
Imperativeness of Newspapers in Education: A Must for Social Studies and Civic Education

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Abstract

This paper investigated, the imperative role of newspapers in education as invaluable tools for enhancing literacy skills, promoting critical thinking, fostering global awareness, and encouraging civic engagement. In recognizing the vital contributions of newspapers to the educational process, educators can empower students to become informed, engaged, and proactive citizens in an increasingly complex and interconnected world. The paper recommended among others, educators should incorporate newspaper reading into curriculum across the various subjects such as language arts, social studies, and current events. Including newspapers as a regular resource, students can develop a deeper appreciation for the relevance of current events in their lives.

Introduction

"Newspapers in Education" is an innovative approach to Civic Education teaching and learning (Keskin et al., 2016). Choo (2005) elucidated the concept of Newspaper in Education as a collaborative endeavour between a newspaper and a local educational system, wherein the newspaper functions as a pedagogical tool. In other words, NIE calls for using newspapers as additional tool and invaluable classroom resource for improving teaching and learning. The *New York Times* started the first NIE programme in the 1930s. Since then, there has been an increase in support for using newspapers to teach Civics in the United States and other countries across the world. The NIE strategy is, however, relatively new in many African countries, especially Nigeria. This may be due to how poorly the connection between the media and educational institutions has fared. A semblance of the NIE model currently in operation in Nigeria is the sale of a few newspapers at reduced prices in some of the Nigerian tertiary institutions. However, there is little connection, if any, between the "campus newspapers" and lecture materials at these institutions. Meanwhile, it could be argued that newspapers, if properly deployed, could make considerable contribution to the subject matter of Civic Education and Social Studies being taught and learned in Nigerian educational institutions.

Newspapers have potentials for motivating readers to learn about contemporary national issues, including

crises and conflicts. For example, in many urban centres, it is commonly observed that young and old Nigerians congregate around newspaper stands and vendors daily to read and discuss headlines of newspapers and magazines. Discussions at many of these newspaper stands sometimes develop into heated arguments, depending on the nature of the topics in focus, as in the case of football competitions or general elections. If such "discourse analysis of newspaper headlines" (Tabe & Fieze, 2018) is continually promoted within the school setting, the practice could foster skills like analytical thinking, digestion of information, decision making and verification of information source in the classroom situation. McLellan and Shackleton (2019) submitted that discourse analysis provides an accurate gauge of what news and information are appearing in newspapers and in what percentages it is said. This improves how newspapers are used "for desired civics projects and to help to remove bad circumstances to serve reader as friendly counsellor information bureau and advocate of his (or her) rights" (Kumar, 2009). Hence, newspaper contents could be extracted and used to teach specific concepts in Civic Education within the NIE approach. If media headlines emphasize educational topics, this will significantly advance the advancement of education in Nigeria (Guanah & Ibbi, 2022).

Several strategies are involved in the NIE approach. These, according to the

246Newspaper Association of American Foundation (NAAF), include Anticipation Guide, Concept Maps, Know-Want-Learn /Know-Want-Learn-Question, and Think Aloud (Sinatra & Broughton, 2011). Other strategies identified by the Association are Questioning the Author, Reciprocal Teaching, Question-Answer Relationships, and Semantic Feature Analysis. Specifically, the Anticipation Guides (AG), which "challenge students' preconceptions or misconceptions about a topic or concept, assist them in setting a purpose for reading and accessing prior knowledge about a specific topic, and support them in reading strategically," (Sinatra & Broughton, 2011) are of interest to this researcher.

Newspapers are vital tools in curriculum organisation and teaching. Ram (2011) described the newspaper as the best textbook because it is written at a level that many youngsters can read, some of them effortlessly, and it enables students to successfully study material while advancing their reading abilities. It further stated that daily newspaper articles reflect what is happening in society and could therefore serve as a bridge or connection between society and the classroom. Newspapers make readers aware of current events and provide a daily context for most of the material covered in social studies and civics classes. In a study conducted by Esther and Benedict, (2019) it was gathered that students use newspaper

most of the time for their academic purposes. Newspaper is highly used to contribute to literacy and great importance to education, there are so many content of newspapers which are very rich in education for instance, we have educational column in newspapers like Guidance and Punch. For the mass literacies, first information on daily occurrences are provided in the pages of newspaper. Faisal et al., (2021).

The Place of Newspapers in Education

The contributions of newspapers and other periodicals to the education of the citizenry have been viewed from diverse perspectives (Guanah, 2019). A newspaper is a printed periodical whose content may be read more than once, and which offers a range of information in print and other forms. It is made up of folded, unstapled sheets with news, articles, and advertisements to educate students. A magazine, according to Farlex (2012), is a periodic publication that features images, tales, and articles that readers would find interesting. Magazines are often released monthly, weekly, or quarterly (Mundo, 2006). Yoety (1992) stated that a brochure is a sheet printed with relatively good paper layout, attractively arranged with all the potentials to be promoted. So a brochure is a sheet or small booklet with layout attractively containing information about all the potential to be promoted. The invention of moveable type printing by Johannes Gutenberg, who brought technology to Europe in 1450, gave rise to the print medium (Christensen, 2020). Lead, tin,

antimony, copper, and bismuth were the same elements utilized in the alloy that Gutenberg employed to make his type (Briggs & Burke, 2002). The Chinese, however, have been utilizing woodblock printing from A.D. 600 before Gutenberg's invention (Viber, 2000). But it was Gutenberg's innovation in Mainz, Germany, that gave rise to modern printing (Viber, 2000). This resulted in speedier and more durable printing, high-quality publications at a reasonable price, and other benefits that eventually influenced the Renaissance and the rest of the globe (Dominick, 2008).

The first printed book dates from 686 in China; however, with the introduction of Gutenberg's printing innovations, giant printed publications started out with the Bible (Locksley, 2009). Mockba (2012) recorded that this ushered in technology of newspapers, magazines, and books. The beginning of the sixteenth century, newspaper printing then again became the most popular source of speaking with the public. The first known English-language newspaper, *Discover Trewe*, first appeared in 1513, whereas *Zeitung*, a daily published in Germany, was established in 1502. Germany's *Avisa Relation oder Zeitung*, which debuted in 1609, was the continent's first regularly published newspaper. The *Oxford Gazette*, the first newspaper in England, started publication 44 years later. The first newspaper in North America debuted in Boston in 1660.

Growing literacy, the establishment of nation-states, the development of a literary and philosophical tradition that placed an emphasis on participation in democracy in government, and the development of technologies that supported newspaper production were all market factors that were created in the 1700s. The *Daily Courant*, founded in London in 1702, became the first daily newspaper in France in 1777. The fundamental technical foundation for establishing newspapers was laid in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries Mockba (2012).

The established guidelines in the nineteenth century encouraged the development of the modern newspaper, while in the twentieth century the focus was on professional growth and adaptation to shifting consumer and media markets. Additionally, the tale included a changing corporate strategy that rode an expanding tide of mass-market advertising (Mockba, 2012). Romance, books, collections of artworks by the German printer (Albrecht Durer), and works by the Roman poets were published alongside the majority of printed books, which were spiritual writings (Wishnia, 2009). During the period of the protestant reformation, printed materials were extremely important. Renaissance academics like Nicolaus Copernicus, John Calvin, and Martin Luther used printed materials to disseminate their enlightened beliefs. Francis Baron Beaverbrook, a British logician, said that the inventions of printing, gunpowder, and the compass were the three that "have changed the

appearance and state of the entire world" in 1620. Books helped transmit knowledge to bakers, merchants, attorneys, and knights despite the fact that many people could not read (Wishnia, 2009). The newspaper business reached its pinnacle in the early 1920s with a home penetration of 130% (moderate daily circulation expressed as a proportion of houses; Meyer, 2004), and has been in continuous decline ever since. Early in the 1950s, when household penetration first fell below 100%, there was another significant fall in circulation (Wolff, 2007).

However, soon following the advent of radio and television at the beginning of those two decades, newspaper performance plummeted. According to Stephens (2007), radio restored newscasters' faces while television restored their voices. The television broadcast does indeed reflect that oldest of public communication techniques (Carpenter, 2007). However, the rise of electronic media (such as radio and television) led to a decline in the appeal and usefulness of print media. With more in-depth reporting and analysis, print media still has the benefit of leaving a lasting impression on readers. The message delivered through print media has an immediate and enduring effect on the reader. The print media is a typical means of disseminating information or news about a certain event or period. Due of its reach, businesses frequently utilise it to market their goods and services. Like farmers

and laborers, the print media is a traditional form of development. Participatory and powerful, these media types (Patil, 2011). However, if a newspaper, magazine, or other print media is only delivered in one area, the print media's reach may occasionally be constrained Lucena and San Jose, (2016). Thus, while the print media offers some measures of advantage to communicate with the public, it is not without some inherent disadvantages. Some of the advantages are highlighted as follows; current information, diverse perspectives, improving reading and comprehension skills, promoting civic awareness. However, nothing can be so perfect without its challenges. Some of the challenges of newspapers in education are; bias and inaccuracy, time constraint, limited interactivity and environmental impact. In all, while newspapers offer valuable educational benefits, they also present challenges that students and educators need to consider when incorporating them into learning environments. Encouraging critical thinking, media literacy, and responsible consumption of news can help mitigate the disadvantages associated with newspaper use among learners. The first print media operations in Nigeria took place in Calabar in 1846. The Rev. Hope Waddell of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland Missionary developed a printing press. Bible teachings and subsequently math textbooks for schools were printed using the press. Another Abeokuta-based missionary, in 1854, the Church

Missionary Society's (CMS) Rev. Henry Townsend established a press. The first Nigerian newspaper, *IweIrohin*, was published on it five years later, in 1859. That project gave rise to the CMS press, which produces hundreds of thousands of books in Nigeria. *The Lagos Times* (1880), *The Nigerian Pioneer* (1914), *The African Messenger* (1921), *The Daily News* (1925), the *Nigerian Daily Times*, the *Eastern Nigerian Guardian* (1940), the *Nigerian Spokesman* (1944), the *Daily Comet* (1949), and the *Morning Post* (1961) were among the indigenous publishing houses that were encouraged to flourish as a result. Additionally, a lot of publications appeared in Nigeria, usually throughout the 1970s and 1980s. One of them is *The Drum* magazine, which was distributed via the *Daily Times*. Before 1986, when *The Newswatch* magazine was founded by Dele Giwa, Ray Ekpu, and Yakubu Mohammad, the focus of *The Drum* was frequently on entertainment. Many newspaper firms have also connected their own magazines to complement their newspapers in addition to *Newswatch*. For instance, the *Guardian* added *African Guardian*, the *Concord* mounted *African Concord*, and *Daily Times Magazine* also included *African Guardian* to *This Week*. *The News*, *Dateline*, and *Tempo Magazines* were established between 1992 and 1993, while *Tell Magazine* was subsequently included in 1992 (Odorume, 2012).

Certainly, Nigeria has several newspapers that play significant roles in informing and educating the public. Odorume (2012) highlighted some prominent Nigerian newspapers and their educational importance:

The *Punch* Known for its comprehensive coverage of news, politics, business, entertainment, and sports, The *Punch* provides valuable insights into Nigerian affairs. It helps students understand national issues, politics, and societal trends. *Vanguard* offers in-depth reporting on Nigerian news, politics, business, and current affairs. It provides students with diverse perspectives on local and national issues, fostering critical thinking and civic awareness. The *Guardian Nigeria*, with a focus on quality journalism and balanced reporting, The *Guardian Nigeria* covers a wide range of topics including politics, business, culture, and technology. It serves as a valuable resource for students interested in understanding Nigerian society and governance. *ThisDay* is known for its coverage of Nigerian and international news, business, and lifestyle. It provides students with insights into global events and economic trends, promoting cross-cultural understanding and awareness. *Daily Trust* is a leading newspaper in Northern Nigeria, covering news, politics, business, and culture. It offers students perspectives on regional issues and cultural dynamics, enhancing their understanding of Nigeria's diverse society. The *Nation* provides comprehensive

coverage of Nigerian news, politics, business, and sports. It serves as a valuable resource for students studying Nigerian politics, economics, and social issues. Daily Sun offers news coverage with a focus on human interest stories, politics, business, and entertainment. It provides students with insights into the lives of ordinary Nigerians and societal challenges, fostering empathy and social awareness.

These Nigerian newspapers not only keep students informed about current events but also contribute to their education by promoting critical thinking, civic engagement, and cultural understanding. Incorporating these newspapers into educational settings can help students develop a deeper appreciation for Nigerian society and its complexities. There were several soft sell periodicals that contributed to the growth of journalism. Quality, Prime Peoples, Hint Encomium, and Ovation were a few of them (Odorume, 2012). These publications comprised nonfiction, articles of human interest, and only original fiction. A number of high-tech printing equipment appeared in the printing industry about the same time as computers first appeared in the end of the 1980s and beginning of the 1990s. According Hamilton Horsfall and Etuk, (2019), Task System used Apple computers to pioneer desktop publishing and computer graphics in Nigeria in 1987.

Conclusion

Newspapers indeed offer a wealth of

educational opportunities for students of all ages and subjects. They provide real-world examples and current events that can engage students and enhance their learning experience. As education trends continue to evolve, incorporating newspapers into teaching practices may become even more crucial, especially with the growing emphasis on competency-based education. To effectively utilize newspapers in the classroom, educators must carefully plan their lessons. They should consider how to integrate newspaper articles and activities seamlessly into the curriculum to maximize their impact on student learning. Before introducing newspapers to students, it's advisable to reach out to local newspapers for discounted or free copies, as well as supplementary materials. Many newspapers are willing to provide resources and advice on how to incorporate their content into classroom instruction, making it easier for educators to leverage this valuable teaching tool.

Incorporating newspapers into civic and social studies education enriches the learning experience, encourages active citizenship, and prepares students to participate effectively in society. By engaging with real-world issues and diverse perspectives, students develop the knowledge, skills, and values necessary for informed and responsible citizenship. By harnessing the potential of newspapers, educators can enhance students' understanding of various subjects, from basic skills to citizenship education, while also fostering critical thinking and media literacy skills. Newspapers play a crucial role in teaching and learning social studies and civic education due to several reasons:

Real-world relevance: Newspapers

provide current and real-life examples of social, political, and economic issues happening locally, nationally, and globally. This relevance helps students connect theoretical concepts taught in the classroom to their everyday lives.

Diverse perspectives: Newspapers offer a variety of perspectives on social and civic issues, including different political viewpoints, cultural backgrounds, and socio-economic statuses. Exposure to diverse opinions helps students develop critical thinking skills and encourages them to consider multiple viewpoints when forming their own opinions.

Promotion of civic engagement: Reading newspapers exposes students to civic issues, such as government policies, community events, and social justice issues. This exposure can inspire students to become more active and engaged citizens by participating in civic activities, volunteering, or advocating for causes they believe in.

Media literacy: Analyzing newspaper articles helps students develop media literacy skills, such as identifying bias, evaluating sources, and distinguishing between fact and opinion. These skills are essential in today's digital age, where misinformation and fake news are prevalent.

Historical context: Newspapers serve as primary sources for historical events, providing valuable insights into past social and political contexts. Studying historical newspaper articles allows students to understand how societal attitudes and policies have evolved over time and how

they continue to shape current events.

Critical thinking and inquiry: Using newspapers in the classroom encourages students to ask questions, think critically, and conduct independent research. They can analyze articles, interpret data, and draw conclusions, fostering a deeper understanding of social issues and their complexities.

Multimodal learning: Newspapers incorporate various media formats, including text, images, graphs, and infographics, appealing to different learning styles and preferences. This multimodal approach enhances comprehension and retention among students with diverse learning needs.

In summary, newspapers are invaluable resources for teaching social studies and civic education, providing students with real-world examples, diverse perspectives, and opportunities for critical thinking and civic engagement. Incorporating newspapers into the curriculum enriches the learning experience and empowers students to become informed, active, and responsible members of society.

Recommendation

1. Educators should incorporate newspaper reading into curriculum across the various subject such as language arts, social studies, and current events. By including newspapers as a regular resource, students can develop a deeper appreciation for the relevance of current events in their lives.

2. Schools and libraries should ensure access to diverse range of newspapers and news sources to expose students to different perspectives and viewpoints. By engaging with a variety of sources, students can develop a more nuanced

understanding of complex issues and enhance their critical thinking skills.

3. Educators should encourage students to engage in discussions about news articles, analyse different viewpoints and explore the implications current events on society. By fostering critical dialogue and debate, students can develop a more sophisticated understanding of the world around them.

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