
Research and Innovation in Early Childhood Care and Education.

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Abstract

This paper is inspired by the alarming rate of challenges in the Diaspora which seems to be as a result of the new technologies which affect countries in all aspect of life – social, political, religion and economic meltdown. Indirectly, all work force irrespective of age, race and class have resulted in no small constraint for development. What sort of thing is art that it should play such a significant role in human's development? Art in education encompasses basic activities for children, the process and practice of art in education in children in Nursery and Primary school gives a unity of consciousness, coordination of the hand(s) and eye(s). Education is a necessity of good life, hence a preparatory ground towards vocation in an individual's future. Art education sharpens both perceptual analytic abilities. It nurtures the creativity and imaginations necessary for innovative thinking and problem solving. In addition, art education is essential which generally to develop skill vital to a child's full development. The natives believe that no formal education is experience or needed to comprehend and create art, hence, deem it not vital to child education. But it is wrong. Thus, it is the aim of this paper to draw attention to the need for art education and programme to a child and in the schools especially formation schools, Intellectual development and ability to fully, experience art and it's potential and recommend the way forward. There is need for the government to post

some of the art teachers to both primary and secondary arm of education to help built up or develop the fourth child's literacy and skill early enough as one of the way forward.

This paper is inspired by the alarming rate of the wane of interest in Art and its values. Both developed and developing countries of the world are attracted to the rapid development of information and communication technology. Global attention is now focused on ICT to the detriment of art education and the arts. There is need to front art as a veritable means in child education and development, inspite of the positive changes brought about of ICT.

Furthermore, for a better understanding of this paper, there is need to clarify the key concept which includes "Research, "Innovation", "Education", global challenges and also proffer solution or way forward. Therefore, this paper will be based on the theoretical words of Lowenfield (1982) which says that creativity should be the basis of education for all mankind. Even Plato the great philosopher emphasized that creativity is a universal phenomenon.

Research: Research simply means a process of finding out solution to a problem based on use of data. Uzoagulu A. E. (1999) explained that Research implies

- An empirical investigation into a problem
- An inquiry into the unknown
- An attempt to provide total or partial solution to a problem
- A scientific approach to solving problem
- A systematic process of problem solving
- A research for new knowledge
- A logical system of investigating problem

Innovation: According to Oxford Advance Learners Dictionary, innovation means introduction of new ideas or ways of doing things that has been discovered or introduced, hence the authors sees research as a value change and recreation. Innovation is a new ideology to improve value chain in development; physically, mentally and otherwise.

Education: Education, according to Advance English dictionary is a systematic training and instruction especially for the young in nursery/primary schools and colleges. Otherwise, it is a means to an end but not the end itself. Education could be acquired, formally or informally e.g. schooling or apprenticeship.

Global Challenges: There are many challenges in the world facing learners today for instance terrorism, gender issue, armed robbery, human trafficking, corruption and insecurity. These tendencies can disarm a learner and delay development in a country. Art in education can proffer a solution to some of these challenges because when a child discovers himself early enough, he cannot easily indulge himself into these social ills.

Globally speaking, creativity is a universal phenomenon; Art is a creative process which has been practiced and utilized by man since the world began. It is a

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skillful way of life which showcases the activities of man in all ramifications of life, cuts across socio-economic, political and technological progress and challenges of man. To strategize the new ways of teaching art in the early childhood care in the nation, there is need to clear these probing questions; Do we actually need Art in our educational system for creativity? If so, what and how do we interpret and implement the curriculum without the necessary tools and materials for each level? “Catch them young they said”, it is now or never? In Early childhood care is the first level of education on the nation’s education system. It involves children of tender age of about (1-5 and 6-10) i.e. Nursery and Primary School age. Learning they said starts from the cradle to the grave”. A child starts learning as early as possible and continues with schematic, scrubbing of things on the floor, wall and paper.

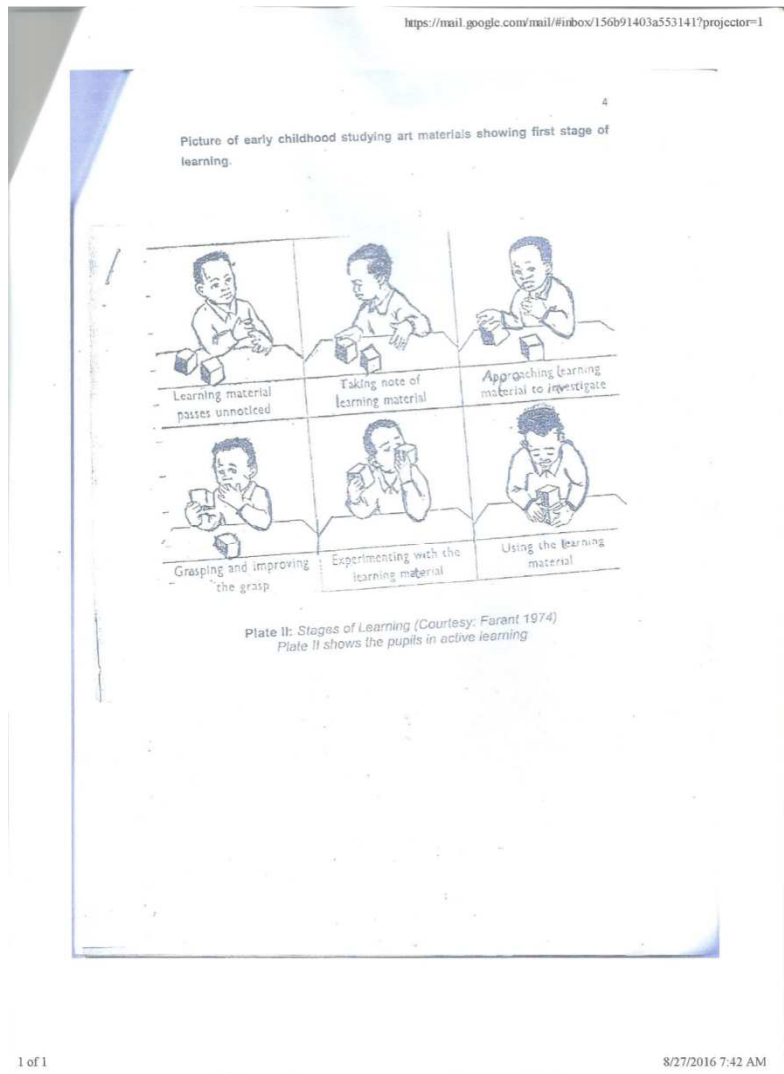
Thus, Madu (2007) from her research observed that every child is creative. A child discovers his/her earlier at home especially where he/she encouraged to draw at home than in the school. The implication is that the teacher who suppose to help the child to develop his/her skill in art early enough does not know how to make use of the tool (ART) effectively which makes the child to forget his first language of expression. Also those art teachers who are qualified to teach, are not recruited to teach especially in the unity schools especially in Imo State.

Mode of Learning and the Role of Art

The authors agreed with Fafunwa (1974) that the instructional techniques at this stage such as that in which the teacher recites rhythms and words after which the pupils repeat suit. The repeated skill is done severely until the teacher is fully convinced that the pupils have mastered the correct pronunciations and spellings. At nursery level, they need picture books with two or three words below, for information, fiction story books as well as audio visuals. Thus, pupils put down their first mark on paper, floor or wall shortly few years after their senses first contact the environment and react to these sensory experiences. No wonder, Lowenfeld (1982) confirms that a touching feeling, seeing manipulating fasting, listening and responding to art forms help the child to study other subjects fast in general. At prismatic stage, most children appear to enjoy works of art and manipulate materials like clay, colour, sand, building blocks and basic shapes like oranges, apple, table, books, and cubes among others from their environment. This sharpens more their inquisitive nature and activeness.

Role of Research in Early Childhood

The researchers observe that a child exposed to art activities learn better, faster than their colleagues who were not expose to visual literacy. However, when children are expose to early multi-media, it gives them the opportunity to select, organize, develop and use their sensory organs properly through feeling, testing, smelling and in making choice.



Picture of early childhood studying art materials showing first stage of learning.

Note, that a work of art is an embodiment of knowledge to the observers. That is to say that one good picture is worth a thousand words. The child starts learning verbal languages from pictures and books or audio visual e.g T.V, CD,DVD, drawing and cartoon etc, which helps him to learn faster.

Primary Levels(covers 6-11 years of age)

Primary education is provided in both public and private primary schools in Nigeria. The ages of the children range between 6 and 12 years old. This consists of pupils about five to twelve years old. At this stage, the pupils are introduced formally to English alphabets – ABCD to Z and numeracy – 0 to 9, by using symbols just like children in Arabic and D type of education.

In learning Social studies the pupils first learn civic rights and roles of the society. Example social virtues which includes language, mode of dressing, greeting and cleanness to their environment as well as respect for elders (code of conduct) among others. They also appear to establish learning patterns, attitude and sense of themselves. This involves the schematic stage of learning. At this stage the pupils have learnt to express their inner picture and can now draw the picture of their world or even represent the culture of the home by slowly their parents, father, mother and brother or sister or members of their family or even tell their stories. This means that their hands are now firm with art tools. Perhaps that is why art is seen as a subject developer because of its involvement in all the motor domains, hence develops a child wholesomely i.e. cognitive ability to think and recognize his story, then ability to appreciate his work and affective domain i.e. ability to represent what he is taught and feelings, show the psychomotor domains through his creativity, i.e.to encourage creative impulse in children early enough and not to make them artists. Art helps the learners to coordinate both mental and psychological dexterity and creative thinking as well as develop self confidence which helps them solve problems that may arise from other subjects.

Thus, Madu (2007) citing Folomriso and Elaluoti; stress that beginners books consist mainly of lap books i.e. Picture books, ABC books, counting concept books, topics and nursery rhymes which determine the quality of learning visuals, needed for teaching and learning concepts. Each learning material covers the subject context the substance and language level suitable for the age of the learner.

In an interview with some staff of the Alvan Nursery School visual art/art education is a veritable tool for learning at this level of education because children at this level learn effectively with what they see, hear and feel or taste; they do not learn in abstract rather plaster sine or clay for moulding, crayon and colour for panting and drawing. Construction of shapes in mathematics with building blocks or counters. Sound and rhymes for body movement and audio visual tapes and CDs on different subjects.

The researcher gathered that at nursery and early primary classes art is related to all subjects because the children are not matured enough to copy notes, they learn through pictures, concrete objects sounds audio visuals songs, signs and symbols sounds as well as scribbling and practical in art. Hence Ike and Okwo (1995), Madu (2009) agreed that expanding this pupils horizon of experience as the teacher provide meaningful sources of information such guiding learners to the vast reservoirs of rallia as well as picture or graphic materials, maps, coat of arm, national flag etc. it also offer rich opportunities for pupils to develop communication skills and actively engage in solving meaningful problems from others subject.

Materials for teaching and learning at early childhood care education need very good instructional visuals which must supply a concrete basis for conceptual thinking and reduce difficulty in presentation and response. Thus instructional materials include the following; newspapers, picture books, flashing cards CD's mathetics, story books, crayon, colour clay plaster sine, key boards computer, guilter etc.

This means that teachers at pre and early primary schools must have good knowledge of art education which can help them select or construct communicate their lessons in various subjects and for continuity of art education. Then, what is art education? This is simply teaching people about art through education formality. Obianyido (1989) in his view pointed out that art education means “a change in education which involves deep understanding of art as a mode of organizing experience and a vital aspect of educative process; Hence, Professionalism: Research has shown that at this level of education teaching is not a matter of specific techniques or style, plans or actions. Rather it is primarily a matter of love, it requires thoughtful caring teacher, committed to the lives of pupils. Thus, a big challenge (tolerance) for teachers and learners especially as it pertains to nursery.

Nursery or Early Childhood Level/Mode of Learning (Age 2 to 4)

This is a period's a child starts exhibiting their technological know from known to how unknowingly through creativity and exploration. Children are known for their energetic life at this stage they are full of exploration with thing found or see in their environment but in the cause of this exploration, it needs close marking by a (teacher) who may be the guardian, etc. No wonder; Madu (2007), citing Ekeada, stresses that;

Every child is creative, a child discovers himself earlier at home especially where he is encouraged to draw, than in the school. The implication is that the teacher that suppose to help the child to develop his skill in art does not know how to make use of the tool (art) effectively, the child tends to forget his first language of expression. He further said that ‘art as a core and special subject needs daily practice like computer, if you leave it for a day it will leave the learner for four days’.

A: What is Art Education?

Art Education is the process of empowering a child through art. At early childhood care, art is only an activity experience which reveals the learners imaginative picture about life and environment. As art is activity based, it adds variance to the teaching and learning process, thereby breaking boredom and encouraging more assimilation and better understanding. They randomly scribble things on the walls, floor and paint with colours, sometimes they communicate their ideas and feelings through symbols and folklores story teaching, this helps to nurture effective honing children's skills required for physical mental and aesthetic development. Using art as their first mark, helps to manipulate things – grab objects and co-ordinate hand and eye simultaneously especially at early stage of development. Ikwuegbu (2013) stress that;

Despite the inclusion of Art in the Nigeria's National Policy of Education which gave art the center spread in the curriculum, the recruitment as qualified creative art teachers and provision of materials are deselected theory depriving the primary school child exposure to the creative activities, intuitive intellectual and manipulative skills targeted to develop the child's career. There is also failure to see art as the 4th literacy or fourth 'R' since art help a child to develop other intelligent.

He regrets that “over the years various governments have joined in denying equipping the primary schools/nursery schools with adequate art teachers and mated thereby leading to poor art activities. Instead of encouraging creative activities through art, the teachers prefer to collect N50 or N100 instead of handiwork (craft from the pupils. Probably, because there is art teacher to give out expertise knowledge to them or they know the value of skill acquisition and development.

Role of Art Education in the Development of Early Childhood Care

Art as important biological value for Brain Development of the child. Research have shown that art helps to maintain and develop visuals, auditory and motor system in human beings. Although art is expensive, the government should try and fund art educations and art programmes in all levels of education. Children and adult need art literacy to be able to cope with their environmental challenges of life.

Art Education is very important for development in science and technology. From the onset, science is driven by creativity, and Art education remains a proven instrument for inculcating creative and critical spirit into the minds of the young. More so, almost all known technical inventions are products of artistic design, be it automobile, architecture or otherwise. Therefore, it takes artistic skills to be a good architect, automobile inventor, etc.

Therefore the encouragement of Art education in our educational system in this country would certainly contribute immensely towards the realization of most desired advancement in science and technology.

Religion and Morals for National Development

According to Uzowuihe, Bertha Oluchi, Dike and Emeka (2012), Art plays very crucial role in inculcating of religious and moral values to the populace. The major factor that has hampered the development of Nigeria is corruption and embezzlement of public funds. It is pertinent to mention that the various programmes and activities of some public and private agencies designed to fight corruption, drug trafficking and fake drugs as well as epidemic like Ebola, are communicated to the citizens through the visual arts and audio visual means. Cartoon is an example of these visual arts produced to teach morals.

Interdisciplinary Role of Art in Teaching and Learning of other Subjects

Religion equally preaches high moral standards to members of the nation who are contributing efficiently to the nation's development. Most religions in the nation condemn bad character, and encourage good morals and virtuous living as important instruments for happy living and meaningful development of a nation. To achieve this effectively, religion and art are interwoven that they cannot do without art symbols for better understanding of the learner.

Creativity and Critical Thinking for National Development

For a nation to develop, its citizens must be empowered. Art education empowers individuals with creative skills for gainful employment. Creativity and critical thinking are indispensable qualities, individuals must possess for the society to advance, and these tools are acquired through Art Education. Art education develops the talent of individuals, thus equipping them to develop themselves and as well contribute meaningfully to the development of the nation. By encouraging creativity and critical thinking. Art Education helps in the production of both learned academics and graduates with marketable skills to be self-reliant, set up their own businesses and employ others anyway.

Art education is more technical and could be the process by which the society transmits deliberately its accumulated knowledge, skills, customs and values from one generation to another. The national policy on education acknowledges that education is the instrument of positive change and development in Nigeria. The current wave of cultural globalization ravaging the world demands a change in the education system from the rather passive to one that is more proactive.

Functional education highlights the all-encompassing development of basic skills and the effective use of these skills in individual development and societal improvement. The core of functional education should be the developing of individuals who will carry out the various socio-economic tasks aimed at reducing poverty and improving the quality of life.

Above all, through art education a child at early childhood care develops different listening skill with what he/she sees, hears, perceives and feels with his/her

sensory organ. Skill development involves in all parts of domains-cognitive, affective and psychomotor.

Education, according to Advance English dictionary is a systematic training and instruction especially for the young in nursery/primary schools and colleges. Art been the first language of a child makes the child to be observant early enough. For instance at cradle, a child see without observing the object that was set for him. But looking at a tool or shapes or colourful objects, the child noticed the same object that was pores for him and grip it, taste it and after smell it. Then sound or noise from their environment helps them to depict when danger comes and response will follow immediately they senses it, they equally scribble or maintaining and mimic.

Thus Mgbodile (1999) posits that the first process in the causes of learning is listening skill. The competence and listening activity constitute throughout the individual's life "The purposes in life are achieved as the result of listening to instruction.

In all, a learner is supposed to develop the following skills during classroom communication.

- Social listening skill; result to listening with patience.
- Aesthetic listening skill; the knowledge of this skill helps the child to know what is good or bad for right judgment, appreciate another's efforts, dictact taste, music, song, poetry, storytelling and dance of his background or environment.
- Critical listening skill: the child also develops early enough the ability to ascertain reasons meaning, facts and pass judgment on the information they hear. Through listening skill.
- Creative listening is the application of figures, visual images and for other stimuli for production e.g. imaginative drawing and panting.
- Another is concentrative listening skill: This type of knowledge occurs when accuracy, responding and cooperativeness which is essential to instruction. Individual uses it to understand, direct and announce or communicate progress and innovations and apply it to solve life problems.

This is practical orientation in a classroom art activities at early childhood of children who need visual literacy as a new literacy: A way Forward.

Thus, all education must be relevant to our survival in our environment, the fulfillment of life needs and coping knowledge with skill for job that pays and improves ones environment and overall development, it must aim at promoting life, to create health and wealth at least. This means that there is a gap in the implementation of National Policy on Education (NPE) It neglects the art, but emphasizes science and technology, ignoring art.

Conclusion

Conclusion Way Forward: Through art awareness in Nigeria, a child at the early childhood care can develop his skill faster as his is being exposed to multimedia in visual art with the right and experienced art teacher beside him.

What the Government should do: Since children and adults need visual literacy to be able to cope with their challenges of life especially in this modern time, Art literacy should be encouraged to actively involve the children through expository, multimedia and art activities so that implication, funding and appointment of a professional artist or art teacher as the education minister or administrator who will ensure the correct placement of art teachers. Here in Imo State most trained art teachers are not posted to unity schools by the state government and this is affecting the youth more because there are no much continuity in art.

Finally, in Nigeria therefore, the child education should be designed to actively involve the child sole root of future development. This in effect calls for new educational portray that can make them useful to their society when they grow up. So, education should be functional for qualitative life.

Recommendations

- Research has shown that child education at all levels should be encouraged so as to develop or inculcate that spirit of skill and creativity early enough.
- The author therefore recommends that the nursery and primary school system should be better equipped for in all round development of the child as art included in the curriculum.
- Government should encourage people to specialize in fine and applied arts or related courses since it will go a long way in solving unemployment. Saga facing the nation.
- Art teachers should be posted to various schools no matter the level and the government should pay them.
- School environments should be well secured for good learning atmosphere.

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