

## **Book 4: Bridging Past and Present for Meaningful Learning**

### **Historical Consciousness**

Understanding history helps students see how the past shapes the present, making them more informed citizens (Ajayi, 2023, p. 66). When they learn about historical events, they can spot patterns and apply those lessons to the issues we face today.

Take Nigeria's colonial history as an example. It shows how old government structures still impact today's politics, like the concentration of power and reliance on former colonial countries. Looking at the Biafran War (1967–1970) helps students understand ethnic conflicts, the need for national unity, and the fallout from unresolved political issues.

Some Nigerian schools have students interview elders about their experiences during key moments, like independence in 1960 or the military rule in the 1980s and 1990s. These personal stories connect students with the struggles and successes of earlier generations, making history feel real and relevant.

By encouraging historical understanding, education helps students think critically about societal issues, participate in informed discussions, and contribute to the growth of the nation.

### **Cultural Heritage and Identity Formation**

Cultural heritage sites and oral traditions contribute to the preservation of identity. When schools include these things in what they teach, it can really build love for the country (Adewumi, 2023, p. 252).

### **Examples of Societal Preservation**

Japan and Germany show us how keeping history and culture alive can really work. They remind us that history is an important part of what kids should learn in school.

In Japan, students study their cultural roots through subjects like Kokugo (the national language) and Rekishigaku (history). These subjects focus on traditional values, significant events, and

national identity. For example, schools teach about the Edo period (1603–1868) to explain governance, societal structure, and cultural milestones. Places like Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park serve as important teaching tools, helping students understand the impact of war and the need for peace.

In Germany, learning about history is key to making sure past mistakes aren't repeated. The curriculum includes a lot about World War II and the Holocaust, so students grasp the dangers of totalitarianism and discrimination. Projects like Stolpersteine (stumbling stones), which place small memorials for Holocaust victims outside their last known homes, make history feel personal for students. Visiting sites like the Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial reinforces the importance of remembering the past and our responsibility to society.

These examples show how Japan and Germany weave history into education, helping younger generations value their heritage while learning crucial lessons from the past.