



## Examining the use of Teaching and Learning Materials (TLM) methods in Basic School Level by Social Studies teachers in Ghana: A tracer study

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#### Abstract

A tracer study approaches are often designed to track individual teachers who have undergone the rigorous training so as to examine, evaluate and assess their performance and progress based on the training received. This paper, however, examined the use of Teaching and Learning Materials (TLM) methods in selected Basic Schools level by Social Studies teachers in Ghana in lesson delivery. It employed a tracer and qualitative study approach. In all, 20 Social Studies teachers were purposively selected from 20 basic schools; 12 females and eight males. Ten headmasters were also selected purposively for interview. This study employed unannounced visits for lesson observation as the strategy for data collection. A semi-structured interview was also used to collect information from participants. The results from this study showed that about ninety percent of Social Studies' teachers in the basic school level do not use TLMs in lesson delivery in the Yilo Krobo Municipality in the Eastern Region of Ghana.

**Keywords:** basic school, tracer, Teaching and Learning Materials, pupils, teachers

## 1.0 Introduction

The Colleges of Education in Ghana primarily aimed at producing competent and highly qualified teachers employable here and abroad. In the light of this, valuable and appropriate information for evaluating the results of the education and training given to teachers are required. This therefore demands for a tracer study as an approach to track and keep record of their teachers once they have graduated from Colleges of Education in Ghana. This is to find out what the graduates are doing in so far as the education and training received from their alma mater. For instance, it was noticed with grave concern that one of the major contributing factors of poor academic performance by basic school pupils in the Yilo Krobo Municipality in the Eastern Region of Ghana is a pedagogical problem of inadequate use of TLMs by basic school Social Studies teachers in lesson delivery. TLMs are instructional materials that Social Studies teachers use in the classroom to support and achieve a specific learning objective. As provided by the new National Teachers' Standards for Ghana under the professional practices, teachers are to produce teaching and learning materials or resources that enhance learning, including ICT. Such resources are to be made from the local materials where possible and in sufficient numbers for all learners to handle. In the Ghanaian teacher training institutions, teacher trainees are taught to prepare and use TLMs in every lesson they have with their pupils. In the Colleges of Education, lesson delivery opportunities are given to teacher trainees to practice the use of TLM during on campus teaching and teaching practices with some of them busily looking for materials within and outside the teaching practicing school environment. Some also resort to drawing those materials that are not readily available in their environment with some others downloading TLMs for the internet. All these draw on how teacher trainees value the importance of TLM in lesson delivery. Following from the training from the various Colleges of Education, it was however observed that Social Studies teachers at the basic school levels ceased to use TLMs in their lesson delivery even though they were aware of importance of TLMs in lesson delivery. It is based on this background that a tracer study need to be conducted to better understand why Social Studies teacher at the basic level do not use TLMs in lesson delivery.

## 2.0 Literature review

Although language still remains the most important asset in the teacher's work, Bušljeta, 2013 indicated that in today's teaching process it is difficult to imagine a successful lesson delivery without the use of different modern teaching and learning resources. The contribution of teaching and learning materials (TLMs) to the teaching process is manifold, and their use in order to makes the teaching and learning process more attractive, interesting and modern. Most importantly, the use of TLMs aids the teacher in the organisation and quality of conducting teaching and learning whilst aiding the students in the processes of enhancing their intellectual and emotional capacities. Though poor performance in schools were not attached with lack of, or inadequacy of these materials, TLMs are important in teaching and learning process for higher class achievement but are inadequate in many schools (Kerr, 2003). As indicated by

Earthman and Lemasters (1996) learners who are provided with safe, modern and environmentally sound materials learn much better and their academic performance are high. According to Oni (1992), TLMs are teachers' strategic factor in organizing and providing meaningful learning situation. This is so because the use of TLMs in lesson delivery helps to explain concepts that the teacher could not, without the use of TLM, thereby making students learn more comfortably so as to influence positively their academic performance. Ajayi and Ogunyemi (1990) emphasize that TLMs are provided in the basic level classroom to meet relative needs of teaching process, pupils learn at his or her own pace. The overall result is students perform much better when different types of TLMs are used in lesson delivery at the basic schools.

## 2.1 Types of teaching learning materials

National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) (2005) categorize of TLMs into three types namely Audio, Visual and Audio-Visual based on the audio and visual effects produced by the materials. NCERF (2005) further explained the categories as:

- a) Audio aids: The materials or devices which call upon the auditory senses and thus help the individuals to learn through listening e.g. Radio broadcasts, Cassette and CD player.
- b) Visual aids: The aids which call upon the visual senses and thus help the learners to learn through viewing. The important and under this head are Black board, Charts, Pictures, Graphs, Models, Film strips, Slides etc.
- c) Audio-Visual aids: The devices which require the auditory as well as visual senses and helping the students to learn through listening as well as viewing. Examples of such aids are television, films and computer-assisted instruction.
- d) Still another way of categorizing TLMs is based on projected, non- projected or experiential.
  - (i) Projected aids: Movies, epidiascope, magic lantern, micro-projectors and projection with the overhead projectors, LCD projector are examples of projected aids.
  - (ii) Non-Projected aids: Chalk board, felt board, bulletin board, photographs, posters, maps, charts, globes, specimens, and text book illustrations, come under non-projected aids.
  - (iii) Experiential Aids: Field trips, educational tours, visit to important institutions and industries, observing experiments, demonstrations and natural phenomena are a few examples of experiential aids

In the light of this, Dobson (1988) on his part lists visual and audio aids which are mostly used at the basic levels as the followings:

**Visual Aids:** Blackboard, Bulletin Boards, Flannel Boards, Magne Boards, Realia, Pictures, Charts, Flash Charts, Maps, Calendars, Cartoon, Clocks, Sliders, Filmstrips.

**Audio Aids:** Radio, Phonograph, Records, Tapes. (Dibson, 1988)

### **3.0 The Purposes of Using TLMs in lesson delivery by the Social Studies teacher**

The purpose of using TLMs in class is to assist the Social Studies teacher with the presentation and transmission of educational content and the achievement of the set educational objectives, whilst aiding the pupils in acquiring knowledge and profiling different abilities and values. Some of the purposes include the providing economy in time and speech, simplify the lessons, vivid and clear lesson delivery, increasing pupils interest and motivation in the lesson, explaining complex explanation easily among others. TLMs also enrich the course, create the desire of learning by pupils, make abstract concepts concrete in lesson delivery and provide the chance for practicing on subjects. (Küçükahmet, 1995)

### **3.1 The importance of TLMs in lesson delivery**

TLMs are an important part of teaching processes of any teaching and learning programme. Effective teaching depends on meaningful, relevant and motivating TLMs when developed according to students' needs, interest and expectations. According to Adeyinka, (2002) any good TLMs help to arouse learner's desire and interest to learn the Social Studies skills by making them feel they are learning in the 'real' life situation". In addition, Hyland (2003, p. 94) states that "one of the most important advantages of using good materials, is that it increases learners' motivation and reflects positively on their learning process." Opoku-Asare (2004) that exposing learners to good TLMs is indispensable for a Social Studies class because of the practical life skills they provide. Exposing students to such practical life skills will enable them to cope with genuine interaction, whether it is inside or outside the classroom." Therefore, to develop Social Studies skills of the student, teacher should use good materials to lessen the gap between classroom and the real world. The use of proper TLMs in Social Studies lesson delivery is very necessary because it prepares the students to face the real world. The teaching and learning material must be prepared to meet the interest of the pupil so as to raise the learner's desire to learn or otherwise the student will gain nothing (Nunan, 1997). Use of proper TLMs supports the teaching of Social Studies, by raising pupil's motivation towards learning (Schomburg, 2003). Pupils' self-satisfaction also improves after teaching proper citizenship skills in the Social Studies classroom because they feel connected with the real life. It is difficult to know how the pupil will perform in the real life situations without using adequate TLMs in the class. Pupils need to feel that the materials from which they are learning is connected to the real world and at the same time they must contribute positively to the aspects of their inner make up such as age, level of education, social attitudes, the intellectual ability and level of emotional maturity" (Cunningsworth, 1984). Onasanya (2004) mentions several reasons for using TLMs in the classroom. These are to prepare learners for real life, meet learners' needs, affect learner's motivation positively, and encourage teachers to adopt effective teaching methods and present good information about culture. In line with this, Onasanya (2004) further identify the following as some of the importance of TLMs to the teacher as well as the pupil.

1. TLMs make lessons more enjoyable, clear and comprehensible for students. They can be used at all levels of learning process to enrich knowledge.
2. TLMs for Social Studies class motivate the students so that they can learn easily without having any difficulty.
3. TLMs are effective to increase student's memory. What they learn with the help of these TLMs imprints in their mind. It also makes their learning permanent. Supportive teaching materials provide advantages to remember the Social Studies skills better.
4. TLMs can facilitate the better understanding of the Social Studies which discourages the act of confusion. It makes the subject and every aspect of lesson very clear and makes them successful in learning other course areas in Social Studies.
5. TLMs used during the teaching of Social Studies make their learning process like a game and students enjoy the learning process. The more use of supportive materials increase the learning activities and chances of success.
6. Use of TLMs is absolutely effective because it make the whole process simple, productive and enrich the learning activities.
7. These TLMs also provide a natural learning atmosphere and help them to actively involve in the learning, teaching and experiencing process.
9. Use of TLMs in the Social Studies class can heighten student's desire of learning. All the students participate in the learning process vividly. It enables the students to express their concepts effectively.
10. TLMs make the Social Studies class live and active and avoid dullness because of involvement of every student. It provides direct experience to the students.
11. Use of proper TLMs saves lots of time and money also. It saves time from long and boring explanatory class and helps the students to understand the complex subjects easily.

However, some researches claim that teaching learning materials have no value as they contain lots of difficult task which have to explain in the Social Studies class with lots of efforts. In a mixed ability class there are so many weak learners who are not affected with these teaching materials. For them authentic and traditional materials are the same. It makes them frustrated and de-motivated as Schomburg (2013) indicates that the use of TLMs may not only prevent learners from responding in meaningful ways, but can also lead them to feel frustrated, confused and de-motivated. It is also a difficult issue for teachers to select the suitable materials for the students. It is a time consuming process.

#### **4.0 Methodology**

A qualitative case study approach was employed to purposively select 20 participants from 20 basic schools in the Yilo Krobo Municipality comprising of 12 females and 08 male Social Studies teachers for interview. In all, 20 basic schools Social Studies teachers were involved in the study. Ten (10) headmasters were also selected purposively for interview. Unannounced visits to the field were made to the selected schools to observe social studies lesson. Twenty lessons

were observed while another 20 participants were interviewed. The Information collected through the use of semi-structured interviews and field observation was analyzed. Coding was first used to allow categories to emerge from the data. The data was read severally to allow meanings to occur. The result of the analysis of the data was presented through the use of tables and qualitative description.

## 5.0 Results from Classroom observation

After thorough observation of 10 lessons taught by the sampled basic schools class Social Studies teacher, I noticed that the majority of the teachers taught without using teaching and learning materials (TLMs) and at times the materials used were inadequate and irrelevant to the lesson. Table I below shows the unannounced field observation result of the use of TLMs in Social Studies lesson delivery.

**Table I: Field observation result of the use of TLMs in Social Studies lesson delivery**

Responses	No. of respondents	Percentages (%)
Throughout	02	10
Aspects	06	30
Not at all	12	60
<b>Totals</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100</b>

It could be seen from table that only two out of the twenty Social Studies teachers representing 10% responded that she always use TLM effectively throughout her lesson delivery. She was able to introduce the TLM at the beginning, middle and at the end of the lesson. These two teachers were able to provide adequate and relevant materials for pupils to interact with throughout the various stages of the lesson delivery. This has led to adequate participation of all pupils in the teaching and learning process. Six out of the 20 participants observed, representing 30% of the respondents observed used the TLM at certain aspects of the lesson. This in effect showed that the these teachers did not effectively and adequately use TLM throughout their lesson delivery with some of them only using it at the beginning stage of the lesson delivery while other use the TLM at the middle of the lesson. It was observed that some of the TLMs used were not properly design, inadequately prepared, and sufficient enough for all pupils to interact with as they learn. The most common ones used were the old charts and diagrams hanging on the walls in the classrooms. For instance, in one of the Social Studies lessons observed, the teacher was pointing to a picture hanging at corner of the class without giving the students the opportunity to have a feel of it. Twelve out of ten respondents, representing 60% of the basic school Social Studies teachers observed did not use any TLM at all in their lesson delivery. These basic school teachers have adopted the lecture method to explain concepts for pupils. It was further observed that these teachers employed the activity based teaching and learning to the barest minimum. The lessons observed here were not made enjoyable, clear and comprehensible for pupils. The natural learning atmosphere that will enable



pupils to actively involve in the learning, teaching and experiencing process was not created as a result of not using TLMs by the teachers. The pupils desire of learning has gone down with pupils not engaged in expressing concepts effectively.

Following from this, 20 Social Studies teacher were interviewed to find out if TLM were adequately employ in the lesson delivery. The responses were presented in the table 2 below.

**Table 2: Interview result of Social Studies teacher use of TLMs in lesson delivery**

Responses	No. of respondents	Percentages (%)
Always	03	15
Not always	08	40
Under supervision	07	35
Not at all	02	10
<b>Totals</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100</b>

It could be seen from table that three (3) out of twenty (20) basic school Social Studies teachers representing 15% responded that they always use TLM in their lesson delivery. These participants indicated that the use of TLM makes their lesson more practical and promote pupils participation since pupils are always curious to feel and touched any material brought to class. Eight out of the twenty Social Studies teachers representing 40% responded that, though they know the importance of TLMs in lesson delivery, they do not always use TLMs in their lesson delivery with the reason that it is difficult and time consuming to prepare or get TLMs for lesson delivery. This group of respondents further indicated that they use TLMs depending on the lesson topic to be treated. Those topics that are less involving do not need a TLM. Another seven out of the twenty Social Studies teachers, representing 35% responded that they use the TLM in lessons delivery only when supervisors have come for inspection or to supervise their works for promotion or other purposes. *“Even with this, the visiting team do give the schools a pre-notice of their intended visit which makes them to prepare for the use of TLMs in lesson delivery”* said by one. Two out of the twenty participants representing 10% said though they are aware of the several advantages of using TLMs in lesson delivery; they do not use it in their lesson delivery at all. These participants indicated that the use of TLMs make the class noisy and difficult to control so they try all the possible best to teaches to the understanding of the pupils. *“My pupils perform very well in all class activities though I do not use a TLM to teach”* said one of the teachers who do not use TLM at all. To further find out from those who always use TLM in their lesson delivery to explain to give reasons why they do so, one of them has this to say: sir, the use of TLMs, it makes my lesson delivery very simple, easy and more practical. It enables my pupils to understand and practice even in class the concepts learnt before applying it elsewhere. Through observation, it was noticed that all the participant teachers were very much aware of the need and importance of the use of TLMs in lesson

delivery, however, the motivation to employ TLMs in lesson delivery was not there. For instance, in an interview, a primary four teacher in one of the basic school said:

Though we were trained at College on how to prepare and use TLMs in lesson delivery, and even make sure we use the TLM in every lesson especially during teaching practice. We only do that to earn a good score or grade which led to the award of teacher certificate but now we teach for money not scores. We do not have enough resources to spend on TLMs.

Another participant said: *“Payment of electricity bills and rent is already a problem let alone using spending on TLMs. We try our best for them to understand our lessons”*. A further probe showed that the basic school teachers normally use TLMs only used except there is going to be an external inspection for promotion or general inspection from the Municipal or District offices. One of the Social Studies teachers interviewed has this to say: *A quality teaching and learning process is not determined by the use of several modern teaching and learning material, but by a teacher’s success in using them to motivate the pupils to gain positive knowledge, skills, and accept and adopt positive values and attitudes* which he was already doing that without necessary using TLMs always. To find out if the headmasters of the basic schools supervise the use of TLMs in the lesson delivery, the following reposes were given and presented in Table 2 below

**Table 2: Supervision of the use of TLMs in the lesson delivery by headmasters**

Responses	No. of respondents	Percentages (%)
Always	03	30
Not always	06	60
Not at all	01	10
<b>Totals</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>100</b>

It could be seen from Table 3 above that out of the ten headmasters interviewed only three of them representing 30% responded that the always super vise their teachers on the use of TLM in lesson delivery. Six of the headmasters representing 60% indicated that though they supervise their teachers on the use of TLMs in lesson delivery, they did not always supervise them. One of the participants, representing 10% of the headmasters said though he supervises the teachers, he did not supervise the use of TLMs in lesson delivery. An interview, one of the headmasters indicated that teacher always made provision for TLMs in their lesson preparation but in teaching the lesson he did not go ahead to supervise them to use TLMS in the lesson delivery. *I think once the TLM was stated in the lesson plan, the teacher will use them in lesson delivery.* He said.



## 6.0 Summary of findings

The basic philosophy of TLM is that teacher is a part of the whole process of collection, preparation, and maintenance of TLMs whether the TLMs are to be procured or prepared. The Social Studies teachers at the basic schools, however, lack the motivation to employ TLMs in lesson delivery. That Social Studies teachers at the basic schools only used TLMs except there is going to be an external inspection for promotion or general inspection from the Municipal or District offices. Those lesson topics that are less involving do not need a TLM. That it is difficult and time consuming to prepare or get TLMs for lesson delivery. That the use of TLM is only necessary during teaching practice to earn a good score or grade for certification but not really necessary teaching for salary. Finally, survey conducted through classroom lesson observation showed that only 10% of Social Studies teachers in the classrooms who are literally refer to as permanent teachers or professional teachers do teach using teaching and learning materials in their lesson delivery after leaving the various Colleges of Education. The majority of them, representing 60% who were seen during unannounced visit did not use any TLM at all in their lesson delivery. The classroom teaching was also dominated by the Lecture Method of teachers. Though there were some essential aids like chalk, duster, and blackboard in the classroom, teaching learning materials were hardly used in the classroom.

## 7.0 Conclusion

Though teachers had qualifications and the required professionalism in the teaching, they lack motivation to effectively execute their professionalism which include developing teaching and learning materials. By means of using the teaching materials, teachers increase students' interests and motivations to the subjects and lessons. So the students listen to the teacher more carefully and do not forget whatever their teachers teach them. In this way the teachers can create desire of learning and all the students participate in the lesson vividly and voluntarily. Teachers can enrich the skills by continuously preparing and using supportive teaching materials.

## 8.0 Recommendations

The following suggestions were made for effective and appropriate use of TLMs in lesson delivery at the basic levels. The study suggests a periodic workshops and refresher programmes are organized for Social Studies teachers at the basic levels on how to use materials in their immediate environment to prepare TLMs at low or almost no cost for lesson delivery. Apart from indicating the use of TLMs in lesson notes, all headmasters should supervise teachers on the use of TLMs in their lesson delivery. Teacher must ensure that all pupils should also be involved in the collection, design and development of TLMs from locally available materials in sufficient numbers for all learners to handle. The government must also ensure provision of resource rooms in all the basic school for use as a centre for designing, preparing and keeping TLMs in the schools.

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