

REPOSITIONING CULTURAL AND CREATIVE ARTS EDUCATION THROUGH FOLKLORE TEACHING METHOD IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN IMO STATE

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Abstract

One of the aims of cultural and creative arts education is to impact in learners cultural and practical values of the society to which they belong. Teachers in secondary schools do not use folklore to teach as a result of ignorance or perhaps lack of knowledge that it is one of the best teaching method that strive to focus on system of interrelationship between people and their artistic production. Folklore is inter-related with the culture and practices of any group of people. It is used as a means of entertainment and instruction because it serves as the store house of culture and values of various societies. Folklore being an aspect of cultural heritage through which people perceive their world/beliefs and give meaning to their culture needs to be used as teaching method to reposition artistic expressions in cultural and creative arts education which is the major aim of this paper. The lecture method used by art teachers has drastically reduced students interest in learning the subject due to their inactive participation which has resulted to low enrollment of the subject each year. This paper therefore tried to propose the use of folklore as an innovative teaching method that calls for active participation of both teachers and students within and outside the classroom. It also discussed how folklore can develop creative ability of students. The paper concludes that the use of folklore encourages students to appreciate their cultural values and sharpens their creative ability and skills for development of art works that will protect their cultural heritage. It was recommended among others that art teachers should adopt folklore in order for students to become active learners in class thereby developing their creative ability.

Key words: Repositioning, Cultural and Creative Arts, Folklore, Teaching Method

Education is the process of teaching, training and learning in schools to acquire knowledge and develop skills. It is one of the major tools for the realization of needs goals because it is naturally an instrument for excellence in achieving socio-economic reformation and reconstruction. Cultural and Creative Arts Education is an integration of music, art, drama and dance in which a student is expected to grow into and enhance his/her entrepreneurial skill through acquiring the elements of cultural heritage. Each component of cultural and creative arts education develops skill which empowers the students to achieve self-confidence and become independent. Cultural and creative arts education is like a catalyst that speeds up and controls the process of cultural diffusion in a most meaningful way that gives the Nigerian child a sense of direction and sound judgement to re-enact the Nigerian cultural heritage

One of the aims of cultural and creative arts education is to impact in the learners' cultural and practical values of the society to which they belong. The subject is also aimed at expressing the emotions, experience, ideas and feelings beyond the reach of language. It is a subject offered in the junior secondary schools level. Majority of the students do not take the subject seriously as a career at

the senior secondary level because of the teaching method used by Art teachers who usually teach more of theory lesson than practical. Art teachers in Junior Secondary Schools level usually adopt the lecture method in teaching cultural and creative arts due to scarcity of instructional materials. This has served as a serious challenge to the teaching of cultural and creative arts hence students are denied the opportunity of full and active participation in class for effective learning to take place. When adequate teaching resources are not provided, art teachers are left with the option of changing and adopting other teaching methods that will maximize the interest and academic performance of students in the subject. Hence it is expected that pattern of teaching and learning should shift from the conventional method to a more dynamic and flexible one which should be both teacher and learner-centered. This approach makes students to have interest; teachers to sustain the interest of students thereby achieving the set objective of the lesson taught.

Teaching method as noted by Agwu (2005:25) refers to the overall plan for the orderly presentation of content of learning materials. It is a general process the teacher adopts in presenting his/her lesson to the students for learning to take place. Hence, the use of good teaching method in teaching cultural and creative arts plays an important role in harmonizing classroom instruction. Nevertheless, it has been noted with dismay that cultural and creative arts is being taught using traditional lecture method of talk and chalk (Asogwa & Echemazu, 2011:22).

The lecture method used by art teachers has drastically reduced students interest in learning the subject due to inactive participation which has resulted to low enrollment of the subject each year for both WAEC and NECO. The use of lecture method set the teacher as the only active participant in the class while the students are complete observers or admirers throughout the lesson period. Therefore, inability of art teachers to use methods that encourage students active participation could lead students to lack motivation to further more studies in art as a career.

Cultural and creative arts is more of an innate individual gift which needs to be developed and expressed through intuition, feelings, imagination and free self activity. Students can achieve this process of self expression in their artistic works through motivation into action by art teachers repositioning of their teaching method. The major aim of this paper therefore is to propose the use of folklore as an innovative teaching method by art teachers to achieve the above objective.

Folklore teaching method is one of the best approach that strive to focus on system of inter-relationship between people and their artistic production. Folklore is inter-related with the culture and practice of any group of people. It is used as a means of entertainment and instruction because it serves as the storehouse of culture and values of various societies. Folklore is also an aspect of cultural heritage through which people perceive their world/beliefs and give meaning to their culture.

Art teachers in secondary schools do not use folklore to teach cultural and creative arts as a result of ignorance or perhaps lack of knowledge of the important roles it plays in the lives of the students. Through folklore, students will introduce their cultural beliefs and practice into art since art is a process of self expression. With the understanding of folklore, students are guided through their life style which encourage originality, sharpens creative ability, develop readiness and high interest to learn. It is in this direction that the emphasis of repositioning the teaching method used by art teachers in teaching cultural and creative arts becomes necessary and optimal through folklore.

Concept of Cultural and Creative Arts Education

Cultural and creative arts is the subject that studies arts and craft, performing art and entertainment, customs and tradition as well as principles guiding a citizen's relations with other. The subject is designed to produce students that could be verse in intellectual creativity. Owolabi (2013:32) sees cultural and creative arts as the culmination of fine art, music, drama and craft into a single subject. It is an umbrella term which brings together the three arts subject areas-music, fine and applied arts, and drama/theatre.

Umbugada (2015:140) defined creative art as one of those occupational cultural subjects with various vocational opportunities which prepare individual of any nation for technological growth if well directed. Ajewole (2013:19) described cultural and creative arts as an interdisciplinary field of study. A creative art is an intellectual and emotional recording of experience, presented in an individual manner. It is an application of skills to produce work of creative things and imagination. Nalah (2000:10) defined creative art as anything created by man thorough his own creative thinking, ideas and skills for the use of man. It is the work of man which he produces through his skills in imitation of nature. Cultural and creative arts from the context of this paper is one of the core (elective) subjects in junior secondary schools in which all the activities in the visual and performing arts are carried out. In support of this view, Buoro (2000:33) stated that the activities of cultural and creative arts have relevance to the people's way of life and survival as individuals or groups which have been part of human life for long, existing in all the cultures through their visual arts, drama, music, dance and craft.

Cultural and creative arts education is designed to produce students who should be involved in dynamic and unifying activities by bringing together diverse elements of their experience to make new and meaningful hole. Every student exposed to cultural and creative arts education is expected to express his/her thoughts, feelings and interest in his artistic works and shows his/her knowledge of environment in his creative expressions.

Areas of Cultural and Creative Arts Education

Umbugadu (2015:142) analyzed the three forms of creative arts: Visual, performing and crafts arts viz:

- **Visual Arts:** These are works of art designed primarily to the sense of vision. It is the art of beauty and emotion. They include fine and applied arts; painting, textile, ceramics, graphics and sculpture.
- **Dramatic or Theatre Art (Performing Art):** It deals with the expression of thought, ideas, feelings immaterially: They are referred to as performing arts because of their characteristics in action. Examples include music, dance, drama and poetry.
- **Craft:** It also serves as occupational therapy. Many people even the blind and other physically challenged persons take part in handcraft. Craft is done as a leisure or means of livelihood. According to Uzoagba (2000:36), craft is the art of any country as well as the exponent of its social, cultural and political virtues.

In junior secondary schools, three subjects are carved from cultural and creative arts which include fine art, music and drama that deal with creativity. Fine art means the art that deals with aesthetics or

beauty only and this include drawing, painting, sculpture, decorative design and architecture. Music deals with sound. It is the art of composing, combining, arranging and producing of sensible and meaningful sound which occurs in a prescribed span of time, usually having pitch. Drama is the art of composing, writing, acting or producing plays in a literacy composition to portray life which involves an action or actions which are performed by characters (Amoke, 2013).

The above mentioned areas of cultural and creative arts education need maximum stimulation to achieve maximum creativity. The process of creativity involves divergent thinking in the use of unique ability to improve, invent and to expand the range of relationships, the use of image forming skills and a talent for rearranging established concepts into new and novel system (Guilford, 2009).

Concept of Folklore

Folklore is made up of two words: “folk” and “Lore”. Folk refers to the pastoral people while Lore is the material tradition. Folklore refers to the body or oral tradition that passes from one generation to another. It comprises the people’s way of life and world view (Nze, 2009:118 and Okezie, 2007). Folklore is defined as the traditions and stories of a community or country (Hornby, 2010:579). Folklore is the literary art which expresses and highlights in pure language important issues and messages. It is one of the veritable sources of information about beliefs of the traditional Igbo society which is employed by children, house wives and men while working, resting in groups or solitarily at day time or night time amidst festivity or solemnity. According to Obiechina (2004), folklore is made up of mainly of tales about human beings, personified animals and animated trees, nature and spirits.

Horn (2010:52) defined folklore as the traditional beliefs, myths and legends among a common people. It encompasses all the traditional beliefs and customs handed over from one generation to another. Folklore concerns itself with the culture and traditions of a group of people or tribe. Jonas (2006:333) opined that folklore comprises of traditional creations of people, primitive and civilized. These are achieved by using sounds and words in metric form and prose which include folk, beliefs or superstitions, customs and performance.

In the society verbal sense, folklore includes all those materials that may be transmitted orally through ballads, songs, tales, proverbs, superstitions, riddles, legends, sayings, fables and myths. Ike (2019:9) sees folklore as the whole body of traditional culture or conventional studies of human thought and action which has been accepted widely enough to have attained considerable currency and over a sufficient period of time to have acquired traditional traits, such as anonymity of authorship and historic geographic patterns of variant basic forms.

Folklore reveals and helps us understand humanity. Communities through time and space have created stories, songs, dances, music, rituals, customs, festivals and various materials through artistic genres to make sense of and to celebrate the world and the human conditions.

Traditionally, folklore has been used as a practice by parents and elders for entertainment and instruction to express natural phenomenon to their children in different communities. This activity was normally done in each home after evening meal whereby the young ones gather to listen to the oral tradition rendered by their parents and elderly ones. Folklore was practiced through songs, riddles, proverbs, folktales etc. thereby passing information, teaching and learning of languages,

customs and culture of their people to the younger ones. All the children present were expected to be attentive in readiness to answer questions or repeat the story as well as ask their own questions.

This paper views folklore as the totality of the belief system of a people which is given expression through their language. Academically, folklore shares methods and insight with literature, anthropology, art, music, history, linguistics, philosophy and mythology. Hence, if used as a teaching method will serve as a means through which students acquire the qualities of appreciation of culture, inquisitiveness, readiness, sound reasoning, remembrance and preservation of custom, laws, and arts of their communities as well as flourish in their artistic expression through innovative inspiration.

Folklore Teaching Method for Development of Creative Ability of Students in Cultural and Creative Arts Education

For effective teaching and learning of cultural and creative arts to take place, it is the teachers' task to create a more conducive learning environment by the use of good teaching method that will aid better understanding of the lesson. Quality teaching method used by the art teacher helps the students to acquire knowledge, skills and proper behaviour to live a useful rewarding life through exposure to cultural and creative arts. Hence the subject needs to be handled with folklore teaching method because both give expression through the medium of language of culture transmission and preservation.

Although folklore exist only in the oral form spoken through the word of mouth, its use as a teaching method will no doubt develop in the students such values as interest, concentration, honesty, appreciation, judgement, patience, listening attentively as well as skills of creativity, underlines and accuracy in learning and practice of art. It is expected that the students will participate actively by either being ready to listen and answer questions arising from the oral renditions or songs or folklores or repeat the story later. (Lawrence, 2004:158).

The use of folklore to teach cultural and creative arts will result in students being attentive, curious and inquisitive to know some of the meanings of the words, phrases, sentences and structures used in the lesson. When students are taught with folklore method, they will invariably appreciate the beauty in their cultural songs, dance, tales and arts which will draw them nearer to the root of creativities. Students taught with folklore teaching method will be exposed to different aspect of their culture which include religion, dress code, food, agriculture, art, song, dance, festival etc. which will give them strong foundation and back up a good traditional creative concept from their environment (Milord, 2007).

After using folklore to teach the students, different techniques are used for evaluation which include questioning, giving assignment to paint, model and drawing of some of the objects or themes from the folklore. Also the teacher can illustrate some stories or scenes from the folklores which can be used as instructional materials for teaching. Again students are made to learn to sing and play/act drama using some themes from folklore. This will no doubt promote, propagate and sustain their cultural heritage for future generation. The use of folklore as teaching method will help the students to understand and appreciate our cultural and democratic values thereby encouraging them to contribute more meaningfully to the social, economic and political development of the country. Supporting the above view, Adibe (2008:45) stated that the use of folklore sharpens the creative skills of children because it creates an environment of fellow-feeling where the students interact freely as members of

one large family with their teacher. Students take turns in the rendition of stories or songs. The experience gained from this, shape their perception of the society and the world at large which also influence their creative ability for artistic expressions.

Cultural and creative arts teachers need to develop the appropriate folklores suitable for the different concepts to teach in class from the environment of the students. This will rekindle past history, legends, culture, symbols, artifacts and aspirations of the society where the students belong. The knowledge that the students will acquire encourages them to develop their creativity in getting involved in the use of folklore to sing, play, dramatize and create art works which projects and preserves their cultural heritage (Needlman, 2004). In support of this view, Obiechina (2004) stated that folklore should be used in educating the child into the culture of the people, their ethics, morals, food, values and arts because it makes them develop interest in traditions, institutions and art history as well as transform their mindset to embracing their cultural heritage.

When art teachers adopt folklore teaching method to teach there is active participation of both the teachers and students within and outside the classroom. Students are encouraged to think creatively by developing their own folklores through becoming interested in discovering things for themselves. The students will be exposed to be more open to new ideas and challenges of creating art works as a team or working in group with others in various areas of cultural and creative arts activities which will make them become more effective learners.

The need therefore to reposition cultural and creative arts education through adopting folklore teaching method cannot be over emphasized. Its usage as teaching method will result to students' display of interest and high level of curiosity about many things, generating many ideas, providing solutions to problems and questions as well as criticizing constructively. Folklore teaching method will enhance the capacity of the students by equipping them with knowledge, creative skills, attitude to transform and develop their artistic values for the betterment of their environment and the society at large.

Folklore teaching method which is a demonstration and discovery learning approach enables the students to be active and attentive in class. It influences students' aesthetic values to arts works and choice of title and themes. This is in agreement with Ogbu (2008:54) assertion that development and encouragement of creativity in students is an important task for art teachers who can achieve it through the use of good teaching method. This is because the product of the students is dependent and influenced by their dynamic creative empowerment received from the knowledge acquired through learning from their teacher.

Conclusion

This paper concludes that most art teachers in secondary school in Imo State do not use folklore to teach cultural and creative arts subject. They prefer the use of lecture method due to lack of facilities, equipment and instructional materials in schools which demoralizes the interest of students. Hence, there is need to reposition the teaching and learning of cultural and creative arts education through adopting folklore teaching method because it has contributed a lot in projecting the culture of the people in diverse societies by mirroring their life style. Through the use of folklore, students are expected to participate actively by either being ready to listen and answer questions arising from the oral renditions, songs and folklore or ask their own questions or repeat the story later. Folklore

method also encourages students to appreciate their cultural values and sharpens their creative ability and skills for development of art works and activities that will transmit, protect and sustain their cultural heritage.

This paper has clearly highlighted the numerous roles played by folklore teaching method which if adopted by art teachers can assist in overcoming some of the problems they are facing in teaching cultural and creative arts.

Recommendations

Based on the foregoing, it is recommended that:

1. Art teachers should adopt folklore method as the students centered teaching approach in order to capture their interest as well as make them active in the class.
2. Cultural and creative arts teachers should be using folklore method to teach the students so that they can develop their creativity from the knowledge to be acquired.
3. Art teachers should be creative themselves by developing folklores appropriate to the needs of the students emanating from the environment which is suitable for the concepts to teach.
4. Curriculum planners should include folklores as one of the new compulsory teaching methods for art teachers in cultural and creative arts curriculum. This innovation will boost its adoption by teachers to encourage students' active participation and interest in the subject.

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