

APPLICATION OF INTERDISCIPLINARY METHODS IN TEACHING HISTORY IN SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN BAYELSA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study of history in Nigerian secondary schools has evolved significantly since the colonial era, where students followed the Cambridge senior-level curriculum. The effectiveness of history education largely depends on the teacher's preparedness, students' interest, and, critically, the teaching methods employed. History equips learners with the knowledge to understand the past, develop critical reasoning skills, foster patriotism, and make informed decisions for national development. However, contemporary teaching practices often rely heavily on the lecture method, reducing history to mere storytelling and diminishing student engagement. Emerging trends in history education emphasize interdisciplinary and innovative approaches, reshaping course structures, instructional materials, and pedagogical strategies. This study examines the impact of teaching methods on the effectiveness of history instruction in secondary schools, highlighting the need for interactive, participatory, and inquiry-based approaches that enhance students' understanding of the past while fostering analytical and reflective skills for future development.

Keywords: History Education, Teaching Methods, Secondary Schools, Student Engagement, Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

During the colonial era in Nigeria, history was studied to the Cambridge senior level by Nigerian secondary school students. The success of teaching history is determined by the readiness of the history teacher, interest of the student, and above all the approach of teaching subject adopted by the history teacher. The study of history is a significant one as it equips its learners with knowledge that will help them to understand their past in order to make assessment between situations with the intention of making plan for development. History as a subject has help so many students to understand the past for the future, develop a sense of patriotism and nature reasoning skills. History teachers are at the centre of events for the achievements of these goals. The method used in teaching history determines the attainment or otherwise of these skills.

As opined by Uma (2022) a new concept of teaching history 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 in teaching history. The major problem teaching of history is facing is the approached being used by the history teachers in imparting such body of knowledge to their learners. In fact, there are various methods of teaching ranging from discussion, lecture, inquiry methods and the like. But majority

of history teachers of today tend to over emphasize the use of lecture method. The over usage of this method, makes history as mere story-telling, boring and irrelevant.

Therefore, for the effective teaching of history to be achieved the effective approaches of teaching history should be adopted. These approaches are what referred by scholars such as Uma, et al., (2022) as innovative teaching methods (ITM). Stegers (2012) is of the opinion that innovative teaching methods brings about innovative history education. This is a kind of education that render students challenge the basic stories since they are demanded to have an open mind, empathic understanding as well as think critically through questioning, analyzing, interpreting and judging the themes being imparted in history lessons. Mwale (2018) pointed out that, with innovative teaching methods, students construct their own learning through active participation in class room activities. Innovative teaching approaches encourages student's participation in the class activities hence their assessment is never on memorization but on their ability to apply what they have learnt into practice.

Before today, teaching of history was made up of largely of taking notes and learning by heart. Most of the history teachers stress the use of lecture methods that may not efficiently facilitate learning of history even though sometimes they may be useful. Of course, the teaching of history is one of the most difficult tasks. The popular process in most schools is to memorize names and events. The teaching of history is to memorize the prizes in most events after which the knowledge gained may be lost sadly, most history teachers do not reveal the subject as an interesting field of learning during lessons periods (National Academy of Science, 2007). Adeyenka (1989) in Uma, et al., (2022) discovered that most history teachers are tied to using traditional mode of delivery, with little or no innovation.

During the teaching of history, Boudu (2005) stated that history teachers should demonstrate mastery over the content, show enthusiasm relate lessons to students' prior knowledge, use multiple instructional methods and resources, in conveying content, create a supportive assessment technique. Suslov, Salimgareev, and Khammatov (2017) observed that innovative teaching approach have been described to encourage shared understanding between a teacher and student providing cooperative solution of educational tasks, arouse cognitive skills as well as acquisition of positive communicative skills among students. Also, Fru (2015), innovative teaching approaches make students understand other people's culture other than just idolizing the culture of the dominant group in a country.

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.

Conceptual Clarification

History

History is defined by Karl Marx as the relationship between man and his environment and the influence of his environment on man (Onyirioha, 2019). History refers to the events, episodes and the totality of the changes, experiences or happenings which humanity has undergone ever since the emergence of human society. History in other perspectives is also seen as an academic discipline that deals in reconstruction, study and explanation of changes which humanity has undergone. It is a total study of past activities of human beings that had produced significant effects on subsequent course of events.

It is the study of past human activities at a particular place over a given period of time so as to record changes over time. It is the systematic study of the process, events or motion of events through the aid of records or sources. Thus, history refers to both the events of the past as well as the study of circumstances leading to such events. The subject matter of history looks at man not as a biological unit but as a societal figure, otherwise, a social man who is adoptable to change. It is the changing activities of man over time that constitutes the transformation of societies. History is like Mother Nature; you cannot cheat it. It hangs over the head of every nation like the sword of Damocles. It is difficult to move; but whenever it moves, it is purposive and unsmiling. It does not suffer fools. It makes those who provoke it or try to cheat it pay dearly (Oyeranmi, 2003).

History Teacher

A history teacher is a person who helps history students to acquire knowledge, competence, or virtue, via the practice of teaching history (Burger, Strohmeier & Kollerová, 2022). A history teacher is a teaching professional who is meant to help history students to gain knowledge on history, competence on history, and virtue. Oyekan (2016) noted that teaching history is involving a person in an experience that effects a change in his behaviour. It is an attempt to bring about desirable changes in human learning, abilities and behaviour. The aim of teaching history is to influence the students to make those desirable changes in their behaviours that contribute to better living.

Amaele (2017) stated that teaching history is the guidance of students through planned activities so that they may acquire the richest leaning possible from their experiences. The act of Teaching his is a process of integration of

cognitive, affective and technical components into a sequence of activities aimed at the attainment of selected learning goals or outcomes. This means that teaching history is consciously directed to bring about learning. The Nigerian national education policy in Gul, Tahir, Ishfaq, and Batool (2021) stated that "educational systems cannot rise beyond the excellence of its teachers," suggesting that history teachers play a crucial role in facilitating learning and teaching of history in addition to defining the quality of education service delivery in history.

Teaching History Approaches

History teaching is an activity undertaken by a more experience and more knowledgeable person in order to enable other learn (Obanya, 1983). For history teaching to be successful, it must satisfy a number of requirements, such as methodical, well planned. result from resourcefulness on the part of the history teacher. activity –based, and it must be related to learner’s experience. As observed by Osokoya (1990) for history teaching to take place there must be a change from the student, resulting from experience. The change in behaviour 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 student in other to make learning meaningful.

Famoyin (1985) in John (2022) opined that, teaching of history is faced with many problems, such as non-availability of current edition of textbooks, to take care of the new syllabus, wider coverage of history syllabus in the secondary schools for example Nigeria in the 19th century, Nigeria in the 20th century, African and the wider world since 1800 etc. Michael (2015) is of the opinion that poor foundation of the secondary school students and inability to speak simple and correct English; most secondary schools’ 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) in Michael (2015) 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 strength and weaknesses of the pupils and know the method to adopt in motivating the learners. As stated by Bining and Bining (1952) in Michael (2015) 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) in Coyle (2012) classified teaching approach into three; they are classroom discourse, lecture and discovery method. Crookall (1972) in Coyle (2012) 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) in Iyabo (2017) 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) in Iyabo (2017) opined that emergence of new subjects like social studies and civic education affects teaching and learning history in secondary schools because these 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.

SOURCES AND METHOD

This study employed the mixed methodology approach. And the sources of data that was collected were; primary and secondary sources and personal observations.

Mixed Methodology Approach

Scholars have defined the concept of mixed-methods research in several ways. In an effort to precisely define a mixed-methods research, Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, and Turner (2007) reviewed various definitions for the term. Based on their review, they defined mixed-methods research as a type of research in which a researcher combines elements of qualitative research approaches for the broad purposes of breadth and depth of understanding and justification scholars have defined the concept of mixed-methods research in several ways. In an effort to precisely define a mixedmethods research, Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, and Turner (2007) in Uma (2022) reviewed various definitions for the term. Based on their review, they defined mixed-methods research as a type of research in which a researcher combines elements of qualitative research approaches for the broad purposes of breadth and depth of understanding and justification.

Primary Sources

The primary source that was used for data collection is the Semi-Structured questionnaire. A semistructured questionnaire is a type of interview in which the interviewer asks only a few predefined questions while the rest of the questions are not planned in advance. The research questions were used to design the appropriate questions, items that the researcher wanted to use to generate data. Questionnaire allows each respondent to read and answer identical question.

Secondary Sources

The researcher also explored some relevant published and unpublished materials in collecting information that aided the subject matter. They included: the work of other scholars that have been written, and used by others for reference purposes (published and unpublished) – books, newspapers, monographs, gazette, internet, libraries, magazines, journals, public lectures, publication textbook, thesis, previous research studies. The secondary sources constituted the highest percent of the data and method of sourcing materials that were majorly used.

Innovative approaches to teaching history education

During a telephone interview Johnson (2025) stated that one of the major innovative approaches to teaching history education in Bayelsa State is primary source analysis. Johnson (2025) further told the research that history teachers in Bayelsa State teach history through primary source analysis by analysing historical artifacts, documents, and accounts to develop critical thinking skills and interpret different perspectives to the students.

During an oral interview Samuel (2025) stated that role-playing and simulations are innovative approaches to teaching history education. In this the history teacher in Bayelsa State engages the history learners in immersive experiences, stepping into historical figures shoes to gain empathy and deeper understanding of history. Oye (2025) added during a personal communication that history teachers in Bayelsa State teach history through multimedia presentations. In this the history teachers utilize videos, images, and interactive presentations to make the teaching of history memorable and dynamic.

Ebiye (2025) a senior secondary school history teacher during an oral interview told the researcher that project-based learning is one of the innovative approach's history teachers use in teaching history as a subject. In project-based learning the history teacher encourages his/her students to explore historical topics, conduct research, and create projects that promotes collaboration and critical thinking.

During the telephone interview Johnson (2025) told the researcher that another innovative approach history teachers use in teaching history is debates and discussions. During the telephone interview Johnson (2025) further stated that history teachers use debates and discussions to foster communication skills and critical thinking on historical perspective and events.

During an oral interview Samuel (2025) told the researcher that inquiry-based learning is another approach history teachers apply during teaching history as a subject. Samuel (2025) pointed out that in the inquiry-based learning the history teachers encourage their students to ask questions, investigate historical topics independently and conduct research. During a telephone interview Johnson (2025) stated that during instructional delivery history teachers use virtual reality technology to teach their students. The history teachers use approach such as virtual reality technology to transport students to historical events or environments, providing an immersive learning practice. As opined by Oye (2024) during a personal communication another innovative approach history teachers use in teaching history is blended learning. Oye (2024) further stated during a personal communication that history teachers use blended learning by combing traditional face-to-face instruction with online learning components for a flexible and personalised learning experience.

During the personal communication Samuel (2025) added that history teachers use artificial intelligence to teacher their history student's history by leverage AI powered adaptive learning platforms to tailor lessons to individual students' needs and abilities. During the telephone interview Johnson (2025) stated that the peer teaching is another means in which history teachers used in teaching history encourage students to teach and learn history from each other, promoting communication skills and collaboration skills. During a telephone interview Johnson (2025) stated that collaborative projects is another innovative approach in teaching history, in this approach the history teachers assign group projects that require students to work together, share insights, and develop team-work skills. Johnson (2025) further stated that Jigsaw technique is another approach in teaching

history, in this approach the history teacher divides the history students into groups to become experts on specific topics and share knowledge with peers, promoting teamwork and share responsibilities.

Ebiye (2025) stated during a personal interview that history teachers use field trip or excursion method as an innovative approach in teaching history. History teachers use the field trip or excursion approach to teach history because using the approach is a great way to enjoy a unique learning experience outside a classroom environment. Field trips are not only good fun, they allow students to absorb, interact and immerse themselves in a practical way. During an oral interview Samuel (2025) stated that using field trip to teach students history enables students to retain information. Samuel (2025) added that being immersed in information and being involved in visual and practical experiences will help students remember, learn and understand subjects. Oye (2025) added during a personal communication that history teachers use field trips because it helps reinforce classroom materials, bringing lessons to life and give students the opportunity to visualize experience and discuss information on a subject. John (2025) an history teacher during an oral interview told the researcher that he takes his student to field trips because it offers them a unique cultural learning experience. It allows them to be involved in new environments, key to encouraging curiosity about a given subject. It is also valuable as an exercise in broadening a student understands of the world and their place in it.

Respondents such as Johnson (2025) Samuel (2025) Ebiye (2025) and Oye (2025) all pointed out that history teachers use e-learning as an innovative approach in teaching history. During a telephone interview Johnson (2025) stated that history teachers apply e-learning in teaching history because it creates opportunity for the required interaction to take place, it gives both the teacher and students the opportunity to put their views and ideas, helps a teacher provide concrete experiences to the students on the subject matter. Ebiye (2025) stated during a personal interview that history teachers use e-learning approach because it helps history students get opportunities to play active role in learning process, and that it stimulates students' interest and curiosity on learning history. Oye (2025) added that e-learning as an innovative approach in teaching history facilitate the learning process of history education.

Respondents such as Johnson (2025) Samuel (2025) Ebiye (2025) and Oye (2025) all pointed out that history teachers use online resources such as YouTube, WhatsApp Account, Edmodo, Instagram, Zoom, Quizlet and Kahoot as an innovative approach in teaching history education. During a telephone interview Johnson (2025) stated that history teachers apply YouTube to introduce new concepts on history education and display information during instruction, history teachers use and YouTube to up-to-date teaching materials which helps them to form course content. Ebiye (2025) added during a personal interview that history teachers use teachers use YouTube video to share resources to engage students in classroom activities, teachers use YouTube video to instruct students through different teaching methodology, and that Using YouTube make teachers teach effectively.

Oye (2025) stated that history teachers use WhatsApp as an innovative approach in teaching history because it makes teachers teach students effectively, to share ideas to students in order to enhance their academic

performance, to enable them work collaboratively with students in the learning process, and access to latest global standard for teaching techniques that help improve the learning process.

During an oral interview Samuel (2025) stated that teachers of his use Edmodo as an innovative approach because it helps students to see their intellectual ability to think and act both as an individual and as a group member. Samuel (2025) further stated that history teachers use Edmodo because it acts as a playground for teaching and learning with a place for posts, calendars, and general communication for teachers and students. Linking to students becomes simpler and more efficient as well as more effective when students enjoy the presentation of it. It makes it easy to share valuable apps with students.

Oye (2024) stated during a personal communication that history teachers apply Instagram in teaching history because it improves history student's listing, interaction and communicative skills, and history teachers also use Zoom because it allows students to share their ideas, It can be used at the beginning of a topic to ascertain students' pre-conceived notion of the subject matter or toward the end of a sub topic by presenting student with a new situation and asking them to explain in terms of what they have just learned in business education. Samuel (2025) stated that using Quizlet to teach students history as an effective means for collaborative teaching-learning, to evaluate their teaching, and that teachers use Quizlet to assess their students learning.

John (2025) an history teacher during an oral interview told the researcher that history teachers use Kahoot as innovative approach in teaching history education. John (2025) further stated that they use it to evaluate their students' level of understanding in the lesson taught, to make their classroom more positive learning environment, to make their classrooms more student-centric, and to amplify student's engagement in the learning process. Oye (2025) added that history teachers use Kahoot as an innovative approach to review students' knowledge, for formative assessment, or as a break from traditional classroom activities.

The challenges of innovative approaches to teaching history education

During a telephone interview Johnson (2025) stated that one of the challenges of innovative approaches to teaching history education in public senior secondary school in Bayelsa State is large number of students in a class. Johnson (2025) pointed out that when there is large number of students in a class discussion time becomes fragmented among students and history teachers may rely on passive teaching, assign less written homework or fewer problem sets, and may not use innovative approach in teaching history. In addition, learning history is not affected much by class size largely because the history teacher does not adjust their teaching approach to class size.

During an oral interview Samuel (2025) stated that teachers' level of competence. A competent teacher performs academic duties professionally as expected for improved performance functions geared towards academic achievements among the students. Therefore, history teachers are expected to acquire professional competences in knowledge management for effective instructional delivery and productivity in history. Samuel (2025) stated that why most history in Bayelsa State do not use the above-mentioned innovative approaches in teaching history is because their level of competence in history is low, which has made history teachers not to reach their set goals and not to be persevere with resilience in the face of difficult situations. Oye (2024) stated during a personal

communication that inadequate provision of finance by the Bayelsa State government is a major factor that made most history teachers not to use the innovative approach in teaching history. During the telephone interview Johnson (2025) stated that insufficient teaching materials and a lack of time allocated for history education subject are major reason why most history teacher in Bayelsa State do not use innovative approach why teaching history.

CONCLUSION

The success of teaching history is determined by the readiness of the history teacher, interest of the student, and above all the approach of teaching history adopted by the history teacher in Bayelsa State, Nigeria. The innovative approaches to teaching history education in senior secondary schools are primary source analysis, role-playing and simulations, multimedia presentations, project-based learning, debates and discussions, inquiry-based learning, virtual reality technology, blended learning, artificial intelligence, peer teaching, collaborative projects, Jigsaw technique, and field trip or excursion method. The challenges to innovative approaches to teaching history education in senior secondary schools in Bayelsa State, Nigeria are large number of students in a classroom, teachers' level of competence, inadequate funding, insufficient teaching materials, and a lack of time allocated for history education subject.

Suggestions

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

1. History teachers in senior secondary schools in Bayelsa State, Nigeria should be encouraged to engage in training sessions as well as capacity building programme such as seminars and conferences to help them identify new approaches in enhancing the teaching of history.
2. History teachers in senior secondary schools in Bayelsa State, Nigeria should be resourceful, innovative and creative in selecting various instructional appropriate in teaching history lessons.
3. 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.
4. The methodological issues in teaching history in senior secondary schools in Bayelsa State, Nigeria should be well-addressed, a good history teacher should know the best method to use that will suit the subject matter.

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