besides, excursions in Social Studies will avoid students the opportunity to use their senses of seeing, learning, feeling, smelling, touching and tasting in the course of the trips.

Excursion method of teaching increase learner's level of understanding and knowledge in Social Studies. Through personal contact with the places of historical interest, student will be stimulated to learn. More also, personal contact to some historical places could also make teaching of Social Studies topics more easy.

Problems associated with excursion or field trip in teaching Social Studies

Ogunjemilua (2004) opines that field trips to places of interest entail the following problems or difficulties.

- (i) It requires adequate and long term planning.
 - (ii) It requires a lot of fund since it is usually very costly.
 - (iii) Lack of money frustrate planning.
 - (iv) There is the possibility of parent rejecting or disapproving such visits.
 - (v) Pupils and teachers are exposed to some dangers such as accident.
 - (vi) It is time consuming and may disrupt other school programmes.
- He also stressed difficulties associated with organizing visits to places of interest in the school community as follows:-
- (a) Time table adjustment, some teachers may feel offended by adjust their table if not told in advance.
 - (b) School heads might think that such a visit may be as a result of readiness to teach or painlessness in the part of the teacher.
 - (c) It might distract attentions of other learners in other classes, this can be demonstrated through peeping through the window to see members involved in the field trip.

Probable solutions

With the numerous problems confronting the use of excursion as a mean of teaching, one could not be able to conclude that this technique is not relevant to the teaching of Social Studies. Merely looking it at the angle that traveling is part of education. One could be convinced beyond reasonable doubt that excursion method makes Social Studies more teachable. But for this to be attainable, some of the problem confronting it must be dealt with.

The following suggestive measures could be used to tackle some of these problems.

- (1) Parents of the student should be adequately informed and their consent must be sought before embarking on an excursion.
- (2) The school authority and the teacher in-charge should guarantee maximum security of the students and others that are involved in such an excursion.
- (3) The school authority should give approval to such an excursion and assist in the preparation.
- (4) The teacher in-charge and the school authority should not charge the students much they should not turn an excursion to a commercial enterprise.
- (5) The teacher in-charge should let the students know that objective of such an organized excursion this will make them not to see such an excursion as mere travelling.
- (6) The teacher should equally evaluate the students after the end of an excursion, this will enable him to know much students have gained and how far the objective of such an excursion had been achieved.
- (7) The teacher should make sure that they get approval from the place of visit before they embark on such an excursion. They should not be in a hurry but ensure proper planning.
- (8) The teacher or the school authority should write letter of appreciation at the end of an excursion to the place visited. This will make any subsequent future excursion organized enjoy the same privilege as people use to say “one good turn deserves another”.
- (9) Students should be well informed and oriented about the code of conduct in the place of visit.
- (10) In any long distant, excursion that will last two or more days students should be advised to hold much money for their feeding and other needs.
- (11) Adequate health care provision must be made to cater for emergency cases. First aid box should always accompany such trips.
- (12) In such a long distance excursions accommodation must be well arranged so that students and other people involved should not be exposed to danger.

References

- Adeleye, A. (1982). *Teaching Social Studies in Nigerian College*. Ile-Ife. University of Ife Press.
- Dubey, D. I. Onyabe, V. O. & Prokepek, (1988). *Social Studies Methods for Nigerian Teachers*, Ibadan University Press Ltd.
- Fabusuyi, E. B. (1981). *Methodology for Teaching Social Studies in Schools and Colleges*.
- Fadeiye, T. (2004). *Easy Topic in Histography and Method of Teaching History for NCE and Undergraduates*.
- Ikudayisi, T. O. (1990). Educational Excursion. "A Solid Way of Improving the standard of Teaching processes in Yoruba Language in Ondo State Secondary School" in Olu Aderounmu W. O. Duyilemi B. O. and Ojo.A. O. (eds) *History of Educational Development in Ondo State, a Multi-Disciplinary Pervised*, Lagos. Kola Okanlawon Publisher Ltd.
- Iyewurum, S. A. (1989). "Excursion in Social Studies Teaching and Learning", Ilorin. Department of Curriculum Studies and Educational Technology, Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin.
- Jayeola, M. S. (2004). *Methodology of Teaching and Learning History in tertiary institution*, Ile-Ife, Wole Printing Press.
- Ogunjemilua, A. A. (2004). *Social Studies Instructional Materials*, Ado-Ekiti Deen-Lat Publishers.
- Ogungbemi, E. O. (2001). "Excursion: A mean for effective teaching of History in Schools" *Ikere Journal of Education*, 5(1).
- Osokoya, I. O. (1996). *Writing and Teaching History*, Ibadan, Laurel Education Publishers.