Teaching and Learning in the Humanities and Social Sciences: Perspectives of Competence

Teaching and Learning in the Humanities and Social Sciences: Perspectives of Competence

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Foreword

I feel privileged to be requested to write the foreword to this book entitled: *Teaching and Learning in the Humanities and Social Sciences: Perspectives of Competence,* a publication put together by the School of Arts and Social Sciences, Adeyemi Federal University of Education, Ondo, Nigeria. The contributors to this book are seasoned scholars in their various fields with solid academic standing. Each of them has unveiled the most salient points in the emerging issues in multidimensional pedagogical perspective.

The three-module book, has been broken down into units, which no doubt provides a clear discussion of each of the topics. Of great interest are the first five units of the first module which engaged critical areas of teaching profession. The second module centres on lesson planning and methodology of teaching courses in Arts and Social sciences. Module three focuses on instructional materials for teaching and learning. This ranges from improvisation to utilisation of materials that could be gainfully used in the teaching of courses in Economics, Theatre Arts, History, Geography and Political science in Nigeria school system.

I wish to commend and congratulate the Dean and her team for coming up with this noble idea and nurturing it to fruition. The quality, readability and language used to convey ideas in this book will appeal to students, educational practitioners and general readers.

I therefore, strongly recommend the book as a special and general text for students at all levels as well as practising teachers in tertiary educational institutions.

Professor Olufemi A. Ojebiyi Faculty of Education University of The Gambia The Gambia.

V

Contents

Foreword		ν
List of Co	ntributors	ix
MODUI	E 1: ETHICS OF TEACHING PROFESSION AND TEACHERS' COMPETENCE	
Unit 1:	Teaching Profession in Nigeria and its Professional Codes of Ethics	3
Unit 2:	A Critical Analysis of the Ethics of Teaching Profession	18
Unit 3:	Professional Codes of Ethics in Teaching	36
Unit 4:	Music Teachers' Professional Competence and Compliance with Ethical Codes	48
Unit 5:	Teachers Competence in Research Writing: A Systematic Approach	65
MODUL	E 2: LESSON PLANNING AND METHODOLOGY OF TEACHING	
Unit 1:	Principles and Methods of Preparation of Lesson Plan in Religious Studies	85
Unit 2:	Pedagogy and Teachers' Competence in the Effective Teaching of Geography in Nigerian Schools	96
Unit 3:	Effective Music and Theatre Teaching in Africa's 21st Century: The Vidal Approach	110
Unit 4:	Teaching Music Composition in Nigerian Tertiary Music Education	124
Unit 5:	Indigenous Method of Teaching in African Societies	149

— vii

MODULE 3: UTILIZATION OF INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

Improvisation of Instructional Materials for Teaching and Learning of Economics in Nigerian Senior Secondary Schools	167
Utilization of Instructional Materials in Teaching and Learning Theatre Arts in Nigerian Tertiary Institution: Prospects and Challenges	189
Utilization of Instructional Materials for History Teaching and Learning in Nigerian Schools: Prospects and Challenges	202
Utilization of Instructional Materials in Teaching and Learning of Geography in Secondary Schools	220
Selection, Utilization and Educational Values of Instructional Materials for Teaching and Learning Political Science in Nigerian Schools	231
	251
	Teaching and Learning of Economics in Nigerian Senior Secondary Schools Utilization of Instructional Materials in Teaching and Learning Theatre Arts in Nigerian Tertiary Institution: Prospects and Challenges Utilization of Instructional Materials for History Teaching and Learning in Nigerian Schools: Prospects and Challenges Utilization of Instructional Materials in Teaching and Learning of Geography in Secondary Schools Selection, Utilization and Educational Values of

viii —

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ix

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xi

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UNIT 2

Utilization of Instructional Materials in Teaching and Learning Theatre Arts in Nigerian Tertiary Institution: Prospects and Challenges

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Introduction

The term instructional material has been misunderstood by most young student-teachers and learners to be those materials which could be used to "show" or illustrate to learners' aspects of a topic in a subject. They see it as a material which must be shown or "flashed" to learners during a learning process without which learning cannot be effective. To some extent, this assumption can be myopic in nature because it does not fully capture the essence of what instructional materials are in a learning process. Suffice it to say that, instructional materials are any item or element which a tutor uses to deliver the best teaching experience, Nze, (2008) and Agun (2009) defines instructional materials as the material helpful to the teacher and students alike, and they maximize learning in various areas of education endeavor. Uzuegbu, Mbadiwe, and Anulobi (2013) succinctly describes instructional materials as any device used to assist the instructor in the preparation of a lesson, the teaching of that lesson and also facilitate students' learning of that subject topic and these include locally improvised materials or commercially purchased. This is that which invariably helps the teacher make concrete whatever may look abstract to the learner Iwu, Ijeoma, Onoja and Nzewuihe (2011) believes. They can be human or non-human resources like lectures, readings, textbooks,

multimedia components, and other resources. Farombi (1998) in Tety (2016), opines that the availability, adequacy and relevance of instructional materials in classroom can greatly influence the quality of teaching, which can positively affect students learning academic performance. Oni (1992) on the other hand believes instructional materials or resources are teachers' strategic factor in organising and providing education. It must be noted, however, that the best instructional materials should facilitate academic freedom to both teachers and learners and should enable an inclusive learning environment.

The use of instructional materials could be equally effective in face-to-face learning and digital learning. These materials provide students with the fundamentals of the information which they must get in the course. Well planned and curated instructional materials can motivate learners and develop their interest in any subject. The creative use of instructional materials increases student engagement rate, and it give the instructor a direction to take the course further. It is a known fact that teachers at all levels of education utilize a variety of instructional materials such as textbooks, presentations and hand-outs to enhance the quality of their lessons. The quality of those materials directly impacts the quality of teaching. Knowing how to find the best instructional materials is a valuable skill for a teacher to have. The importance of instructional materials or educational resources is to improve students' knowledge, abilities, and skills, to monitor their assimilation of information and to contribute to their overall development and upbringing. Thus, it is advisable that teachers must carefully select, organize, refine, and use these materials for the optimum impact. The reason for this is because instructional materials synergize the holistic learning experience when the teacher allows students to choose the materials they want. It makes the students feel involved and also helps the teacher provide a personalized learning experience.

The objective of this study unit is to highlight the importance of utilising Instructional materials to the teaching and learning process of Theatre Arts in tertiary institutions. Apart from the economic

190

viability of both teachers and learners of Theatre Arts as a profession, it makes them independent as observed by Abdul (2014). Osofisan (2006), further posits that, theatre is the most viable of all the courses in the humanities, the most rounded of all available Arts disciplines, offering the most comprehensive and detailed training for students through the study of subjects like theatre literature, lighting and sound, costumes and make to mention a few. Hudgson (1972), in his estimation being interpreted by these researchers believes that theatre Arts serves as a crossroad where all arts meet. Adedina (2007), asserts that a well-trained theatre artist must have gone through all aspects of the theatre in terms of sociology, history, physics, fine arts, engineering etc.

As a professional teacher or student-teacher, it must be known that learners are unique individuals and there are important factors to be considered in constructing an effective instructional material. These factors among other things include; age, diverse user interests, learners' abilities, backgrounds, cultures, languages, and maturity levels. As infinitesimal as these factors look, if they are not adequately considered, a teacher can waste the entire teaching period without impacting the desired instructional objectives on learners. Other factors apart from the above that should be considered are the individual learner's needs and learning styles. Teachers should choose materials that present information in a variety of ways. What this equates to is that teachers should not be monotonous or static in the use of instructional materials. Professional teachers should be creative in their teaching approaches. Mixed media such as texts, video, images, real world examples, graphs, plastic and concrete arts etc. make information more interesting and address learners' different learning styles. It is the duty of a creative teacher to consider how students can best learn. Since learners are different in their learning approaches, some would only need to listen to instructions, while others may need to have more hands and experiences. An experienced teacher should be able to switch up approaches so as to cover all types of learners. As a result, a teacher should create solutions that, on the one hand, will meet the learning objectives

and, on the other hand, attract the learners' interest. For the proper development of educational activities and content, it is imperative for a professional teacher to take into account the unique characteristics of the learning audience that shall use their educational product.

It is also imperative to consider the learning audiences' preexisting knowledge as well as its needs. Apart from the pre-existing knowledge, a teacher should bear in mind the learner's generation, their cultural background, and possible learning difficulties they might face. All of the above considerations are part of the need analysis a teacher should conduct before designing instructional materials in a learning environment. Another basic factor that should be put in place before selecting instructional materials for learners is the ability of teachers to produce instructional materials that respects all individuals. The teacher needs to endure that the content of the instructional material is presented in a way that respects the particular characteristics of certain groups such as gender, religion or race. Choosing the right visuals is also essential as some depictions may offend some social groups. So it is good to select visual representations that are generally acceptable and do not affect groups of people. This is to say that learner's religion, political, ethnic or personal beliefs should not be violated by teachers. In as much as it is right to inculcate pedagogy, learner's rights must be safeguarded.

Apart from the aforementioned, a unique factor which should not be disregarded by anyone is that which tasks on the ingenuity of teachers. According to Kopper (2006), properly designed educational products such as instructional materials, should use different pedagogical approaches to achieve the establishment of knowledge and should not focus only on one method of presenting the content. As it is true with human beings, people differ in the way they perceive things and particularly knowledge. Therefore, it is vital that educational content should be presented in a multidimensional and learners' centred way and not be limited to just text. It is advisable that the text should be accompanied by

192

multimedia such as graphic illustrations, pictures, creative arts such as drawings, plastic arts, stage props, decorations, sounds or videos. As a result, the learner will be able to perceive the new knowledge more efficiently.

Utilization of Instructional Materials in Theatre Arts

The unique person of a Theatre Artist is fundamentally a social artist who uses his unique ability of impersonation of character to address the unpredictable human condition in a dynamic society. Though they are seen as a "player" on stage but at its best, they are seen as a "creative teacher" who inculcates educational objectives through their unique ingenuity. According to Umukoro (2001), a Performing Artist (Theatre Artist) in the academia:

... is an eclectic scholar whose creative and intellectual activities though rooted in the theatre arts department, transcends the broad canvas of the liberal arts into the wider spectrum of education as well as the physical and social sciences. Indeed, the discipline of Theatre Arts resides at that curricular crossroads where the humanities, education and the sciences are in perpetual interaction.

It must be noted that Theatre Artist is a unique educator. They are not just the performing artist as creator, but the intriguing relationship between their creative and pedagogy roles in formal education. Hence, they are equally qualified to inculcate educational values in learners. According to the Nigeria's National Policy of Education, (2014) the essence of education on any individual is as follows:

- 1. Respect for the worth and dignity of the individual.
- 2. Faith in man's ability to make rational decisions.
- 3. Moral and spiritual values in interpersonal and human relations.
- 4. Shared responsibility for the common good of society.
- 5. Respect for the dignity of labour and

6. Promotion of the emotional, physical and psychological health of all children.

Examples of instructional Materials in Theatre Arts Education

Instructional materials in theatre education refers to materials that aid and facilitate teaching learning in Theatre Arts. They include play text, textbooks, costumes, television, radio, dance videos, drama videos, drums, journal articles, stage light, projector and board, and other materials that are specifically designed to help theatre arts students to learn new information.

The following are examples of instructional materials used in Theatre arts Education. They are pictorially indicated in the figures below



Fig. 1(a)



Fig. 1(b)



Fig. 1(c)





Fig. 1(e)Fig. 1(f)Instructional materials commonly used in Theatre Arts Education

The importance of Instructional materials cannot be overemphasized because they are vital in education as they play a vital role in teaching and learning. They are necessary resources that aid teachers to plan and deliver effective instruction, and also aid students to learn easily. It is paramount to consider the specific learning goals and the needs of the learner when choosing instructional materials. When instructional materials are effectively utilized by teacher and students, it improves learning experience. Though, this depends on the teacher's ability to identify and select appropriate instructional materials that is relevant to the particular subject or course of study. However, the lack or inappropriate use of instructional materials is detrimental to students learning.

Instructional materials serve several purposes in the classroom. Below are some of the importance of instructional materials in teaching and learning:

- 1. When properly utilized, instructional materials provide a framework that makes the teaching process effective. They are specifically planned and thus help students stay on track and avoid getting overwhelmed or lost in the material.
- 2. Instructional materials help to make the content of the lesson more engaging. Good instructional materials will



include activities, illustrations, and other elements that capture students' attention and help them to better understand and retain the information presented.

- 3. Instructional resources level the playing field among learners. Students who have access to quality instructional resources often have an advantage over those who do not. This is because good instructional materials provide students with additional support that they might not otherwise receive.
- 4. Effective use of instructional materials promotes active learning rather than passive learning.

Benefits of Instructional Materials to Teacher and Students in Theatre Education

Instructional materials are very much important to both teaching and learning process in the Arts and Theatre Education. This, apart from helping the teacher achieve set goals, it is what make learning concrete in the minds of the student. It helps them relate physically with what the teacher is teaching.

These materials used in the learning process in the theatre, are majorly in the form of plays which are written to pass certain messages and information or to educate. They can be improvised from among the student or standardized. That is, they are already written by a playwright. Gene and Acquah (2021) observed that, when standardised instructional materials are not readily available, the improvised becomes an option.

To the learning and teaching process in the theatre, instructional materials are very germane to its educational process. This is because:

1. There is the concretisation of lessons taught, students will grasp and understand what they are taught with some form of visual aid. The pictures and images formed in the mind of the student can never be forgotten.

- 2. The students are engaged in the learning process. This aids their concentration and understanding of the lesson or of whatever the teacher wishes the students learn.
- 3. In the learning process, distraction and its form are cleverly eliminated. This is because, the instructional materials will help engage the student and until there is an issue that needs the attention of the teacher, the students or learners will be engrossed.
- 4. The retentive memory of the learner is quickened via this practical use of an instructional material. Whatever a student does with his/her with any assistance, he/she is quick to remember and there is always a form of satisfaction and joy in the heart of such learner.
- 5. Instructional materials always make the class interactive. Students easily express their ideas on the subject of discussion and their knowledge of the topic is easily assessed and built upon. It also enables the students interact with one another and organise themselves when grouped. For example, during class play production, the students choose from among themselves who to direct and lead and allocate roles to other students with the less supervision of the teacher.
- 6. Instructions materials give control of the teaching and learning process to the teacher. Through, the activity, learner centred, the control rest squarely in the hands of the teacher who is able to measure and assess the learners' level of assimilation and understanding. With that at the back of our mind, the teacher is therefore, able to help any student or learner that needs help before proceeding to what is next.
- 7. The use of instructional materials help learners learn fast. It encourages quick and fast learning. Due to the practical nature of the instructional material, learners learn fast whatever they are able to solve.



Utilization of instructional materials can pose a big challenge, depending on the type and nature. Especially when you have untrained teachers, there would certainly be a problem of proper utilization (Chong, 2016). As Chong observes, it is not limited to one particular field of study but it cuts across all areas of study. Another challenge that can hinder the utilization of instructional materials is the lack of adequate power (electricity) supply. Nigeria, bedeviled by this great albatross has in many ways hindered the utilization of instructional materials. Curriculum review can also pose a challenge in the use of instructional materials. A sudden change in curriculum can destabilize a teacher who has prepared his teaching notes, methods and the proper use of a particular instructional material and this usually happens when the instructional material cannot be locally improvised. Government funding of Arts related subjects in schools has in its own way affected the utilization of these varied instructional materials due to the cost of acquiring them and the lack of requisite environment to use such delicate and expensive equipment. Government focus now favors more to the leaving the arts which happens to be the mother of all subject while the sciences attract more attention and funding both from the government and corporate private sector who sponsor science programs. A good example is Promasidor producers of "cowbell milk" who sponsor Mathematics and science related competitions.

The improper implementation of educational policy can also affect the utilization of these various instructional materials. This is when qualified and well-trained educational administrator are not allowed to do their jobs, favouritism and tribal sentiments are criteria for appointing policy deliberator, curriculum developers and administrators will push down the abyss destruction and decay which was brought as a result of maladministration. The quality of studentteachers graduating from our institutions need to be reconsidered. The quality of these students needs to be re-evaluated to ensure high standard. This is occasioned by the simple fact that many of these students are tired of sitting at home due to their inability to

198

gain admission to their desired courses of interest. Therefore, rather than see the college and the present course being offered as a stepping stone, they otherwise see it as a place to while away time. Finally, parents' attitude towards the subject of Theatre Arts is biased. The society frowns greatly at theatre practitioners and students alike seeing them as never-do-well. This is because of the fake lives and the numerous scandals in which actors and actresses who are the frontline ambassadors of the profession are constantly enmeshed in, this has made or painted a negative image in the heart of the public who see these people perform on their multimedia devices at home and in cinemas. The collaboration between the academic community and the public, that is, the 'Town and Gown Collaboration' is gradually paying off and this has helped in shaping the lives of learners who as they come in contact with their actor heroes are able to learn first-hand from them.

Conclusion

To a trained Theatre Arts graduate, the world is his to explore and conquer, due to the various tutelage he has gone through in the course of their studentship. Recalling to mind the words of Femi Osofisan and Adedina Femi both describing Theatre Arts as the cross road of other subjects or courses and it being the most viable of all the liberal arts courses. It is evident that the utilisation of instructional materials is crucial and central to the success of the teaching and learning process. Therefore, instructional materials must be authentic, support and reinforce academic standards. Also, the utilisation of instructional materials has a great influence on students' performance Chong (2016). Anima and Udeh (2021) suggests that using instructional materials enables effective and eventful teaching and learning experience, further advocating for a tripartite agreement between government, organised private sector and parents to ensure the availability of these instructional materials. While government on the other hand should increase funding, they should equally monitor to ensure the proper use and maintenance of them.

They should retrain the trainers via refresher courses, workshops, conferences, seminars. This will expose the trainers (teachers) to the latest of the instructional materials available.

Recommendations

- 1. There should be an increase in government funding for the arts in school of higher learning. The organised private sector should not be left out. This will lead to a synergy between the government, the organised private sector and the parents.
- 2. The training of teachers and their retraining is highly important to the appropriate use of instructional materials that are modern and of high intrinsic value to the teaching and learning environment.
- 3. Curriculum developers and reviewers should work with various classroom tutors so as to harness and discuss the best instructional materials to be used when developing or reviewing curriculum, instructional materials can also be reviewed to meet global best practices as well as that which is best suitable for the environment. They are to note the adaptability of these materials.

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