

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT IN CREATIVE ARTS EDUCATION FOR JUNIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL (J.S.S)

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Abstract

In Nigeria today, there is need to re-evaluate our school art programme in order to provide for our present societal needs. In addition, there is need for a sequential, conceptually based programme for art instruction and systematic approach to the teaching of art in our schools. These needs arise due to the incoherent nature of the current instructional programme and the types of art activities conducted in most of our schools. To be able to formulate and implement substantive curriculum issues effectively, one must understand the progress of curriculum development. In this regard, the paper attempts to emphasize some important areas of curriculum development as they relate to creative arts education. This study resulted from a probe and investigation conducted on curriculum development in order to assist and consequently facilitate effective designing of instructional programmes in the field of art. The author believes that a comprehensive understanding of the basic curriculum principles will enable us to achieve excellence in the quality of creative arts education available to learners in Nigerian Schools.

Introduction

Creative art is a new subject in the curriculum of primary school and early part of secondary school. It is based on the concept that there must be an effective interplay among the various components of art. Its core is creativity and its significance is realized in performance. Performance is therefore, shown in an evaluatory period during which a child through the use of the basic skills acquired, displays his talent in a particular branch of the main discipline of art (namely: drama, music and the fine arts) which is then re-inforced in follow-up activities. Performance should be the end-product of an integrated group activity.

The creative arts programme pre-supposed that specialization will take place in the post-primary school. The curriculum that follows is a brief outline of what one thinks could be included in teaching the new subject creative arts, which embraces, drama, music and fine art.

This task of integrating drama, music and fine art in the teaching of creative arts education is not all that easy, however an explanation to this effect is given in a curriculum design, hi designing a curriculum suitable for primary school or secondary school or even tertiary institution in Nigeria, one must take into consideration the psychology of human being. No two human beings are exactly the same in the way they behave and learn. There exists individual differences in human beings e.g. some are slow learners, others fast learners, some are long sighted, others shortsighted, some are mentally retarded or maladjusted while others are not. Therefore, the teacher should understand the psychology of children or human behaviour at various stages of development before imparting knowledge into them effectively. In the light of above, the knowledge of curriculum development will enable one to take such psychological problems into consideration.

Definition of Curriculum

Some curriculum experts defined the word, curriculum as follows:

According to National Policy on Education (1989:25), it is "All the learning which is planned or guided by the school...whether it is carried on in groups or individually, inside or outside, the school environment".

According to Banjo (1956:72), curriculum is "the subject-matter of instructions", This includes the child, teacher and functions in education entirely. This viewed as a whole, is known as the curriculum, a Latin word meaning "a race-course". It is now used to indicate "a planned course of instructions".

According to Richmond (1972:98), curriculum is a contrived activity and experience organized, focused systematic that left unaided would not provide for anything. It is properly artificial selecting, organizing, elaborating and speeding-up the processes of real life.

According to Taba, (1976:103), "curriculum is a trading and culture to which ideas and art facts are brought, exchanged and taken away".

There are numerous descriptions, which cannot be exhausted in this write up. As a major contact one shall now look at how curriculum can be developed for the level of the Junior Secondary School (JSS) in creative arts education.

According to the National Policy on Education the Federal Government has planned that Secondary Education should be of six years duration, and be given in two stages, Junior Secondary stage and Senior Secondary stage, each stage, being of three years duration.

The curriculum development here is based on (he Junior Secondary School (J.SS) which is for both pre-vocational and academic. The curriculum development has to tract all the basic subjects including development arts education which will enable the pupils to acquire further knowledge and develop skills.

According to Tyler (1950:15) and Ryan and Cooper (1982:84) basic curriculum development should be based on the following conditions:

1. Needs of the society;
2. Purpose of Creative Arts Education;
3. Content of basic curriculum;
4. Organization of learning experience;
5. Strategies for teaching;
6. Formative evaluation;
7. Summative evaluation and
8. Review.

Needs of the Society

The artist has to adapt to the needs and circumstances of the locality. The arts are not just cultural embellishments but most of them are activities which give us psychological and mental satisfaction. Curriculum depends on a pattern of interaction within a given group of people. The pattern will be determined by the values shared by the people as well as their beliefs, opinions and accepted behaviour. Values and beliefs are expressed through language, and arts forms. We therefore communicate ideas through language and arts forms. Cultural experts have shown that arts are necessary to human existence just as food and shelter are necessary.

That is the more reason why the anthropologists have described art as desirable form and in . its broad sense it includes design, symbols, artifacts, religious worship as well as painting, sculpture, ceramics, textiles and architecture. They have been argued that for man to survive without art would have returned to an ape level of existence.

The subject (creative arts) taught in the school should primarily be those that will be of use to the children in their daily work as members of the society, and will make them efficient. Since a child is a member of a house, a town, and a country, he is a member of a religious society and certain social and political groups. He should therefore be taught subjects which will make him useful both to himself and to the people among whom he lives. A good example of this is, while Christians cherish three dimensional representation in art, the Muslims on the other hand promote two dimensional art. In this respect, the teacher takes advantage of the knowledge and skills which civilized countries have found useful and important.

Purpose of Creative Arts Education

The purpose of creative arts education in curriculum development is not the production of the works of arts or the amassing of information. The goal is to aid the child in increasing his capacity to enjoy visual experiences and his ability to bring forth what is within him-to express himself through art media. His works may or may not appeal to adults or have aesthetic merit by adult standards. His works must be evaluated on its own term- It is to be viewed in the light of the child's own purpose, its progress to be viewed in terms of the limit of his development. The characteristics common to the arts of all children are modified by cultural and individual differences, and studies have shown that

children's drawings reflect their environment and culture. It is important that the teacher and parents understand the stages of development in arts expression. So that provisions made for the child are appropriate to these requirements. Wachowiak (1972:19) in "Understanding Children's Arts for Better teaching" wrote that such a development from "inside out" is being reversed lately by the emphasis on development from "the outside in" because of recent educational attention to "importance of surroundings in the shaping of artistic aptitude in both production and appreciation of art". For the child art is seen as both a process for development and a product.

Content of Basic Curriculum Development

In the content, one has to think and decide before selecting the objective which must be guided by conditions for what categories-JSS I or JSS II or SS III, the language need of the society. One has to select content which can lead you to achieve the overall selected objectives. Then the age of the learner, learning experience which will help the planner to cast the content material. Eventually, the content has to be evaluated to know whether the objective is achieved or not. It is therefore graduated in a linear form, thus objective content learning evaluation.

The subject content of arts: The arts are not limited to drawing and painting. There is art in most of the man-made and natural objects around us. The furniture used, the clothes worn, the houses in which people live, the charts on the walls, the illustrations in books and magazines and even the kind of scenery called 'beautiful' are a few examples of the sources of the arts. Psychologists described art as a form of doing something; while art educationists agree that art is both product and process, therefore one should teach the child Art History, Art criticism and Aesthetics. It is also known as look and talk. With regard to these, four steps should be taken into account. They are:

- i. The description of the element-line, colour, shape/form tone and texture,
- ii. Formal analysis-This is how elements have been put together artistically;
- iii. Interpretation of the work that is giving their meaning to it;
- iv. Evaluation- classifying according to the history of art which goes into the style, compared with other works in that category. London (op cit: 33 and 35) therefore calls for an assessment of the school system which makes learning and teaching in effectual due to lack of relevance of what is taught to the actual context of the child life outside the school. Therefore, a comprehensive content for the creative art curriculum that relates to the child's life outside the school, would need to be drawn from the way the accomplished artists operate the nature of the arts and the nature of education. That is why Eisner (1998:23) criticized the school for its emphasis on the cultivation of only the intellect without including students whose aptitude lies in forms of thinking.

Organization of Learning Experience

A creative, enthusiastic, imaginative, adaptive, sympathetic, and constantly resourceful teacher is the essential catalyst in the development and implementation of a qualitative programme in elementary art. The teacher of the art class must be an organizer, house-keeper, counsellor, resources expediter, referee, adventurer, and lover of children.

The best teachers of elementary art whether classroom teacher or special art consultant, are creative, adaptive-people. They work hard to understand the basic premises, techniques and evaluative processes of the creative art: they learn how to organize materials, tools, space and time schedule to produce exemplary working conditions in the classroom or art room, and they structure and implement the art programme to meet the present and future needs of their students. They are constantly searching for ideas and processes that can renew the children's interest in a project when the initial excitement wanes. In their enthusiasm, while they display unselfishly, they encourage the younger to open their eyes to the design, colour, form, rhythm, texture and pattern in the world around them, in both nature and man-made wonders. They are generally concerned when a student encounters problems.

Wise teachers plan the art discussion period, the motivating question-and answer session, or the preliminary show-and-tell segment with special care. They avoid blind-alley questions, posing instead, those that open up new avenues of discoveries.

To keep that art programme a vital growing part of the curriculum, teachers of art build and

keep up to date as many art resources as they can, including reproductions, photographs, colour-slides, film strips, and loops, magazine articles and illustration, recordings, illustrated art books and examples of students art projects.

They experiment with new materials, new processes in order to share them with their students. They also learn to see differences as well as similarities in the graphic expressions of children.

Teachers of art learn to cultivate a ready sense of humour. They listen to the child's description of his experiences both real and imaginary, with genuine interest. Another vital requisite for a qualitative elementary art programme is an atmosphere or climate conducive to the development of individual expression. The desired relationship may take a while to develop but once the teacher established a climate of co-operation and of mutual understanding, this gift to guide and challenge the youngster becomes the critical point of teaching efficiency. In short, learning experience are organized according to the levels of development and free activities along with directed activities and projects.

Strategies for Teaching

The primary concern of teacher of elementary art should be an understanding and implementation of the linear image. The line drawing is the basic structural system of all graphic composition. Expressive, sensitively drawn lines usually vary in pressure, width, or emphasis. They can be delicate, bold, flowing, static, rhythmic, awkward, violent or dynamic. They (lines) may converge, radiate, meander or intercept one another to create interest, impact, tension or chaos. Lines expressively drawn can create and define shapes, values and paths of motion. One can turn to nature and man-made objects as sources of line variety: frost, tree branches, spider webs, water ripples, veins in leaves, sea weed, wood grain, skeletons, bark of trees, insect wings, bird cages, kite lines, bicycles wheel spokes, bridge spans, jet stream, road maps, telephone and power lines, and TV antennas. Children in school should be afforded many opportunities to explore the possibilities of line with its myriad interpretations.

A study of pictorial design or composition in painting, eventually counters on the shape of things! The shape created by lines merging, intersecting, or touching each other take many forms. They may be square, rectangular, complex, round, oval, cellular or amorphous shapes which can also be created in design by other means such as colour washes, smudging, flowing ink, object printing on paper, clothing and assorted techniques.

Nature is the richest source of inspiration for a study of variety of shapes. Natural forms and shapes like those found in a tree branch, a leaf, a sea-shell, a cell, a pebble, petal, or a feather and usually much more varied, more suitable than those based on mathematical formulas. The above mentioned things are richer in art classes, than relying on table tops, cabinet doors, windows, building facades, fences, sidewalks, and other utilitarian structures. Both teachers and students should turn more often to contemplation of nature's varied forms as an alternative to their own inventiveness in creating interesting shapes. The shapes of things or objects such as trees, animals, houses, vehicles and people in composition and sometimes called positive shape or spaces. The areas around them are often referred to as negative shapes or spaces even though the negative space may include something definite such as sky, ground, or water. In any case where the positive shapes and varied in size and shapes, the negative space is usually more varied and interesting. When a composition is effectively varied, it is usually in good shape.

The teachers and students should be aware that value and the contrast produced by juxtaposing a variety of values play an important role in pictorial design. Value simply stated, refers to the light and dark elements in composition. Teachers and students most learn to see colour in terms of its value in order to create effective and exciting colour contrasts. Colour in painting is a continuing challenge to art students, to teachers of art and often to professional artists. What were once identified as receding colour may now prove advancing colours. Colour that simply did not go together according to traditionalists of the 'thirties' now are juxtaposed audaciously. Artists, Henry Maths, Pablo Picasso, and Hans Hofmann, are acclaimed pioneers in liberating painting from local colour renditions and restrictions.

To avoid the pitfalls of clashing colours and students chromatic relationships, many art instructors recommend minimizing the intensity of colour used in a composition.

Formative Evaluation

When planning the teaching-learning unit, the teacher outlines briefly a method whereby students can measure their own progress. The method is then treated in detail in daily planning. For instance, the unit may include a multiple-choice test in creative arts theory to appraise the acquisition of concepts. The daily planning is then concerning with specific instruction for administering the test. Distributing copies of it giving directions for answering questions; determining the extent to which students will be helped, anticipating the time allowed for completion after the first student finishes; explaining the method of scoring when the students insist on it and returning the test and answer sheets.

Formative evaluation is usually undertaken during the process of developing the programme. It is aimed at ensuring a healthy acquisition and development of knowledge and skills by students. It is also used to identify students' needs in all curriculum ramifications in order to guide them towards desired goals. Identifying student's needs will help or enable the evaluator to find appropriate remedial measures in solving such problems. Lark-Horovitz (1980:14) said: "the purpose is to find out whether after a learning experience students are able to do what they were previously unable to do". Bondi and Wiles (1976:25) put it that, "the primary purpose of formative evaluation is to help as much as possible to ensure that summative evaluation comes out positive". This equally helps to test out material, contents and strategies as to their appropriateness for the level of education. It leads to a review where necessary.

Summative Evaluation

It is the evaluation which is concerned with purposes, progress and outcomes of the teaching-learning process. In other words, it is the total programme after it has been fully developed. At this stage, the conditions under which the programme will be most profitably used are stipulated. The student's performance, the quality of the creative art teacher are evaluated to give the final verdict as to the usefulness of the programme. Summative is "the evaluation used to appraise a product already placed on the market".

It is therefore based on the following assumptions that:

- i. the programme's objectives are achievable;
- ii. The teaching-learning process has been conducted effectively;
- iii. The teacher-student-material interactions have been conducive to learning; iv. The teaching techniques, learning materials and audio-visual aids are adequate and have been judiciously dispensed; and
- v. There is uniformity in classroom conditions for all learners.

Summative evaluation is judgmental in nature. It takes the form of quizzes, tests, term papers, reports, personal observation of students, class contributions or annual examinations. Students performances in such examinations determine to a large extent their job career or prospects of further education. This made summative evaluation. It is mostly done by experts when the programme has been in use for some time.

Review of the Curriculum

Curriculum has to be reviewed from time to time within a given interval of period, e.g. 5 years or less. Even the most carefully prepared plans will almost certainly need to be modified in the light of the pupil's and teachers' reactions. At all stages, regular feedback of information, criticism and counter-suggestions from those trying out experimental courses to those responsible. Only in this, decision making be effectively shared and off-course drift prevented. This sounds a truism, but arranging for self-correcting procedures is one of the most exacting tasks in mounting a curriculum project. Testing as one goes, entails a great deal more than administering post-tests which give a measure of pupils' comprehension. This kind of testing calls for sensitive, sophisticated skills, and it is as well to recognize that those skills are at present in short supply. If current content becomes

obsolete, it has to be rejected or re-designed. In this case, there are new pieces of information on additions to knowledge, new strategies, etc. which have to be accommodated too.

Conclusion

In the final analysis, the true measure of success in the learning of creative art is the extent to which its value permeates life within and beyond the classroom. With artistry, the teacher and pupils can create an environment for learning, which is highly responsive to human needs and pleasing to the eyes. They can become increasingly aware of the place of art as an expression of human spirit and of the uniqueness of each individual. Therefore, to become an art teacher is to assume the obligation to nurture the creative power within each child.

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