

# Teaching a Perfect Lesson in Social Studies Classroom: Some Useful Tips

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## Abstract

Teaching and learning are not equivalent either can occur independently of the other and frequently does. The teacher's approach to instruct will reflect in great measure his concept of how the students learns. As teachers we need to use those instructional methods that will most effectively help our learners incorporate the content of the lesson into their minds and hearts. All methods are not equivalently effective for all teachers. Part of the artistry of teaching lies in discovering those strategies especially the tips that make a lesson a perfect one in the classroom. The Social Studies teacher, while looking at the tips suggested in the article could consider the instructional intent, physical environment, resources and many other factors before he enters into any decision to use a particular teaching approach.

**Keywords:** *A Perfect Lesson, Active Participation, Artistry of Teaching, Physical Environment.*

## INTRODUCTION

Watching some teachers teaching, the presentation looks so easy, smooth and natural, like all professional do when performing their craft. One's interest in such lessons may never wanes, with one never noticing time passing until the class is over. Amazingly by the end of the lesson, students would have learnt what they are expected to learn. The lesson may be entertaining, yet the students have learnt something. While the method used by the teacher may not be new, may not involve dramatic frameworks or no fancy electronic media, there is a secret to this teacher's activity to teach a perfect lesson in the classroom. The tips are important to Social studies teachers knowing fully well that, the teaching and learning of social studies is to create superlative awareness for every citizen about his environment with a view to making him or her respond positively and rewardingly to its challenges. Its inclusion into the strata of the education curriculum in Nigeria is also aimed at providing solutions to the myriad of social, political and economic problems facing the Nigerian society.

Remembering the old maxim 'Genius is 10 percent inspiration and 90 percent preparation?' The same can be said for teaching. Successful teaching is 10 percent talent (performance, technology, education and whatever) and 90 percent preparation. The best teachers are those who have put in the time preparing to teach a good lesson. Kizlik (2012) noted that, poor understanding and appreciation of social studies have great consequence on the teaching and the learning of the subject. He explained further that a good social studies teacher must understand the content (have correct perception of integrated social studies), be able to translate the content and consider it pedagogy. Molebash (2004) noted that, most teachers are eager to teach the integrated curriculum of social studies but their perception are influenced by what and how they were taught in schools. Thus, their preferences for the single subject model becomes paramount. Eggen and Kuachak (2001), asserted that, where

pedagogical tips, content and knowledge are lacking, teachers commonly paraphrase information in learner's textbooks or provide abstract explanations that may not be meaningful to the students.

Ajayi (2007) suggested that teaching method may dictate pace at which learning takes place. He further explained that the focus and perception of teachers often determines the type of teaching method used. Adeyemi (2002) emphasized the need for adopting methods which will motivate the learners to achieve the various objectives of social studies education. He further emphasized that tips that makes a lesson a perfect one cannot be overlooked for the social studies teacher.

Below are some suggested tips for preparing a lesson for the social studies teacher. Following these suggestions may help him teach that perfect lesson.

### **SUGGESTED TIPS**

1. Prepare for each lesson "again for the first time". The teacher should avoid the temptation to coast on his previously learned knowledge, no, matter how experienced he is. What he used to know about a theme about in social studies has faded somewhat (and for some of us, the rate of fading gray matter is faster than for others). Only fresh conception inspires us to our best efforts. The teacher should know that what he knew about a theme in social studies should be different now from the last time he taught it. The teacher is different person today than he was last year, more experienced, knowledgeable and matured. To continue to teach based on what he use to know is a conscious decision to stop growing. To continue to coast on previously learned knowledge is a step to remain a mediocre. To be satisfied with what he the teacher already knows is a step in the wrong direction. The teacher should be opened to new sources especially this era of ICT Technology a teacher should expand his knowledge about a particular subject with the consciousness that there is always something new to learn about others than what he always knows think he knows. The assumption that the social studies teacher incorporates into his living, his thought and world view can hinder him from gaining new motivates and seeing truths never seen before. Sometimes, the teaching he does is when he motivates learners to be dissatisfied with what they already know by challenging their assumptions about awareness of the environment, problems and other issues of the world. The teacher should teach to create dissonance in his learners.
2. The teacher should develop a personal study plan. He should set a definite time each week to do his lesson preparation. If he can establish this discipline, he will be more effective teacher and this will definitely lower his level of anxiety about teaching in subsequent lessons.
3. Teacher can also introduce the tip of making connections in the social studies classroom to more familiar facts and principles through the use of analogies. In this way, he will come up with a number of illustrations that will serve as bridges to applications or as windows to insight. The teaching should identify a central truth in all themes, taught and complete the sentence" This is like.....
4. Someone once said that the final product of clear thought is clear speech. This is why the social studies teacher should study the lesson to be taught early in the week reviewing it several times during the week until he can recount it in his own words. The social studies teacher could employ all resources at his disposal to achieve this.

5. The teacher should identify the flow of the lesson. He should be able to identify the natural order of the several steps in the lesson. The social studies teacher could go from the general to specific or from the specific to general or from the known to the unknown or from quiet to frenzied form or old to new-whatever is appropriate to the learning experiences and learner's outcomes. Once the floor of the lesson is established. He could play it out in his mind. He could picture himself with the learners in his teaching environment. He could see himself teaching the lesson, paying attention to how he makes a transition in the lesson from one step to another. He could play out the lesson in his mind in quick time and then in slow motion.
6. The teacher in social studies classroom could ask and answer the question himself "if my students never learn this lesson, what will they lack in their lives? The social studies teacher should endeavour to find the relevance of the lesson to the learners knowing fully well that social studies is a problem solving and value laden discipline, the essence being to create a superlative awareness for every citizen about his environment with a view to making him respond positively and rewardingly to its challenges. He should assume that at the end of the next lesson, the student would stop and ask him" so what"? The teacher should be able to identify the new one thing he wants the audience to learn.
7. The teacher should choose learners participation, methods to help his students actively engage in the classroom. Ogunyemi (1994) emphasized that active participation is better than passive reception of the contents of social studies lesson and a motivated learner is better than one not motivated. The method that will help to carry the floor of the lesson should be employed. The teacher could use highly participatory method at the beginning and at the end of the lesson. All the same, teacher should not feel the need to be entertaining and creative at every step of the lesson, Famuyide (2015).
8. The social studies teacher should aim to teach one thing at a time. Ekuigbo (2015) opined that, complete mastery of one thing is better than an ineffective acquaintance with many. When it comes to effective teaching, Ekiugbo (2015) maintained that the less is more, as teaching more than what the students can cope with amounts to sacrificing quality on the altar of ineffectiveness as the human mind may not be able to handle too many concepts at the same time. The maximum number of tips of information the mind can process at any given time is eight, Galindo (2004). Effective teaching will involve focusing on teaching one new concept at each learning session.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

At this junction, the social studies teacher should have known that there is no magic formula for the learners to know how to teach a perfect lesson. Like almost anything in life, it takes basic commitment to the task and hard work. And with almost other thing, a little "know how" can go a long way. The social studies teacher is advised to see these tips as suggestion and to also realize the importance of investing in a little hand work in the course of preparation to teach a social studies lesson. Such preparation time will make his presentation look so easy, smooth and natural like all professionals do when performing their craft. The students interest may never waver and it would look as if time stood still for the social studies teacher. Are you a Social studies teacher? You can do better in your next lesson.

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