

7E Learning Cycle Model Imperatives for Teaching and Learning Social Studies in Primary Schools

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Abstract

This paper explores the significance of 7E learning cycle model in enhancing social studies education in primary schools. The 7E learning cycle model is a systematic approach that promotes active elicitation, engagement, exploration, explanation, elaboration, evaluation and extension in social studies education process. Social studies is an interdisciplinary field of study that examines human society, its development, structures and interactions. This paper highlights the significance of utilizing the 7E learning cycle model to create a conducive learning environment that fosters critical thinking skills, inquiry-based learning and meaningful connections to real-world experiences in teaching and learning social studies in primary schools. It explores the theoretical underpinnings of the 7E model, its application in learning social studies and its impact on primary school children's learning outcomes. The paper also discussed the challenges and opportunities for implementing the 7E learning cycle model in primary schools and provides suggestions for primary school teachers to effectively integrate 7E learning cycle model into their teaching practices.

Keywords: 7E Learning cycle model; Social studies; Primary school; Teaching and Learning.

Introduction

Social studies is an interdisciplinary field of study that examines human society, its development, structures and interactions. It incorporates knowledge from history, geography, political science, economics, sociology, anthropology and psychology to help individuals understand societal dynamics and global interconnectivity (National Council for the Social Studies [NCSS], 2010). The primary aim of social studies is to equip learners with critical

thinking skills, civic competence and an understanding of cultural and historical perspectives (Banks, 2017).

In this modern world, knowledge is increasing, technological innovations are advancing rapidly, so also social studies practices, to get along with the developing world. Social studies education has vital role for the communities and for the future of human societies at large. The impact of social studies can be clearly seen in every area of life today (Karamustafaoglu, 2010). Moreover, teaching and learning of social studies helps primary school children to develop socially acceptable behaviour in the society. It also plays fundamental role in helping primary school children understand their environment that impacts in them the ability to elucidate ideas, reason very well culturally and make inquiries about their origin (Noreen, Iqbal, & Hayat, 2024).

Social studies education plays a crucial role in shaping primary school children's understanding of the society, culture, history and citizenship. Primary schools education play a key role in laying the foundation for children's social studies knowledge and skills that will prepare them for active citizenship and meaningful participation in their communities and in the society at large. Just for a second, consider a teacher who changed your life, to see that the educational experiences of children, whether good or bad, have an impact on their growth and development. According to Aboluwarin and Oyedapo (2022), these events have an effect on children's behavioural patterns, social and emotional competence and academic development.

Effective teaching strategies are essential to engage primary school children in social studies and help them develop critical thinking skills, empathy and a sense of social responsibility. In primary school education, social studies is an essential subject that helps children develop essential skills and values, such as cultural awareness, critical thinking and problem-solving skills (National Council for the Social Studies, 2010).

Effective teaching and learning of social studies in primary schools require a teaching approach that is engaging, interactive and inquiry-based. That teaching approach is the 7E learning cycle model. The 7E learning cycle model is a teaching approach that has been widely adopted in various educational settings, including primary schools. It is one instructional model that has gained recognition for its effectiveness in promoting active learning and deep understanding of social studies. Classroom practice results, student-teacher behaviour (especially behaviour that is impacted by the instructor) and student achievement are all affected by how successful a teacher is, efficacy and anticipated outcomes are not the same thing, which might lead to some confusion (Aboluwarin & Oyedapo, 2023). The 7E learning cycle model is a research-based

instructional framework that guides primary school teachers in designing and delivering engaging and effective social studies lessons by focusing on seven key components or stages of the constructivist-based learning cycle model, which are Elicit, Engage, Explore, Explain, Elaborate, Evaluate and Extend (Adak, 2017). The goal of the 7E learning cycle model is to help elementary school students become more engaged learners who can think critically and solve problems on their own. The 7E approach has been shown to improve primary school children's performance in a number of disciplines, including social studies, according to research (Banchi & Bell, 2008). The 7E learning cycle model is based on constructivist theories of learning, which emphasize the active engagement of primary school children in the learning process and the construction of their own knowledge of concepts through hands-on experiences, collaboration and reflection.

Assumptions of Constructivist Learning Approach and 7E Learning Cycle Model

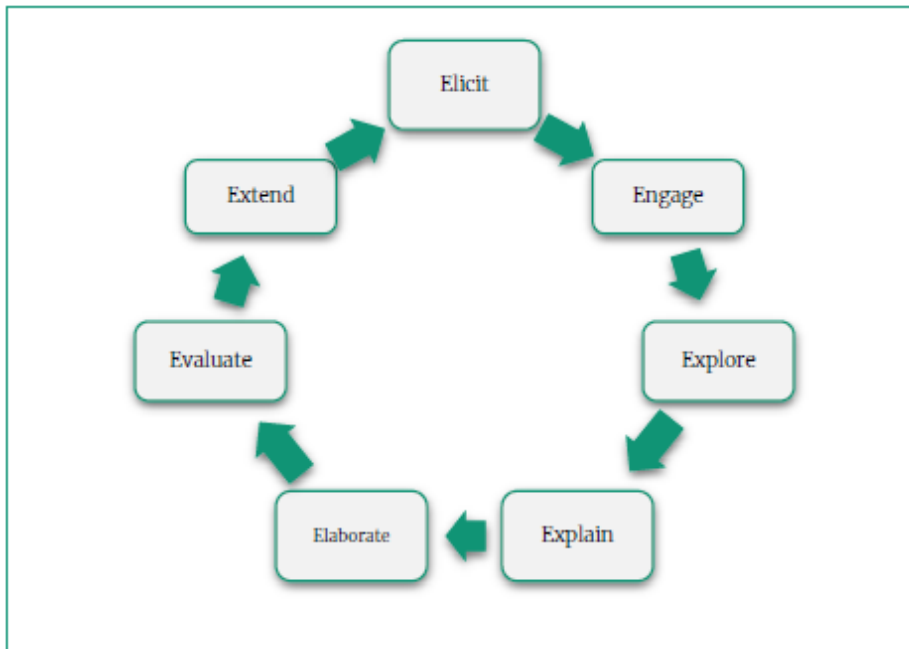
Assuming that all students bring some background knowledge to the classroom, the constructivist method of teaching and learning builds on the students' existing body of information. Constructivism posits that learning is a social and cognitive process that occurs when individuals actively build new knowledge and skills by interacting with their environment and making connections to their prior knowledge and experiences. Effective teaching and learning occur when students are actively engaged in exploring concepts, making connections to their prior knowledge, collaboratively constructing meaning, reflecting on their learning and applying their knowledge to real-world contexts (Bybee, 2014).

The 7E learning cycle model is designed to address the diverse learning needs and styles of primary school children by providing multiple entry points and opportunities for them to interact with content in various ways. The model encourages teachers to design lessons that are children-centered, inquiry-based and experiential, promoting critical thinking, creativity and problem-solving skills among primary school children (Demirbas & Pektas, 2015).

Primary school children benefit from the teaching models' underlying techniques because it help them get a better grasp of social studies, improve their reasoning skills and correct their own misunderstandings and mistakes (Alam, 2017). There are seven stages to the 7Es model of learning and they all contribute to the primary school children's development and achievement (Kazempour, 2013). By bringing together prior and current information, the instructional approach aids primary school children in developing a deeper comprehension of social studies. They are also better able to apply what they have learnt to other contexts. Noreen, Iqbal, and

Hayat (2024) found that the approach improved children's performance in social studies by facilitating more effective knowledge transfer.

Fig 1. Phases of the 7E Learning Cycle Model



Source: Noreen, Iqbal, & Hayat, 2024.

Application of 7E Model Learning Cycle in Social Studies Education

In teaching and learning social studies in primary schools, the 7E learning cycle model can be effectively employed to engage primary school children in exploring complex social issues, understanding diverse cultures and perspectives and developing empathy and social awareness. The 7E learning cycle is acclaimed in social studies education in primary schools, therefore teachers should be motivated to use the 7E learning cycle model in the classrooms (Balta & Sarac, 2016). The following are the seven components of the 7E learning cycle model and how they can be applied in teaching and learning social studies in primary schools:

1. Elicitation: The elicitation stage of 7E model is the provoking stage, the stimulating stage or prompting phase. As the first stage of 7E model, the objective being to access the primary school children previous knowledge about the concept of social studies to be taught. The primary school teachers can access the previous knowledge of social studies the primary school children already have through enquiring, activity sheets, incomplete concept maps, concept cartoons and KWL chart, among others. (K-W-L is an acronym that denotes Know, Want to Know and Learned). The primary school teachers also tries to find out any misunderstandings primary school children have about social studies. For instance, to find out the children's

previous knowledge on the topic, culture; the teacher can ask questions like, what is culture? Have you participated in cultural dance before? Why the dance is called cultural dance? Do you celebrate cultural day in your school? What type of cloth do you wear on the cultural day? Why is that day celebrated in your school called cultural day? The answers emanating from the children will reveal their knowledge about culture, cultural diversity and cultural heritage (National Research Council. (2010).

2. Engagement: As the second stage of 7E model, engagement stage involves capturing primary school children's interest in learning social studies and activating their prior knowledge to create a meaningful context for learning social studies. In teaching and learning social studies, primary school teachers can engage primary school children by posing thought-provoking questions, showing multimedia resources such as videos or images and engaging the children in discussions or hands-on activities. For example, when teaching about different cultures, teachers can show pictures of cultural clothing or artifacts from different countries and ask the children to share what they notice and surprise. Engage primary school children in social studies learning through hands-on activities, simulations and games that promote cultural awareness and understanding (Bybee, 2014).

3. Exploration: The exploration stage of 7E model, which is the third stage encourages primary school children to actively investigate concepts of social studies, explore different perspectives and gather information through various sources. In social studies, primary school teachers can provide children with opportunities to conduct research, conduct interviews with community members, or visit local historical sites. For instance, primary school children can explore primary sources such as letters, diaries, or artifacts to learn about historical events or figures. Explore social studies concepts through inquiry-based learning, such as investigating cultures, historical events and geographic locations (National Research Council, 2010).

4. Explanation: This fourth stage of 7E model, which is the explanation stage involves primary school children articulating their understanding of concepts of social studies as explained by their teachers making connections to their prior knowledge and engaging in dialogue with peers. In social studies, primary school teachers can facilitate class discussions, group projects, or presentations where primary school children can explain their interpretations of historical events, cultural practices, or social issues. Primary school children can work together with their teachers, to create concept maps or graphic organizers to visually organize their thoughts and explanations of social studies. Teachers should explain social studies concepts to primary

school children through age-appropriate language and examples, such as explaining cultural traditions and historical events.

5. Elaboration: As the fifth stage of 7E model, elaboration stage focuses on extending and deepening primary school children's understanding of social studies concepts through additional activities, discussions or projects. In social studies, primary school teachers can encourage children to delve deeper into a particular topic by conducting debates, creating multimedia presentations or engaging in project-based teaching and learning. For example, children can create a cultural heritage project where they research and present information about their own cultural background or a specific cultural group. Teachers can elaborate on social studies concepts by connecting primary school children to real-life situations, such as exploring how cultural traditions are practiced in everyday life, to immerse and acquaint them with diverse cultures and traditions (Adesoji & Idika, 2015).

6. Evaluation: Being the sixth stage of 7E model, involves assessing primary school children's understanding of social studies concepts, skills and processes through various formative and summative assessments (Adesoji & Idika, 2015). In social studies, primary school teachers can use a variety of assessment strategies such as quizzes, essays, projects or presentations to gauge children's comprehension of historical events, geographical locations or civic concepts. Teachers can also provide feedback to primary school children to help them reflect on their learning and set goals for improvement and also evaluate their learning in social studies through assessments and feedback that promote critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

7. Extension: As the seventh stage of 7E model, extension stage focuses on applying primary school children's learning of social studies in primary schools, to real-world contexts and encouraging them to transfer their knowledge and skills to new situations. In social studies, teachers can facilitate opportunities for primary school children to apply their learning in service-learning projects, community service initiatives or simulations of real-world issues. For instance, primary school children can engage in a community clean-up project to learn about environmental conservation or participate in a model United Nations simulation to understand global diplomacy and cooperation. Therefore, teachers should extend the use of 7E learning cycle model teaching and learning of social studies to primary school children by providing opportunities for them to apply what they learnt to real-world situations, such as exploring cultural diversity in their community (Hmelo-Silver, 2004; Bang, 2013). By incorporating these 7E learning cycle components, teaching and learning social studies in primary schools can become more engaging, interactive and meaningful for young learners.

Further Applications of 7E Learning Cycle Model in Social Studies

- Improved academic achievement: 7E model has been found to improve academic achievement of primary school children in social studies by promoting active learning, critical thinking and problem-solving skills; cultural and creative learning skills; observation, exploration, experimentation and communication skills.
- Effective instructional approach: 7E learning cycle model is an effective instructional approach for teaching social studies as it provides a structured framework and template for primary school teachers to follow.
- Blended learning: 7E model is useful in designing blended learning experiences for primary school children, in social studies that combine traditional instruction with online learning method.
- Enhanced active participation: 7E model has been found to enhance children's active participation in social studies by providing a more interactive and immersive learning experience.
- Project-based learning: 7E model is useful in designing project-based learning experiences in social studies where children work on a project that requires them to explore, explain and evaluate scientific, historical and cultural events and natural phenomena.
- Cultural awareness: 7E learning cycle model can be used to promote cultural awareness in social studies by providing a framework for exploring different cultures, traditions and perspectives.
- Technology integration: 7E learning cycle model can be used to integrate technology into social studies education, such as using online resources and tools to explore and explain historical events and cultural phenomena.
- Collaborative learning: 7E model is useful in designing collaborative learning experiences in social studies where primary school children work together to explore and explain historical events and cultural phenomena.
- Differentiated instruction: 7E learning cycle model can be used to design differentiated instruction in social studies, where primary school children are provided with different learning experiences based on their needs and abilities (National Research Council, 2010).

Advantages of 7E Learning Cycle Model

Primary school students benefit from the teaching models' underlying techniques because they help them get a better grasp of social studies subjects, improve their reasoning skills, and correct their own misunderstandings and mistakes (Alam, 2017).

Deduction and the construction of ideas from prior knowledge are central to the 7Es learning cycle model, which has seven stages (Elicitation, engagement, exploration, explanation, elaboration, evaluation & extension) and leads to the development and success of learners (Kazempour, 2013).

By bringing together prior and current information, the instructional approach aids elementary school students in developing a deeper comprehension of social studies subjects. They are also better able to apply what they have learnt to other contexts. Noreen, Iqbal, and Hayat (2024) found that the approach improved students' performance in social studies by facilitating more effective knowledge transfer.

7E Model Prospects and Challenges in Teaching and Learning Social Studies

The growing emphasis on 21st-century skills such as critical thinking, communication, collaboration and creativity aligns with the goals of the 7E model and can provide a supportive context for its implementation in teaching social studies in primary schools (Rahman & Chavhan, 2022). Some of the challenges primary school teachers may face include limited access to resources, large class sizes, diverse student populations and differing levels of support from administrators or parents. Besides the numerous benefits offered by 7E learning cycle model for enhancing the teaching and learning of social studies in primary schools, its implementation poses some challenges. Conversely, there are substantial prospects for implementing the 7E model learning cycle in teaching social studies in primary schools. For instance, the diverse cultural landscape of Lagos state provides rich opportunities for primary school children's to explore various cultures, traditions and historical events firsthand, which can greatly enhance their understanding of social studies concepts.

Impacts on primary school children's learning outcomes in social studies

The 7E learning cycle model has several impacts on primary school children's learning outcomes in social studies education, these include:

- **Improved academic achievement:** Studies have shown that the 7E model improves academic achievement in social studies by promoting active learning, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills.

- Enhanced student engagement: The 7E model enhances primary school children's engagement in learning social studies by providing a more interactive and immersive learning experience.
- Development of geographic skills: The 7E model helps develop in primary school children, geographic skills in social studies, such as spatial awareness and mapping skills.
- Cultural awareness: The 7E model promotes cultural awareness in social studies education by providing a framework for exploring different cultures and perspectives which enhances primary school children's interest in learning social studies.
- Analytical and problem-solving abilities: The 7E model encourages students to investigate, describe, and assess cultural and historical occurrences in order to foster analytical and problem-solving abilities in elementary school social studies students.
- Collaborative learning: The 7E model promotes collaborative learning among primary school children during social studies lessons, where they work together to explore and explain historical events and cultural phenomena.
- Technology integration: The 7E model integrates technology into social studies education, enhancing learning outcomes and creating technological awareness in primary school children and equipping them with the technological know-how needed in this 21st century for upgrading social studies concepts and activities in basic education.
- Differentiated instruction: The 7E model allows for differentiated instruction in social studies, catering to diverse learning needs of primary school children to enable their proper growth and development.
- Project-based learning: The 7E model facilitates project-based learning in social studies, where primary school children work on projects that require exploring, explaining and evaluating historical events and cultural phenomena, gaining insight of the world around them.
- Service learning: The 7E model incorporates service learning into social studies education, enabling primary school children to learn while engaging in community service projects which will make them better members of their communities in future. (National Council for the Social Studies, 2010).

Conclusion

The 7E learning cycle model offers a comprehensive framework for enhancing social studies in early childhood education centers in Lagos State. By actively engaging primary and preprimary school children in exploration, explanation, elaboration, evaluation and extension of social studies concepts, teachers and caregivers can create a dynamic and engaging learning environment that promotes critical thinking, inquiry-based learning and real-world connections. While there may be challenges in implementing the 7E learning cycle model, such as limited resources or large class sizes, there are also significant opportunities for leveraging the rich cultural diversity and 21st-century skills emphasis in Lagos State to support the effective integration of the model.

Suggestions for Effective Integration of 7E Learning Cycle Model

To successfully integrate the instructional model into social studies instruction in primary schools, teachers should consider the following suggestions:

1. **Curriculum Alignment:** make sure that the social studies lessons follow the 7E model of learning, which entails a cycle of active participation, investigation, explanation, elaboration, assessment and extension.
2. **Professional Development:** Provide teachers with ongoing professional development and training on the principles and strategies of the 7E model cycle of learning, as well as support in designing and implementing effective lessons that incorporate the model.
3. **Collaboration:** Inspire teachers to work together, discuss ideas for lessons that use the 7E approach and generally improve social studies education. Collaborative planning can help ensure consistency in the application of the model across different classrooms.
4. **Differentiated Instruction:** Within the 7E model, observe and respond to students' unique learning styles and needs by using a variety of instructional tactics, resources and assessment tools. All elementary and pre-primary school students may benefit from a more welcoming and interesting classroom setting if this is implemented.
5. **Community Engagement:** Foster partnerships with the local community, museums, historical sites, cultural organizations and experts in the field of social studies to provide primary and preprimary school children with authentic learning experiences and opportunities to apply their knowledge in real-world contexts.
6. **Continuously assess and refine instructional strategies.** By embracing the 7E learning cycle processes, educators can empower students to become informed, active and responsible citizens equipped to comprehend the complexities of the world

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