

Research Article

Techniques and Strategies Use in Assessing Social Studies Concepts

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Abstract: The purpose of the study was to examine techniques and strategies use in assessing Social Studies concepts in the three senior high schools in Sefwi Wiawso Municipality in the Western North Region of Ghana. Qualitatively, the research design for this study was a Case study. The population for this study consisted of all ten (10) Social Studies teachers in three public Senior High Schools (Wiawso Senior High School, Wiawso Senior/Technical school, and Asawinso senior high school) in Sefwi Wiawso municipality in the Western North Region of Ghana. Purposive and convenient sampling techniques were used to select municipalities, schools, and Social Studies teachers for the study. The main instrument used for data collection was interview. The data were edited before being analyzed in themes and pattern. Being a case study design in qualitative research, the researcher read through the data several times so as to familiarize with the data, making notes, referring back to the research question, making decisions whether to focus on individual responses or on topics. The interview data were interpreted to articulate meaning, making decisions on whether to use direct quotes or the summary of respondents' responses and reporting the data considering the interest of various audiences. The study revealed that teachers used various teaching techniques such as brainstorming, simulation, discovery-learning, role-play discussion, dramatization, problem-solving, and building a community implies that they believed in child-centered method of the teaching and learning of Social Studies. The study also concluded that Social Studies teachers use techniques and strategies like concept attainment, field trips, and debate co-operative learning in motivating and providing learners with the opportunity to interact with their own community or environment. It is recommended that Social Studies teachers should make effort either to go on field trips or make use of available experts that are in their communities by inviting them into the Social Studies classrooms to tap into their rich knowledge to enhance concept learning. It is also recommended that frequent seminars and periodic or regular in-service training should be organised by the Ghana Education Service to help Social Studies teachers to acquaint themselves with the modern teaching techniques and strategies that promote the teaching and learning of Social Studies concepts.

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1. Introduction

Methods, techniques and strategies are different levels of planning that a teacher thinks about when preparing to teach (African Social and Environmental Studies Programme [1]). A good method is not merely a collection of artifices or mechanical devices and that every teacher must devise his/her own method, it is important to remember that good method can result only from the constant observation of certain broad principles. These include orderly procedure in teaching, an arrangement of subject-matter which will avoid waste of time and energy and a distribution of emphasis which will secure the greatest cooperation from the learners and maintain their active interest

[2]. A technique, on the other hand, is a change in stimulus variation as the lesson goes on. For example, a lesson can start with a film show, followed by role play or simulation or dramatization and debate all in the same lesson. Strategies are the means (techniques, processes, and procedures) to be used in presenting content to students in an instructional setting. Strategies have been defined as ways of “sequencing or organizing a giving selection of techniques, that is, during one class period the strategy was to use the following techniques: lecture, discussion and workbooks” [3] Dynneson and Gross are of the view that, a teaching (or instructional) strategy is the technique that the teacher employs to help students learn the content of the course, unit, or lesson. In other words, a teaching strategy is a delivery system aimed at establishing, clarifying, and expanding the student’s ability to understand and to interact with the content of the subject. The subject matter is not merely “presented.” Rather the teacher should choose strategies that provide for the active involvement of the student in the learning process. The strategy therefore, is the order in which the techniques are used in the presentation of the lesson [3].

Basically, the difference between creative and uninspired teaching is determined by strategies teachers use in presenting lesson content, skills and values to students [3]. This means that not all strategies lend themselves to effective teaching and learning of social studies concepts. A study outlined the features of good techniques of teaching Social Studies concepts which should aim at the inculcation of love of work, developing the desire efficiently to the best of one’s ability, providing numerous opportunities of participation for the learner and developing capacity for clear thinking, among others [2].

1.1. Working in Groups: Two-by-two

This approach is especially useful in helping break the ice when teachers are forming a new classroom group. To initiate the activity, ask pupil to find out a specific bit of information about one other person. Once this has been done, pairs of pupils are joined to form groups of 4. Members of the group share and try to remember information about all 4 individuals. The groups of 4 are joined to form groups of 8, the groups of 8 joined to form groups of 16 to form one large group. At each stage pupils are to try to remember information about each person. The multiplication of group size can be conducted up to the size you feel appropriate, given the age and maturity of people in the class, and the class size. The exercise makes learners more comfortable with one another and builds a sense of cohesiveness. Learners who know something about one another tend to settle into academically oriented group work better than those who are assigned to work with comparative strangers [4].

1.2. Think-Pair-Share

This introduces the idea of small-group learning by getting the pupils together in groups of two. In this technique, begin by giving the class by a question or a problem. In the first phase, each student is to think individually about the question or problem. After a short time, give a signal, and pupils then begin to work in pairs to share their responses. When the pairs have had opportunity time to discuss, each pair shares responses with the rest of the class [4]. An advantage of the think-pair-share is that it helps pupils learn how to discuss and share their ideas with others. It can help them learn “two heads are often better than one.” The technique also helps pupils to understand the importance of integrating ideas and of compromising.

1.3. Inside-Outside

This approach is useful in helping pupils begin to learn effective group work skills. In this method, members of one group, the “outsides,” observe the working of one group, the “insides.” Each member of the outside group is assigned to watch one person and is told to look for specific things. It is sometimes best for the “outsides” to take notes on their

observations. The inside group is given a task to complete or problem to discuss. When the inside group has completed the task and has had ample time to discuss the issue, the groups change places. Members of the new outside group are reminded of their assignments. When the new inside has completed its task or has had ample time for discussion, the whole then is pulled together, and individuals share the type of things that contributed to the success of the group. Pupils who have had an opportunity to participate in this type of activity tend to work more productively when they are assigned to participate in learning than those who have not. Sometimes, we (the authors) use inside-outside with our classes several times during the year to reinforce good group work skills [3, 4].

1.4. Buzz Session

The buzz session is a very simple procedure that can be used to introduce pupils to doing group work in Social Studies. Buzz sessions are particularly effective for motivation, to get students to state initial opinions, to select or narrow concepts, and share belief reactions [3]. A research also share a similar view when they say that in buzz session, students are placed in a small group, (for example between 5 and 7) for a specific period of time to discuss a given issue or topic. Reports of the results of the various buzz groups are then presented to the entire class. These stimulate whole-class discussion in which questions are posed by the teacher and the students for clarifications and comments. The teacher then makes summaries to help students understand the topic. Buzz sessions are so named because of the humming or buzzing noise that the students make during the discussion [5]. Parker shares this view and stresses that “talking things over in a buzz session can be helpful in clarifying ideas, getting a wide sampling of opinion and feeling about a concept, obtaining suggestions and ideas, and getting students who might be reluctant or fearful to participate in a more structured discussion situation” [6]. Thus, a buzz session provides a more favourable environment for the shy and reserved students to actively participate in a group discussion on concepts.

1.5. Classroom Debate

According to Savage and Armstrong, people whose only exposure to debates has been formal debate tournaments in high schools and universities may wonder how debate might be a useful group activity [4]. The classroom debate is organized differently from the format used in tournament debates. It features teams of students who prepare positions on each side of an issue. Members of the two teams participate actively during the debate itself. There are many ways of organizing classroom debates. One version features teams of seven students each. Assignments are made as follows:

- Three learners take the pros position.
- Three learners take the cons position.
- One learner plays the role of critic.

The teacher explains that members of the pros team will gather as much information as they can that support the controversial proposal. Each member is expected to play active role in arguing the pros team’s case. Similarly, the members of the cons team will gather information that can be used to attack the same controversial proposal. Each member will play an active role in arguing the pros team’s case. The critic will learn as much as s/he can about the position of the pros team and the cons team. The critic’s function will be to ask probing questions towards the end of the debate that will highlight weaknesses of both positions [4]. To get the activity started, select a controversial issue that will serve as a focus. Make sure that adequate background materials are available for team members. The time must be provided for team members to prepare their case. (Monitor students during this time to render assistance and to ensure they are staying on task.)

The controversial issue is usually a proposal that implies a change. The following are examples:

- How democratic is National Democratic Congress (NDC) or New Patriotic Party (NPP) in Ghanaian politics?
- Female Genital Mutilation is an outmoded cultural practice
- Trokosi system does not promote development
- Widowhood rite is gender bias

Classroom debate is a technique that can generate higher levels of interest. It provides an opportunity for large numbers of students to get actively involved in the learning process.

1.6. Know, want to know, Learned (K-W-L+)

The letters K-W-L+ stand for the process of making meaning that begins with what students know, moves to the articulation of question of what they want to know, and continue as students record with what they have learnt. The strategy is designed to be used by a teacher and group of students working together. It is then easily transferred into a learning method for students' independence study. In using the strategy, the teacher first leads the group through an oral discussion of each of the components and then turns the process over to students to individually write their own ideas and questions on a personal worksheet. As teachers initiate a new topic or prepare students to read, they give brief explanation to the strategy that is being used. After a brief explanation the teacher and the students identify what they think they know about the topic; the teacher writes students-brainstormed ideas on the board or overhead transparency without comment. The teacher notes the differences and help students to frame them into questions. This then becomes the beginning of the second column What We Want to Know. The teacher then asks that each student should write on their own sheet. Through this active involvement, learners are able to connect new information to their personal knowledge of the subject. These help students to monitor and understand how they learn [5].

1.7. Role play

Role play is the vehicle that forces people to take the role of others [7]. The technique may be useful to motivate students and get their maximum participation in the lesson. The steps are as follows:

- Present the topic or problem to the class by introducing the characters.
- Outline the functions of each role player as shown in the topic.
- Invite learners to pick up their role on their own.
- Prepare the audience who are non-players for critical observation and objective evaluation.
- Set the stage for action by providing essential materials with the help of learners.
- Actual enactment – role players enter the stage to act their roles in turns.
- Class discussion – this is also called debriefing and comes after the whole performance. The teacher facilitates the discussion.
- Conclusion – the teacher goes over the general summary and evaluates the lesson using any evaluative techniques [7].

Role Play is on-the-spot "acting" of a situation, problem or incident. Role play is an attempt to make a situation clear or to solve a problem by unrehearsed dramatization. Role play serves several purposes that are in line with the objectives of social studies education [8]. This points to the fact that, role play is an activity-game in which participants (learners) assume the role of specific people or personalities.

1.8. Dramatization

Dramatization is a form of organised play in which some of the participants represent individuals' history or contemporary society and shows their behaviour in the form of improvised conversation or actions [9]. The following steps have been found useful in implementing:

- First help your learners to be familiar with the incident, story or event you want them to dramatize. You narrate or discuss it with the class
- The next step is to improvise conversation.
- You can then go on to select some learners to represent actors in the incident, story or event.
- You guide them to rehearse the incident, story or event.
- You guide them to act the play.
- Lastly, you need to summarise and evaluate the lesson.

They further outlined that dramatization, especially when used effectively at the initial stage of the lesson has the following benefits:

- Sharpens learner's power of observation.
- Gives learner an insight into other people's feeling by or showing empathy by putting themselves in their place
- Helps create and maintain interest and thereby stimulate or encourage learners to learn more effectively.
- Provides opportunities for learners to improve their communication skills.
- Helps to unearth the creative talents of students.
- Helps to appreciate the cultures of the past or present [9].

Researchers argues that when dramatization is used at the initial stage of the lesson, it activates students' prior knowledge, sparks their curiosity and arouses their need-to-know attitude in the lesson [6, 9].

1.9. Discovery-learning

Discovery-learning can be defined as learning that takes place when students are not presented with subject matter in its final form but rather are required to organize it themselves [5, 10]. In the organization of the subject matter, it is thought that the student's curiosity would be aroused and his interest directed to the learning activity. Thus students' desire to learn is stimulated. In the discovery-learning method there is a process of self-learning and the learners generate their own ideas or concepts with very little intervention from the teacher. Because of the high level of students' participation in the teaching and learning process, retention is greatly improved.

The proponents of the method are of the view that it is capable of promoting very high levels of student's autonomy. They are also of the view that perfection is attained when students begin to find out for themselves the regular and irregular aspect of their physical and human environments. The discovery-learning method, it can be seen, thrives best in the teaching-learning process in which "springboards" are used to make students take active part in their own learning. In the method, not only are students highly motivated they are also made to participate in the learning which is meaningful to them [10].

1.10. Brainstorming

Brainstorming is a strategy by which members of a group bring out as many solutions as possible to a problem that can be solved [11]. Brainstorming is a technique for generating many ideas uncritically on a given topic so as to get many solutions, with comments and evaluation considered later. In a brainstorming session, learners are encouraged to say the first thing that comes into their minds. These responses are drawn upon learners' personal experience or relevant learners' previous knowledge. Brainstorming can be done individually on paper or in a group orally for the teacher to write the responses on the chalkboard. In brainstorming; All ideas are initially accepted

without criticism, evaluation or censorship; No put-downs, either in voice or body language, are allowed; Students are encouraged to try to build on the ideas of others [6].

According to him the following stages should be followed when conducting a brainstorming lesson:

- **Generating:** Elicit students' ideas by giving everyone the chance to call out responses as quick as possible. Record the brainstorming list on the chalkboard, an overhead transparency or on chart paper.
- **Clarifying:** Ask students to review the entire list and request clarification of any of the ideas they do not understand. Discuss multiple meanings.
- **Categorizing:** Ask students to identify responses that are similar or belong to the same category. Put "1" beside one category of responses."2" beside another and so on. Explain that not all ideas have to be grouped, and that some ideas may fit into more than one category.
- Explain that students should look for logical connections.
- **Assessing:** If the brainstorm list is to be used in problem solving and decision making; suggestions will need to be assessed against criteria. Students should set criteria and then choose the most appropriate suggestions. Assessment should occur after all ideas have been recorded and clarified [6].

1.11. Simulations

"Simulation is a technique that enables learners to obtain skills, competences, knowledge or behaviours by getting involved in situations that are similar to the real life [12]. It is, therefore, a technique which enables learners to enact or dramatize a real life situation in the classroom. For example, the class can be given a chance to perform a naming ceremony, a District Assembly sitting or an AU Ministerial Conference. They outline the conditions underlying the choice of simulation as follows:

- *The lesson topic should be suitable simulation.*
- *The lesson objectives should call for the use of simulation.*
- *The intellectual ability of the class should be high.*
- *The developmental stage of the class should also be high.*
- *The use of the simulation method should be familiar to the class.*
- *There should be available resources and material to be used for the simulation.*

Simulations simplify reality to highlight certain key ideas. For example, a simulation designed to focus on the legislative process may emphasize negotiation and deemphasize other features of legislative decision process. Simulations may not have winners or losers. The participants in simulation may all achieve their goals. The objective is for each participant to make decisions and to experience the consequences of the decision. Simulations are more elaborate role-playing activities. Activities that incorporate the elements of reality as well as elements of games, such as winning and losing, are usually called simulation games [7].

1.12. Debriefing

This is a critically important part of any simulation activity. During debriefing, lead a discussion highlighting various events that occurred during the activity. The discussion helps students recall things that might have escaped their notice during the fast pace of the activity itself. Debriefing discussions sometimes focus on specific dimensions made and their desirability related to alternatives. Sometimes the debriefing concerns the design of the simulation. What issues were forced to the front because of the rules of the simulation? What did the designer of the simulation omit? Often, individuals will want to critique their own performances and suggest ways they may act differently, were they to do the exercise another time. Teachers with no prior experience with simulation tend to allow insufficient time for debriefing. This severely limits the effectiveness of the

simulation as a productive learning activity. It is during the debriefing that the important concepts and procedures are discussed and the learning is reinforced [3, 4].

1.13. Decision Making Process

Decision making is the process of deciding the best alternative to be made when faced with a problem. It is a process that is best applied to concepts that can be narrowed down to choices between the possible alternatives [3]. This points to the fact that learners should be able to recognize when decision making skills are required to select the best alternative from a number of alternatives. In the view of Dynneson and Gross, through a process of speculating, examination and prediction, various alternative choices are eliminated until a final choice is selected [3]. Savage and Armstrong contend that a decision making lesson should generally feature the following steps:

- *Identify the basic issue or problem*
- *Point out the alternative responses*
- *Describe evidence supporting each alternative*
- *Identify values implied in each alternative*
- *Describe possible consequences that might follow selection of each alternative.*
- *Make a choice from among the various alternatives*
- *Describe evidence and values considered in making this choice [4].*

1.14. Discussion

Discussion is an activity in which people talk together in order to share ideas/information about a topic or problem. The main aim is to seek possible available evidence or a solution to a problem [5]. Discussion may be implemented in a variety of ways. The types of discussion available to the teacher include:

- a) Whole-Class Discussion, and
- b) Small-Group Discussion

In whole-class discussion, there are students who are not courageous enough to stand up and contribute to the class discussion. However, by and large, in the class discussions, fewer number of students benefit than the group in the discussion [5]. The group discussion permits a greater number of students to present a variety of problems; gain experience in the various ways of integrating facts formulate hypotheses, amass wealth of relevant information; and evaluate conclusions arrived at. Because group discussion generates a high degree of participation and involvement it is able to make real changes in attitudes and behaviour. Many institutional authorities who are aware of this potent role of group discussion use it to solve problems and diffuse tensions. It is discernible from the foregoing that the dividends which the discussion method yields are more pronounced in the group than in the class discussion [5]. Discussion is guided by the central purpose of developing that group's knowledge, or understanding of the concept or the issue at stake. Undoubtedly the key goal in discussion is the practice of co-operative deliberation and consensus decision that best solves the problem. The discussion should be open-ended, and should not require learners to come to a single conclusion. However, the group members should be able to give reasons for their conclusions and suggest support for their point of view. That the quality of a classroom discussion rests on student participation and the ability of the teacher to direct or manage teacher-to-student and student-to-student interactions [3].

1.15. Problem-solving

Problem-solving is an instructional method or technique whereby the teacher and pupils attempt in a conscious, planned and purposeful effort to arrive at some explanation or solution to some educationally significant difficulty. It is a planned attack upon a difficulty or perplexity for the purpose of finding a solution [2]. A problem occurs in a situation in which a felt difficulty to act is realized. It is the difficulty that is clearly present

and recognised by the thinker. It may be a pure mental difficulty or may be physical and involve the manipulation of data. The individual recognises it as a challenge. [2]. Problem-solving method may be defined as “a planned attack upon a difficulty or perplexity for the purpose of finding a solution. It is a method in which a person uses his/her ability to solve problems which confront him/her. So it would appear that in the problem-solving method the student is guided to use certain skills to solve real life problems which may be bothering him/her or society as a whole. In this, the teacher and students’ planned purposeful attempt to find a practical solution to a problem in their environment [2, 5]. Researchers outlined steps in using the problem-solving method; selection of problem, posing the problem, planning the solution, selection of materials to use, finding the solution and discussion of findings. They further explained that if problem-solving method is effectively used, the following benefits would be realized:

- It helps to improve and to add to the existing knowledge of the students.
- It stimulates to think critically.
- It helps in the development of good study habits of the students.
- Students are afforded the opportunity to participate in social activities as they solve problems through joint efforts. The students learn to accommodate the different points of view of others and thus become tolerant.
- Through the problem-solving method, students learn meaningful facts which have been discovered through their own effort.
- The teachers are provided with the opportunity to know their students better, and accordingly assist both the active and the shy looking ones.
- The knowledge acquired through problem-solving is easily assimilated as it is the result of a resolute activity.
- Through problem-solving, the teaching-learning process becomes more interesting rather than being dreadful [5].

1.16. Building of community

Building of community technique is where the teachers create a climate of mutual respect to help students build positive relationships, resolve conflicts, and develop group problem-solving skills [13, 14]. Through these element students are encouraged to engage in discussion and interaction socially with other students from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds to build groups understanding. Teacher can structure cooperative groups that enables students from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds to be acquainted as individuals [15]. This is important because, as Dewey stated, it is by associating and resolving issues with people whose views are different from one’s own that democracy is learned. Even in homogenous classrooms, based either on race, class or gender, teachers can create cooperative groups that allow students to be seen as individuals instead of representatives of a special grouping [16].

1.17. Field-trips

Field-trips involve journey with the pupils to observe and investigate situation outside the classroom. Many of such expeditions might go no further than the school corridor, the school building or playgrounds. Within the school itself, the teacher may find illustrative examples, for, his/her students. In the immediate vicinity of the school there may be available for examination and observation such as different soils, vegetation, relief features and drainage patterns. The teacher may sometimes invite the co-operation of local industry or public services and visit places like chief’s palace, museum and many other places of interest relevant to the teaching and learning of his/her subject [17]. Experiences gained from field-trips are vivid, lasting and often more meaningful to the students because they are real-life situations. This implies that for effective assessment of Social Studies lesson techniques and strategies can never be overlooked.

Curriculum dictates what is taught and assessed in an educational institution [18]. Assessment is an integral part of teaching and learning in Social Studies is beneficial to both students and tutors if use formatively [19, 20]. Social Studies is an integrated discipline which is full of concepts which required a resourceful teacher to handle it. The focus of the subject is to help improve learner attitude. Many people may quickly react that once there are Social Studies teachers who have various degrees teaching in the various Senior High Schools, the purpose will be achieved. [21]. In spite of the fact that some of the Social Studies teachers have positive attitudes towards the teaching and learning of concepts, the other teachers should be helped to be abreast with the nature of concepts in the subject and the techniques and methodology that will promote effective teaching and learning of the subject. It is an undisputable fact, that if Social Studies is to help in promoting attitudinal change in the Ghanaian society, then, it is not only the necessary teaching-learning resources that should be readily available but also there is the need for Social Studies trained teachers who have positive attitude towards the teaching and learning of the Social Studies concepts. For Social Studies to make impact at the Senior High School levels in Ghana teachers should not only be encouraged to develop positive attitudes towards the teaching and learning of the subject, they should also be trained to teach the subject well [22]. The researcher therefore set out to conduct the study in selected Senior High Schools in Sefwi Wiawso District to find out the existing practices pertaining to the teaching and learning of concepts in Social Studies. The purpose of the study was to examine techniques and strategies use in assessing Social Studies concepts. The study sought to answer the research question - What techniques and strategies do teachers with and without Social Studies background use in teaching concepts in Social Studies?

2. Materials and Methods

The research design for this study was Case study. The population for this study consisted of all ten (10) Social Studies teachers in three public Senior High Schools (Wiawso Senior High School, Wiawso Senior/Technical school, and Asawinso senior high school) in Sefwi Wiawso municipality in the Western North Region of Ghana. Purposive and convenient sampling techniques were used to select municipality, schools, Social Studies teachers for the study. The main instrument used for data collection was interview. The data were edited before being analyzed in themes and pattern. Being a case study design in qualitative research, the researcher read through the data several times so as to familiarize with the data, making notes, referring back to the research question, making decisions whether to focus on individual responses or on topics. The interview data were interpreted to articulate meaning, making decisions whether to use direct quotes or the summary of respondents' responses, and reporting the data considering the interest of various audiences.

3. Results

This section present results on the research question - What methods, techniques and strategies do the teachers use in the teaching and learning of Social Studies concepts?

Table 1. Techniques for teaching and learning of concepts

Techniques	Number of respondents	Trained Social Studies Teachers	Untrained Social Studies Teachers	%
Fieldtrips	2	2	-	20
Problem-solving	6	4	2	60
Co-operative/ Collaborative learning	7	4	3	70
Discovery-learning	5	4	1	50
Brainstorming	7	4	3	70
Role play	6	3	3	60

Building of community	4	3	1	40
Simulation	4	3	1	40
Lecturing	8	3	5	80
Discussion	8	4	4	80
Debate	5	4	1	50
Dramatization	5	3	2	50

Source: field survey

As can be seen from [Table 1](#), teachers representing (80%) made up of 40% from each category of teachers mentioned that discussion technique has been their major technique for teaching and learning of Social Studies' concepts but the remaining 2 said they use lecturing. Most of the teachers emphasized that they usually use both types of discussion; small group and whole class discussion.

Eight of the participants (80%) made up of 50% Untrained Social Studies Teachers and 30% Trained Social Studies Teachers established that they often use Lecturing technique in their lessons, but the rest of the participants said that they do not use Lecturing technique in their lessons. It is clear that lecturing technique was one of the major techniques used by the Social Studies teachers in their Social Studies lessons.

Brainstorming is another technique used often by teachers. As many as 7 respondents (70%) sampled for the study consisting of 40% Social Studies Trained Teachers and 30% Untrained Social Studies Teachers mentioned that they often used brainstorming in teaching Social Studies concepts, while the remaining 30 per cent made up of 10% Social Studies Trained Teachers and 20% Untrained Social Studies Teachers mentioned that they were not certain about the technique.

With respect to the use of collaborative learning technique, 7 respondents (70%) comprising 40% Social Studies Trained Teachers and 30% Untrained Social Studies Teachers expressed their view that they occasionally use such a technique in teaching Social Studies concepts. Whereas the rest of the respondents made up of 10% Social Studies Trained Teachers and 20% Untrained Social Studies Teachers stated that they were not familiar with such technique.

On the use of the problem-solving technique, 6 respondents (60%) made up of 40% Social Studies Trained Teachers and 20% Untrained Social Studies Teachers said they often used problem-solving technique in their Social Studies lessons, while 40 per cent comprising 10% Social Studies Trained Teachers and 30% Untrained Social Studies Teachers mentioned that they do not use problem-solving technique in the teaching of Social Studies concepts. This indicates that problem-solving technique is to some extent used by Social Studies teachers. Considering the role play, 6 of the respondents out of which 3 from each category of Social Studies teachers expressed their view that they have use such a technique in teaching Social Studies concepts while the remaining 4 (40%), hardly use such technique.

The use of the dramatization technique revealed that fifty per cent of the Social Studies teachers sometimes use dramatization technique in the teaching and learning of concepts. The remaining fifty per cent revealed that they never used dramatization technique. The results indicate that teachers have not neglected the use of dramatization because during any lesson a teacher hardly uses a single technique.

On the use of debate, the results revealed that 5 of the respondents (50%) comprising 40% Social Studies Trained Teachers and 10% Untrained Social Studies Teachers were clear that they usually used debate technique in their Social Studies lessons, while 50 per cent comprising 40% Untrained Social Studies Teachers, 10% Social Studies Trained Teachers said that they do not use debate technique in their teaching of Social Studies concepts.

Simulation is another technique which appeared not to be used often by teachers during lessons. Sixty percent of both trained and untrained social studies teachers do not

use this technique but only ten respondents representing 40 per cent had used simulation once in their teaching experience of which 30% are Trained and 10% Untrained Social Studies Teachers.

On the use of Building of community technique, 4 of the respondents (40%) made up of 30% Trained and 10% Untrained Social Studies Teachers said that they occasionally use Building of community technique in their Social Studies lessons, but 60% of the interviewees composing of 4 Untrained Social Studies Teachers and 2 Social Studies Trained Teachers said that they never used Building of community technique in their Social Studies lessons. This implies that most teachers underscored the importance of Building of community technique in the teaching-learning of Social Studies.

On the use of field trips, eight out of the ten participants representing 80% of the respondents comprising 50% Untrained Social Studies Teachers and 30% Social Studies Trained Teachers said that they had never used such a technique in teaching and learning of Social Studies, 20 per cent made up of only Trained Social Studies Teachers mentioned that they had once used field trip in the teaching and learning of Social Studies concepts but they have stopped because of the problem they encountered.

Table 2. Teaching techniques preferred by the teachers

Techniques	Teacher No.	Trained Social Studies Teachers No.	%	Untrained Social Studies Teachers No.	%
Debate	1	1	10	-	-
Discovery-learning	-	-	-	-	-
Role play	1	1	10	-	-
Field Trips	-	-	-	-	-
Simulation	-	-	-	-	-
Discussion	6	3	30	3	30
Dramatisation	-	-	-	-	-
Lecturing	2	-	-	2	20
Problem Solving	-	-	-	-	-
Building of Community	-	-	-	-	-
Total	10	5	50	5	50

Source: field survey

Table 2 shows that 6 of the teachers (60%) sampled made up of 30% each from trained and untrained Social Studies teachers prefer discussion technique while 20% also prefer lecturing. Role play and debate account for 10% each but other techniques (building of community, problem solving, simulation, field trips, etc) were not preferred by both trained and untrained teachers.

4. Discussion

Any method, good or bad, links up the teacher and his/her students into an organic relationship with constant mutual interaction; it reacts not only on the mind of students but their entire personality; their standards of work and judgment, their intellectual and emotional equipment, their attitudes and values. Good methods which are psychologically and socially sound may raise the whole quality of their life; bad methods debase it. So, in the choice of methods, teachers must always take into consideration their end products. Namely, the attitudes, and values inculcated in them consciously or unconsciously." A method of teaching then is a whole hog of interaction used completely, without change of focus; thus, method is a teacher's overall plan on instruction, in a teaching and learning environment. Consequently, teaching and learning techniques and strategies that are interactive help learners to learn better than teacher-centred. Technique

that offers the opportunity for a high level of student activity and feedback is highly recommended in the teaching and learning environment [5].

The researcher poses 15 Interview items which falls under research question. The participants were expected to mention which methodology/techniques they mostly use. The data gathered were presented in Table 1. Results from Table 1, revealed that majority of the teachers representing 80 per cent of the interviewees mentioned at the interview that discussion techniques has been the major techniques used in the teaching and learning of Social Studies concepts; 20 per cent stated that they use lecturing and debate technique in the teaching and learning environment. A similar point out that discussion techniques can be integrated with or follow a wide variety in the teaching and learning environment. This indicates that discussion technique has been the major instrument for lesson delivery in the teaching and learning of Social Studies concepts at the Senior High Schools [5]. They further remark that discussion offers a greater opportunity for a high level of students' activity and feedback and therefore could be effective in developing concepts and skills in problem solving and critical thinking [5]. In supporting this assertion, Dynneson and Gross contend that discussion is frequently observed activity in the Social Studies lessons [3]. Aggarwal shares a similar view when he argues that if most Social Studies teachers are interviewed, they will affirmatively admit that discussion is their main technique [2].

On the use of field trips, two out of the ten participants representing 20% said that they had used such a technique in teaching and learning of Social Studies, 80 per cent of the sample size mentioned that they had never used field trip in the teaching and learning of Social Studies concepts. This means that Social Studies teachers at the Senior High School level do not expose their students to vivid or real life experiences. Similar study contradicts the findings of this research that experiences gained from field-trips are vivid, lasting and often more meaningful to the students because they are real-life situations [7]. In sharing a similar view, Kellough stated that one of the richest resources for learning is the local community and the people and places in it so teachers should expose learners to them [23]. With respect to the use of collaborative learning technique, 70 per cent of the participants expressed their view that they occasionally use such a technique in teaching Social Studies concepts. Whereas 30 per cent stated emphatically that they were not familiar with such technique, so they had never used the said technique in their Social Studies lesson. This means that students are not given the opportunities to work with their peers in teaching Social Studies concepts.

Earlier study reiterated that Pupils who have had an opportunity to participate in this type of activity tend to work more productively when they are assigned to participate in learning than those who have not [4]. Complex instruction as a cooperative learning help students to explore related concepts; but regrettably, greater number of Social Studies teachers were not using it. Therefore, a primary task of the teacher is to increase participation of all students in groups. Complex instruction emphasizes the development of cooperative norms. These are the behaviours required for successful group work for good citizenship. Savage and Armstrong, suggest that cooperative learning techniques encourages more able students to assist less able members of their group to master the content. Indeed, in team achievement divisions, each member of the group has a stake in the learning of every other member. Hence, there is an incentive for all group members to help each other [4].

For the use of simulation technique, the study was to ensure that interviewees use simulation technique in the teaching and learning of Social Studies concepts in their respective Senior High Schools classrooms. Hence, four out of the ten participants representing 40 per cent of the interviewees responded that they occasionally use simulation in teaching Social Studies concepts, whereas the other six participants representing 60 per cent of the participants were emphatic that they had never used simulation technique in their teaching and learning of Social Studies concepts. This attests

to the fact that most of the Social Studies concepts were abstract, without helping them to replicate the real life situation and deny learners from the benefits which go with such techniques. Previous study shares a similar view when they state that “Simulations simplify reality to highlight certain key ideas”. For example, a simulation designed to focus on the legislative process may emphasize negotiation and deemphasize other features of legislative decision process. But the situation on the present study area, appears to be that lack of space in the classroom or lack of skills and inadequate time on the timetable do not permit the respondents to use the simulation [24].

The use of the dramatization technique revealed disheartening results. Thus, fifty per cent of the Social Studies teachers that were interviewed said that they sometimes use dramatization technique in the teaching and learning of concepts in their Social Studies classrooms, but the other fifty per cent mentioned categorically that they never used dramatization technique. The results indicate that dramatization is occasionally used by the Senior High Schools Social Studies teachers which deny students of the numerous advantages that go with the use of the dramatization technique. It could be that, the course content and inadequate periods allotted to the subject on the timetable do not permit most teachers to used dramatization technique. A similar study argues that when dramatization is used at the initial stage of the lesson, it activates students’ prior knowledge, sparks their curiosity and arouses their need-to-know attitude in the lesson [6].

With respect to the use of the problem-solving technique, 60 per cent of the interviewees said that they often used the problem-solving technique in their Social Studies lessons, while the other 40 per cent mentioned that they had never used problem-solving technique in their Social Studies lessons. This indicates that problem-solving technique is to some extent used by Social Studies teachers. Problem-solving is an instructional method or technique whereby the teacher and pupils attempt a conscious, planned and purposeful effort to arrive at some explanation or solution to some educationally significant difficulty. It is a planned attack upon a difficulty or perplexity for the purpose of finding a solution [2].

Problem-solving method may be defined as “a planned attack upon a difficulty or perplexity for the purpose of finding a solution. It is a method in which a person uses his/her ability to solve problems which confront him/her. So it would appear that in the problem-solving method the student is guided to use certain skills to solve real life problems which may be bothering him/her or society as a whole. In this the teacher and students, planned and make purposeful attempt to find a practical solution to a problem in their environment [2, 5]. They further explained that if problem-solving method is effectively used, the following benefits would be realized:

- It helps to improve and to add to the existing knowledge of the students.
- It stimulates to think critically.
- It helps in the development of good study habits of the students.
- Students are afforded the opportunity to participate in social activities as they solve problems through joint efforts. The students learn to accommodate the different points of view of others and thus become tolerant.
- Through the problem-solving method, students learn meaningful facts which have been discovered through their own effort.
- The teachers are provided the opportunity to know their students better and accordingly assist both the active and the shy looking ones.
- The knowledge acquired through problem-solving is easily assimilated as it is the result of a resolute activity.
- Through problem-solving, the teaching-learning process becomes more interesting rather than being dreadful.

With regard to the use of brainstorming, 70 per cent of the teachers sampled for the study mentioned that they often used problem-solving technique in their Social Studies lessons, while 30 per cent mentioned that they sometimes used problem-solving technique in their Social Studies lessons. The result for this technique was quite encouraging; perhaps the interviewees misconstrued brainstorming technique to be questions and answers technique or whole class discussion. Brainstorming is “a strategy by which members of a group bring out as many solutions as possible to a problem that can be solved” (Martorella, 1994 as cited in Anim-Dampsey and Nyame-Kwarteng 2006:96). Brainstorming is a technique for generating many ideas uncritically on a given topic so as to get many solutions, with comments and evaluation considered later. While questions and answers technique generating many ideas critically on a given topic so as to get many solutions, with comments and evaluation thoroughly scrutinized and considered.

On the use of Building of community technique, 40% of the interviewees said that they occasionally use Building of community technique in their Social Studies lessons, but the remaining 60% said emphatically that they never use Building of community technique in their Social Studies lessons. This implies that most teachers underscored the importance of Building of community technique in their Social Studies in the teaching-learning of Social Studies. Building of community technique where the teachers create a climate of mutual respect to help students build positive relationships, resolve conflicts, and develop group problem-solving skills [13, 14]. Through this element, students are encouraged to engage in discussion and interaction socially with other students from different ethnic and cultural background to build groups understanding. Teacher can structure cooperative groups that enable students from different ethnic and cultural background to be acquainted as individuals [15]. This is important to note that by associating and resolving issues with people whose view are different from one's own that democracy is learned. Even in homogenous classroom, based either on race, class or gender, teachers can create cooperative groups that allow students to be seen as individuals instead of representatives of a special grouping [16].

Considering the use of Lecturing, 80% of the participants sampled for this study established that they often use Lecturing technique in their Social Studies lessons, 20% of the participants sampled for this study said that they sometimes use the Lecturing technique in their Social Studies lessons. It is clear that lecturing technique was one of the major techniques used by the Social Studies teachers in their Social Studies lessons. Thus the use of the lecture method was firmly established. To a large extent, the reading was at a reasonable pace to enable the listeners write down what was read verbatim [5].

With regard to the use of the discovery-learning method, whereas 50% of the interviewees motioned that they frequently use the discovery-learning method in their Social Studies lessons, the other 50% said they never used the discovery-learning method in their Social Studies lessons. This point to the fact that students are to some extent denied from the advantages that go with the use of discovery-learning method. Earlier study supported the findings of the current research by commenting on the nature of the method indicates that “Discovery-learning can be defined as learning that takes place when students are not presented with subject matter in its final form but rather are required to organize it themselves” [5].

In the organization of the subject matter, it is thought that the student's curiosity would be aroused and his interest directed to the learning activity. Thus, students' desire to learn is stimulated. In the discovery-learning method there is a process of self-learning and the learners generate their own ideas and concepts with very little intervention from the teacher. Because the high level of students' participation in the teaching-learning process, retention is greatly improved. The proponents of the method are of the view that it is capable of promoting very high levels of student's autonomy. They are also of the view that perfection is attained when students begin to find out for themselves the regular and irregular aspect of their physical and human environments. The discovery-learning

method, it can be seen, thrives best in the teaching-learning process in which “springboards” are used to make students take active part in their own learning. In the method, not only are students highly motivated, they are also made to participate in learning which is meaningful to them.

Table 2 implies that 60% of the teachers sampled for the study prefer discussion technique perhaps because it is easy to use, its ability to integrate with other techniques of teaching and its ability allow students participation. Discussion techniques can be integrated with or follow a wide variety in the teaching and learning environment [5]. Discussion as “a situation where learners are allowed to give their views about a topic or problem after a careful study of the topic or a problem [2]”. These writers suggest that discussion should be the most frequently observed activity in Social Studies classrooms. This is due to the fact that discussion is a means of promoting the exchange of information and ideas between teachers and students” [2, 5]. It is thus speaking-to-learn technique that assists students in developing their critical thinking and interpersonal skills. Quality of a classroom discussion rests on student participation and the ability of the teacher to direct or manage teacher-to-student and student-to-student interactions. So Social Studies teachers are supposed to plan their lessons to engage their students in effective discussion processes [3].

Another technique preferred by the teachers was the lecture method. The lecture method preferred by the teachers perhaps because it is easy to adopt. Thus the use of the lecture method was firmly established, (Tamakloe, Amedahe and Atta, 2005:324). Other techniques preferred by the teachers was debate and this may be due to the fact that it develops learners’ critical and creative thinking skills. Nyame-Kwarteng and Dampthey-Anim, (2004) pointed out that debate develops learners’ critical and creative thinking skills; strengthen their speaking abilities and helping them to become active listeners and to respect the viewpoints of others on a given topic. Thus debating promotes tolerance and acceptance of divergent views in the decision making process.

When the researcher inquired about the reasons for preferring debate and discussion techniques by the teachers, the most predominant reasons were that debate and discussion techniques go a long way to promote students critical thinking skills and help to develop tolerance among learners as they place learners at the center of the teaching-learning process. Those who preferred the lecturing technique said that it is the most effective process for teachers to impart knowledge to larger class size, which hitherto other techniques could not be effective for teaching. They also mentioned that when the lecturing technique or reading was at a reasonable pace to enable the listeners write down what was read verbatim and read them at their own convenient time, this helps the learner to develop good listening skills which help them in their future learning.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

The study revealed that teachers used the various teaching techniques such as brainstorming, simulation, discovery-learning, role play discussion, dramatization, problem-solving and building a community implies that they believed in child-centred method of the teaching and learning of Social Studies. This method offers learners opportunity to be actively involved in the teaching and learning process to discover knowledge for themselves. The study also concluded that Social Studies teachers use techniques and strategies like concept attainment, fieldtrips, debate co-operative learning in motivating and providing learners with the opportunity to interact with their own community or environment. It is recommended that Social Studies teachers should make effort either to go on field trips or make use of available experts that are in their communities by inviting them into the Social Studies classrooms to tap into their rich knowledge to enhance concept learning.

In the light of the lack of application of techniques that motivate students to learn, it is recommended that frequent seminars and periodic or regular in-service training should

be organised by the Ghana Education Service to help Social Studies teachers to acquaint themselves with the modern teaching techniques and strategies that promote the teaching and learning of Social Studies concepts.

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