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Modelling Skills in Cultural And Creative Arts For Teachers Effectiveness in Upper Basic Education in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the skills required by creative arts teachers in the Upper Basic Education (JS1-3) for clay modelling and pottery production in Cultural and Creative Arts (CCA). Two research questions were formulated to guide the study. A 27-item questionnaire structured on a four point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree (SA=4) to Strongly Disagree (SD=1) are administered to 110 teachers. The analysis was done using mean and standard deviation. Mean above 2.50 were accepted while below it were rejected. The results of the study show that 25 out of 26 skills listed are required by Creative Art teachers for effective teaching of clay modelling in CCA.

KEYWORDS : teacher, clay, modelling, cultural and creative arts.

Introduction

Creative Arts, otherwise known as Cultural and Creative Arts (CCA) is a combination of visual arts, music, drama and dance. These subjects were merged as a result of the introduction Universal Basic Education (UBE) (NERDC, 2006). CCA was made compulsory in the 9-year basic education programme which includes Lower Basic (Primary 1-3); Middle Basic (Primary 4-6) and Upper Basic (JS 1-3). The curriculum is mainly practically oriented.

New curricula/syllabuses have been designed to achieve the goals of UBE. However, it is one thing for teachers to be conversant with the teaching and learning materials including lesson notes preparation, it is quite another task to convey content successfully. When the teacher successfully gets the information across to the learner in a clear, unambiguous and well paced manner, learning is often successful. For successful learning to take place, the teacher must convey his/her thoughts effectively. When not successful, the knowledge and ideas the teacher gives is wrong and incorrect, causing confusion and a breakdown in communication thus creating roadblocks in the way of students gaining mastery of content knowledge.

The current reforms in Nigeria education system emphasise the learning of skills in schools, colleges and universities so as to prepare individuals to be functional in society. These reforms include the seven point agenda, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the noble ideas of National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategies (NEEDS) which emphasize on quality education, wealth creation and employment (FGN, 2006). Such curriculum should be planned to include the resources, learning experiences, teachers, and learners. The material resources include clay in CCA which enhances skills for both manipulation of the teachers and students. In the light of this, Hull (1991) in Mojekwu (2010) wrote that skills are established habits of doing things by people.

Clay Modelling and Pottery Production

Clay is one of the national resources and abundant substances found all over Nigeria and indeed Africa. Clay deposits are mostly located around river-rine, and swampy areas and valleys.

There are two types of clay-primary and secondary clays. The primary clay is also known as kaolin and located at the site of formation in the ground. The other is secondary clay which is formed as a result of weathering of rock, minerals and vegetable remains as they settle down in a place. This type of clay which mix with different mineral and vegetables produce different colours of clay. Consequently, modelled clay wares form different colours.

The modelling methods are interesting in both the traditional and machine methods. The traditional method uses the physical hand to build objects from clay while machine method uses machines called potters wheel to build various sizes of clay wares. Tools such as calabash rind bean pods and well curved spatulas are used to put the clay in different shapes that create utility. These tools are used for decoration on the clay ware which includes applying relief of interesting designs, incision of patterns and stamping of patterns on the body of the clay before it dries up. Some designs are also introduced when drying. Drying of clay wares are done by open air firing with wood and kiln. This process bakes the clay wares into biscuit stage and from there to stone ware or porcelain, making it ready for use. Clay wares in the traditional forms have air pores called porosity in wares which make the contents like water to be cool. This is achieved by adding grogs to clay before modelling and firing.

Clay modelling plays aesthetic and decorative functions. The aesthetic vessels are used in decoration of homes and offices. The utility vessels are used for household utensils e.g. plates, cups, frames, vases, wall hangings and clay sculptures. The clay containers depending on the size serve as cooking pots and water storage containers (refrigerators). The refrigerators are used in the areas where electricity is not available as is the case with most homes especially in the villages in Nigeria. Some clay containers serve as warmers for preserving food. Many Africans like to eat hot meals.

Children can easily identify clay and clay products in their homes and schools rendering useful functions such as flower vases and sculptural objects (Agonsi, 2004). Other uses of processed and fired clay wares include wall and floor tiles, wash hand basins and other household utensils. The knowledge of clay modelling skills and its uses are advantageous to any child who wants to develop modelling skills and promote the aesthetic condition of their environment.

Consequent upon this, the curriculum planners have derived activities from clay modelling as they relate to cultural, aesthetic and commercial purposes in terms of contents and learning activities for the achievement of the goals of CCA because they are derived from tradition and culture of the people (FME, 2007).

Teachers Effectiveness

It is a known fact that no educational system can rise above the quality of its teachers (FRN, 2004). Therefore the successful implementation of the UBE depends on the availability of teachers of right quality and quantity. The defunct UPE was launched without adequate number of teachers to implement it and this affected adversely. There is no doubt that the planners of UBE took into consideration by recognising in the UBE implementation guidelines, the place of training, professional development and motivation of teachers in the UBE scheme (FME, 2000). This explains the federal government efforts at addressing the shortfall in teacher supply to basic education institution (National Teachers Institute, 2009).

A teacher is a person who imparts knowledge, skills and attitudes to students in a subject in an institution (Mojekwu, 2010). Skill is something important that has to be acquired to perform correctly in an occupation. According to Obanewa (1994), it is the necessary and recommended training in teacher preparatory programmes. A teacher of CCA should be one who is trained in the College of Education or University in order to acquire relevant skills. Tight (1996) indicates that there is a kind of skill that can only be gotten by students if the teacher possesses some level of skills. CCA teachers are expected to possess certain requisite skills that will enable them to teach effectively. The absence of these may leads to non implementation of CCA curriculum. It has however been observed that there are many teachers who do not possess clay modelling skills and therefore cannot teach them. Since the curriculum for 9-years basic education emphasises manipulative skills for job creation (NERDC, 2006), it is necessary to find out whether teachers know the skills they should possess for teaching and learning of clay modelling.

Research Question

1. What are the clay processing skills required by teachers of Creative Arts for effective teaching of clay modelling-stage one.
2. What are the pottery production skills required by teachers of Creative Arts for effective teaching of clay modelling-stage two

Research Method

The study adopts the descriptive survey design. This involves 110 teachers randomly sampled from 10 secondary schools in Nsukka Local Government Area. The idea is to create the awareness in the study of CCA, the skills which teachers should acquire for effective teaching of modelling at the Upper Basic Education JS 1-3. The instrument has 26 items structured on a 4 point likert type of scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). The validity of the instrument was ensured by presenting it for the scrutiny of two experts each from Creative Arts and Curriculum. Their suggestions were used in modifying the items of the instrument. The reliability was determined using test-retest technique. The scores were correlated and measures of internal consistency sought using Cronbach Alpha which yielded a coefficient of 0.76. In analysing the data, the researchers used mean scores. A mean score of 2.50 was used as cut off and any item with a mean below the value above was rejected.

Results

Table 1: Mean rating of teachers on clay processing skills required for effective teaching of modelling-stage 1

S/N	Item Statements	N	X	SD	Decision
1.	Identify clay at rocky area	110	3.56	.95	Agree
2.	Test for sticky texture in clay	110	3.60	.94	Agree
3.	Dump in a dry and airy shade	110	2.34	.97	Disagree
4	Prevent contact with dangerous object	110	3.70	.84	Agree
5.	Crutch the lumps of clay	110	3.90	.60	Agree
6.	Sieve the grinded dry clay	110	3.36	.98	Agree
7.	Test for texture of clay	110	3.34	.97	Agree
8.	Sort out impurities/ stones from clay	110	2.15	.91	Disagree
9.	Soak clay in the bucket of water	110	3.18	.84	Agree
10	Pour clay into POP to loose excess water	110	3.18	.84	Agree
11	Store clay in cellophane to edge	110	3.12	.98	Agree

Table 1, shows that item 1,7,4,5,6,7,9,10 and 11 with mean scores of 3.56, 3.60, 3.70, 3.90, 3.36, 3.18, 2.56, and 3.12 which were above 2.50 were skills in clay processing stage. While items 3 and 8 with mean scores of 2.34 and 2.15 were not of high extent skills in clay processing stage-1. The items indicated standard deviation (SD) ranging from .60 to 1.06 of teachers responses which show close agreement of ratings on the items.

Table: Mean rating of teachers on pottery production skills required for effective teaching of modelling stage 11.

S/N	Item Statement	N	X	SD	Decision
12.	Make balls of clay	110	2.61	1.06	Agree
13.	Make a hollow in clay	110	3.31	.94	Agree
14	Use balls and rolls to build shapes	110	3.73	.54	Agree
15	Texturize the green ware	110	3.32	.54	Agree
16.	Get a mould of cement etc	110	3.48	.71	Agree
17	Beat the clay over the mould	110	3.92	.88	Agree
18	Make shapes with spiral forms of clay	110	3.94	.83	Agree
19	Use thumb to blend the coiled up layers	110	3.60	.94	Agree
20	Flatten the lumps of clay	110	2.80	1.04	Agree
21	Prepare clay slip for binding clay slabs	110	3.61	.91	Agree
22	Join the slab ends together with slip	110	3.42	.93	Agree
23	Allow the green ware to dry	110	3.98	.53	Agree
24	Fire the green ware to bisque stage	110	3.50	.98	Agree
25	Apply oxides for decoration	110	3.68	.97	Agree
26	Fire the bisque ware to gloss for usage	110	3.78	.89	Agree

Table 2, shows that the teachers' response on item 1 to 16 reveal that all the items are above 2.50 within the limits of acceptance showing that the items are required by teachers in pottery production. The items indicate Standard Deviation (SD) ranging from 1.08 to .53 of teachers responses which show close agreement of ratings on the items.

Discussion

The procedure adopted in the discussion of the result is based on the research questions of the study and were presented as follows: Based on the clay processing skills and pottery production skills which teachers require for effective teaching of CCA, the research question 1 and 2 and tables 1and 2 confirm that the CCA teachers' need of them are as follows: Identify clay at rock area, test for sticky texture, prevent contact from dangerous objects, crutch the lumps of clay, test for the texture of clay, sort out impunities from clay, soak clay in the bucket of water, pour clay into Plaster of Paris (POP) to lose excess water, store clay in cellophane to edge.

Other skills required by art teachers are: make balls of clay, make a hollow in clay, use balls and rolls to build shapes, texturize the green ware, make a mould of cement, beat the clay over the mould, make coils of clay, make shapes with spiral forms of clay, use thumb to blend the coils, flatten the lumps of clay, prepare clay slips for binding clay slabs, join the slab ends with clay slip, allow the green ware to dry, fire the green ware to bisque stage, apply oxides for decoration and fire the bisque ware to gloss of usage.

On clay processing, most teachers adhere to the skills while a few do not. The clay processing stage 1 in modelling is very important because if a teacher does not master the skills, there will be nothing to impart to the learners.

In the light of the above, it is the teacher who uses the skills for effective teaching of the concepts to learners. Teachers required some training in their relevant areas of specialisation so as to be able to impart skills and knowledge to learners. As medical doctors acquire skills for medical treatment of aliments so CCA teachers should possess some requisite skills for teaching.

Skills in clay production and pottery making are meant to be im-

parted to learners' entrepreneurial skills as emphasis in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGS). This is one of the ways to eradicate extreme poverty. This is exemplified in the traditional and modern methods of pottery taught in Abuja pottery centre. This is an outstanding product of late Ladi Kwali whose remarkable skills in traditional pottery has been exhibited in countries like Britain, United States, Italy etc (National Teachers' Institute 2000)

Conclusion

The education sector has many challenges because of the emphasis on technological development through sound educational programmes. The current education system has programmes such as cultural and creative arts (visual and music, dance and drama) as modified from the separated subjects in the past. Universal Basic Education, (UBE) and Education for All (EFA) have some of their cardinal points, quality wealth creation, and empowerment, qualitative and functional education. The Nigerian government is yet to fully find solutions to these challenges. The emergence of new curricula poses new challenges for teachers. These challenges can be overcome through training and re-training of teachers. Universal basic education is a well articulated programme of education which favours CCA in terms of contents and learning activities. At this level, modelling is very relevant as a theme for learning. Through teaching of clay modelling and pottery production, students will be better equipped to face life challenges.

The new teachers of the 21st century are operating in a situation where skills acquisition is consistent with all the reform agenda of Nigeria. In the light of this, they should be exposed to more rigorous training to enable them become more relevant in the school system.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made based on the finding of this study.

- Teachers should be exposed through in-service training organised by the Ministry of Education to include themes like modelling in CCA in order to be conversant with skills relevant to such themes.
- CCA teachers should prepare their lessons well with sound knowledge and skills to be imparted to students. This will help to eliminate haphazardness associated with unplanned lessons which will hinder acquisition of skills by students.
- School authorities should provide resource materials such as clay for practicals
- Educational institutions at the higher level should make courses like CCA compulsory for teachers of UBE.

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