

CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS OF TEACHING FINE AND APPLIED ARTS IN SECONDARY EDUCATION FOR NATIONAL INTEGRATION AND TRANSFORMATION

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Abstract

Teaching of fine and applied arts in secondary school undergoes a lot of challenges and at the same time have benefits for national integration and transformation. Fine and applied arts is not given much attention as per materials and equipment compare to other areas of academic learning while art serves as an ingredients to other secondary school subjects. This paper therefore, focused on the meaning of integration and transformation, the relevance of secondary education for national integration and transformation. Fine and applied arts as an instrument of national integration and transformation; challenges and prospects of teaching fine and applied arts in secondary school. It was recommended among other things that government should provide necessary art materials and equipment for the teaching and learning of art since the sector comprises everything about human life enhancement.

Key words: Challenges, Prospects, Teaching, Fine and Applied Arts, National Integration and Transformation.

Art as an academic discipline has its own part to play in the field of education and to the nation at large. Detaching or neglecting art in the scholarly context is just like a farmer without a farm tool. Art is the pillar that holds other courses. This is to say that no other area of academic discipline can stand firm without the presence of art to a reasonable extent.

Fine and Applied arts are the branches of visual art which include all the works of art that one can touch, see and feel. They are man made objects and every man made objects are products of art. Works of art produced for various purposes relating to human – life improvement and society at large. Art is an intellectual adventure of the first order. Avae (2007) sees art as the highest form of human expression and a reflection of the society that creates it. Ejiamike (2006:3) stated that art serves as an ingredient for other school subjects.

Unfortunately, fine and applied art is being neglected as a cause of study in Nigerian secondary school. In fact, it is surprising and regrettable to note that some secondary schools in Nigeria do not offer art and such is negligence and triviality to this sector of academic learning. Only few students take art in Senior Secondary Certificate Examinations (SSCE). Thus discourages national integration and transformation, thereby hinders national development. It is for this reason that the writers decided to ascertain and create awareness on the prospects and challenges of teaching fine and applied arts in secondary schools so as to address the situation for National integration transformation.

Concept of Integration and Transformation

Integration is the process of combining things so that they form one. That is allowing something or someone to exist among others

without any division, isolation or segregation. According to Longman (2009) integration can be define as combining of two or more things so that they work together effectively.

Hornby (2010) defined transformation as a complete change in somebody /something. Transforming from bad to good attitude, transformation in the school curriculum or vice versa. However, integration encourages transformation, and both of them are like two sides of a coin which cannot exist without the other. Without integration there may not be transformation. Integrated society accommodates, tolerates, relates and promotes all aspects of human endeavour for better Nigeria nation.

The Relevance of Secondary Education for National Integration and Transformation

According to Aggarwal (2010), secondary education is the second level of formal schooling, falling between the primary-elementary level and the specialized higher studies offered by colleges and universities. However, secondary education is the programme of schooling designed for adolescent youth of 12or 14 to 18 to 19 year of age. UNESCO'S survey of world education takes the 14 to 19 age range as the second level of schooling. Indeed students of this category have young brain to catch- up. They are vibrant and capable to grasp whatever that is being imparted in them, therefore educating children of this level of academic induces economic development both at present and in future.

Secondary school art teaching consists of learning and expressive experiences in the field of fine and applied arts such as painting, drawing, sculpture, textile, graphics, printmaking, photography and industrial design. Art comprises virtually everything man needs to adapt in his environment.

Interestingly, Howard in the Encyclopedia of Education (1995) asserted that art plays an increasingly important role in modern

day life. Thus, young persons and adults who do not possess knowledge of aesthetic bases of fine and applied arts are at an economic as well as an artistic disadvantaged. The quality of every manufactured product, home and apartment and community is determined by the nature of its artistic designs.

Based on the above mentioned, Fafunwa in Okeke (2014) stated the aims of secondary education among others as:

- to think effectively,
- to communicate thought clearly,
- to make relevant judgment,
- to play one's part as a useful member of one's family,
- to appreciate one's cultural heritage,
- to develop economic efficiency both as consumer and producer of goods,
- to acquire some vocational skills;
- to understand the world outside one's environment,
- to develop a scientific attitude towards problems and,
- to live and act as a well integrated individual.

A good education is critical for being able to live one's dreams. That is why we must start investing in our people by giving every child a world-class education in arts and other subjects (Obama, 2008).

Find and Applied Arts as an Instrument for National Integration and Transformation.

Art is human conception made manifest by the skillful use of a medium. It signifies a doing, a making, a fashioning or putting together. It usually implies that the thing is accomplished by human skill (Uzoagba, 2002). In other words, art simply means creating, making constructing, establishing, assembling, and manipulating of tools. The knowledge of art leads an individual

to a higher level of creativity. Getlein (2002) affirmed that people in every line of work require creativity but artists occupy a special place in that they have devoted their lives to opening the channels of visual creativity. Consequently, people in other areas of work such as scientists, mathematicians, teachers, business executives, doctors, librarians, computer programmers and all areas of human endeavours need products of art to succeed.

Based on the above submissions, art is an integral part of every human-life. The cloth we wear, the houses we live in, the bridges, educational materials, house hold utensils, office equipment, machinery among other man-made objects are all valuable materials for national integration and transformation. Consequently, integration and transformation through fine and applied arts require good quality art teaching as well as learners' interest, the subject to be learned, instructional materials and proper teaching and guidance. Different methods of teaching can be used to accomplish the learning objective. Use of example, demonstration, field trip among other methods can enhance the teaching and learning of art. In line with this, Newby, Stepich, Lehman and Russell (2006) noted that integration can take many forms. For instance, teachers in art may find their leaning goals better served by having students reflect about examining the paintings and sculptures from the world's past masters after they have visited several of the world's most prestigious art galleries.

Challenges in Teaching and Learning of Fine and Applied arts in Secondary Schools.

Many factors are militating against proper teaching and learning of fine and applied arts. They are as follows.

- **Students lack of Interest:**

To be a successful scholar in any academic discipline requires a high level of interest.

Interest comes when one is willing to know or learn more about something. It is the basis of success in art. Art is practical oriented which cannot be achieved without complete self/mind involvement but, it is quite unfortunate that some students take their class work and assignments for granted. Laxity and non-challant attitude of students affect effective teaching and learning of the subject.

- **Parental Apathy:**

Obama (2008) asserted that success in the world economy begins at school/house door. Indeed, home support is very critical in everything one does at school. It is disappointing to note that some parents do not show interest whenever their child/ward talks about art. Parents with such negative attitude towards art end up not providing necessary art material such as pencil, drawing book, colour among other material needed for teaching and learning for their children and wards.

- **Lack of Professional Art Teachers:**

Madumere (2014) stated that some of the secondary school art teachers are not professionally trained. The trained ones have no opportunity for the job; therefore, teaching art in secondary school without the knowledge of art teaching methodology is a problem to both the teachers and learners.

- **Lack of Government Funding:**

Lukewarm attitude of government towards art teaching and learning in Nigerian secondary school is visible when compare to how government fund and equip the teaching and learning of other subject such as Chemistry, Biology, Physics, English language and Mathematics than art. Such attitude discourages national integration and transformation.

Prospect of Fine and Applied Arts in Secondary School Education for National Integration and Transformation

Teaching of art in secondary school helps in various ways and they are as follows.

- **Entrepreneurial Skills:**

In secondary school, students are taught to produce art work with various materials suitable for a particular art work. The exposure in buying these materials and the act of production inculcate in them entrepreneurial spirit for self-consciousness and actualization. Thus, art works can be sold to earn a living. Moreover, the idea gotten from the teaching and learning at secondary school level can be enhanced for economic development in the future.

- **Creativity:**

Naturally, art is known by its ability to inculcate high level of creativity in individuals. In other words teaching of art encourages cognitive development that allows the child to exercise his personal idea independently in the class work as well as homework. Through this way the child creates new ideas and forms that are peculiar to him/her. The sense of originality and newness acquired are the bases of creativity and without it, the pace of transformation may be retarded.

- **National unity:**

An ideal secondary school art teacher uses different method to supplement regular classroom instruction such as field trips, excursions, guest speakers, teaching method, demonstration, use of example among other methods. The relationship and interaction through the above experiences encourages national unity.

- **Promotion of artistic and cultural heritage:**

Through exhibitions and gallery visitations, secondary school students are

exposed to different art methods and techniques of different ethnic groups. The knowledge of art and culture of different people can be transferred through this means or approaches.

- **Aesthetics:**

According to Getlien (2002) Aesthetics concerns itself with our responses to the natural world and to the world we make, especially the world of art. Here, students learn to appreciate things through sight, hearing and touch. The child begins to know the subject, the composition and the content of a particular work and be able to analyse, criticize and judge value and hierarchy.

Conclusion

This paper discussed fine and applied arts, its prospects and how it could be encouraged in Nigerian secondary school for national integration and how it can arouse peoples' interest thereby creates awareness for entrepreneurial skill, self reliance and promotion of artistic and cultural heritage. Teaching of art in secondary school is necessary for the present economic development and the future.

Recommendations

From the foregoing, the following recommendations were made.

Fine and applied arts teachers in secondary school should endeavour to make art teaching and learning interesting by using methods that will arouse the students' interest in the course. The teacher should also consider the age level and ability of the students before assigning any work to them.

Parents should be given opportunity (at least once a term) to see their children's work at school. Internal exhibition of art work is also encouraged to showcase students' capabilities in various areas of art.

Challenges and Prospects of Teaching Fine and Applied Arts in Secondary Education for National Integration and Transformation

Government should ensure that art teachers in secondary school are professionally trained. It is only a teacher who has the knowledge of art teaching methodology that can nurture the students' well in all rudiments in that field.

Government should provide necessary art materials and equipment for effective teaching and learning in secondary Education. The equipment and materials are printing machine, potters' wheel, cameras, poster colour, pencil, drawing book among other materials and equipment.

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