

THE USE OF AUDIO PLAYER AND DRAMATIC METHODS IN TEACHING: THE WORD OF FAITH EXPERIENCE.

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Abstract:

The neglect of progressive and student friendly method of classroom teaching is the problem of this paper which highlights the significance of Audio player and dramatic methods as teaching tools. The work is predicated on Gardner's multi intelligence theory which acknowledges the relationship between the styles used to learn and intelligence. Recorded audio programme from Dream FM, Enugu "The Patriot" was played to the students who transcribed the audio to text; the students interchanged their scripts with one another to crosscheck transcription error(s). Self-reading, choral reading, and echo reading techniques were employed by the researcher after the recorded story was replayed. Some dramatic methods such as role play, mantle of the expert and reflection were employed during the story dramatization/acting out by the class. The research used participatory approaches both in the decision making and on matters affecting the students (learning period). This culminated in full achievement of the objectives since the students were fully involved in the whole process of learning. It is recommended that teachers should take into consideration the multifarious composition of the students while designing or selecting instructional materials, making sure that the teaching styles are student friendly and participant oriented.

KEYWORDS: Audio Player, Dramatic Methods, Transcription.

Introduction

Teaching is communication since it involves the sharing or exchange of ideas, knowledge and information from the teacher to the learner. The Encarta Encyclopedia (www.microsoft.com) defines teaching as the "systematic presentation of facts, ideas, skills and techniques to students". Teaching method according to Nkpa is "a way of doing the teaching business, the procedures, orderliness in planning and execution of teaching proper with the appropriate integration of instructional materials to achieve the objectives at the classroom level" (105). This is corroborated by Enem, who avers that teaching method "is the overall procedure used to teach a particular lesson" (22). The relationship between teaching and learning lies in the fact that teaching is the vehicle through which learning takes place. That is, teaching helps in the transmission of knowledge from the teacher to the learner. Okpara, observes that "the psychological, emotional, physical, spiritual, cultural and social development of an individual from a particular state to a higher one depends on the internalization of such information, the degree of absorbance" (22). The process and procedure for the transmission of the knowledge from the teacher to the students must be one that should involve the students and make him an active participant. That is to say, it must be participant oriented as to draw his attention and remove boredom. This is the student-centered method of teaching and it enhances the student's ability to learn since according to Ekere, he is "both an active participant and controller of the teaching – learning process" (23).

However, the other type of teaching which majority of the teachers like to use is called the teacher-centered method which Ekere further insists “undermines the capacity and capabilities of the learner” (22). This method, apart from making real learning difficult, discourages initiative and curiosity on the part of students, and invariably hinders the achievement of the educational goals of the students. Furthermore, it encourages rote learning and memorization of facts; hinders the development of creativity, problem solving skills and critical thinking in learners and does not encourage the development of civic and entrepreneurial behaviour. Ekere further observes that the method does not allow the teacher to use teaching aids “thereby making teaching appeal to only one or two of the students senses of listening and probably gestures, thus making remembrance difficult for the average students” (32). Enem highlights the advantages inherent in the student/ learner centered method of teaching to include: making learning real, helping to develop cooperative work attitude and encouraging the development of good morals; encouraging creativity, freedom of expression and initiative through project execution and stimulating in the child the spirit of healthy competition and reactivity. The Audio player is an important tool to enhance learning experience of students. It appeals to the auditory sense of its listeners and conveys auditory codes/signal while in the classroom. It also enables the teacher to make his teaching accessible to a wider range of students. Nwankwo describes audio players as “instructional techniques employing materials and procedures not dependent solely on the printed word” (12). According to the Daekin Learning Futures Teaching Development Team, (Learningfutures@daekin.edu.au) the audio player is “an extremely valuable method for capturing and presenting information and allows the students to connect in various ways to the outside world”. They further assert that for a classroom teacher, “Audio provides a quick, cost-effective alternative to text for connecting with your students and providing up-to-date content, interviews, discussions or lecture materials. Concluding, they quoted Middleton (2013) who agreed that “audio has a demonstrated capacity to facilitate authentic engagement, allowing students to connect in various ways to the outside world as both listeners and publishers.

Theoretical Framework.

This work is predicated on Gardner's multi intelligence theory. Gardner observes that there is a relationship between the styles used to learn and intelligence. The theory shows multiple intelligence as different way of learning using innate ability, talent or skill. Before this theory, the major learning styles are auditory-ear, visual-eye, tactile/ kinesthetic- moving. However, Gardner in his postulations identified eight learning styles in a human being as visual/ spatial, verb/linguistic, logical/ mathematical, bodily/ kinesthetic, musical/rhythmic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, naturalist intelligence. According to Gardner, auditory learners learn best through listening to what others say, lectures, and discussion. They use tone of voice, pitch speed and other distinctions to interpret meaning. In class, such categories of learners are active note takers and listeners. Visual learners learn through watching the teacher's demonstrations, bodily language and facial expressions. They are more in love with colours, diagrams, charts and videos. Tactile/ kinesthetic which simply means learning through bodily movement and touch. In this category, learners learn through explorative and interactive activities. They are inclined to activities that involve them directly such as acting out, working with concepts and improvisations. They create songs, musical tones, charts and easily formulate acronyms around lessons to aid recall.

On the other hand, visual/ spatial intelligence learners possess artistic capabilities. They enjoy and excel in painting, sculpting. They like to draw, create images and pictures. Graphic description of events is their

strong point. However, verbal/ linguistic learners are smart in words, good in reading, speaking, storytelling, good vocabulary. They learn best through verbal representation and they communicate effectively and have the ability to manipulate words. Logical/ mathematical intelligence is endowed with the ability to understand numerical relationship and patterns and are active when presented with a problem. They use critical thinking and problem solving skills to attend to problems and tend to ask a lot of question, use abstract symbols, think in numbers and are more analytical in their processes. Bodily /kinesthetic learners use their body in a skilled way to learn and are highly coordinated. They are body smart and good at dancing, acting, athletics. These categories of learners like role play, dancing and choreography.

Musical/rhythmic intelligence learners enjoy music. They have a good sense of rhythm and melody. They like to sing, rap, listen, read, write and create music. They master musical instruments and vocal techniques faster than their peers. Interpersonal intelligence learners are good at making friends and learn by interacting with others and environment. They easily make and maintain friends. They understand and respect others, lead and organize others, resolve conflicts and like to work with others. On the other hand, intrapersonal learners understand self (strengths and weaknesses), his motivations and has the ability to regulate and control himself. They are good at self-reflecting. In contrast to the above, naturalist intelligence are aware of the natural surroundings and are good at classifying and sorting. They are endowed with observational skills and are inclined to the care of animals and pets.

From what Gardner has postulated, it can be deduced that each person possesses ability in all eight intelligences in certain degree which is exclusive to the individual possessing it; if given appropriate encouragement, enabling environment and instruction, everyone has the capacity to develop all eight intelligences to a reasonably level and that there are many ways to be intelligent within and out of each category. It is evident that Gardner's Multiple Intelligence theory is a cognitive theory which is concerned with the way knowledge is acquired by the use of reasoning, intuition, or perception and which categorizes learning processes into different intelligence cadres. Cognitive psychology when applied to education from instructional approaches help learners to reflect upon their learning processes. From the above theory, it is obvious that levels of intelligence overlap each other as learning involves the above intelligences in varying proportions in learners. Consequently, there is need for classroom teachers to take into consideration, the multi nature composition of the class and strive to accommodate all the intelligences during their teaching and through the use of appropriate teaching methods. To achieve this, the method adopted by the teacher must be flexible, dynamic and accommodating as to reach out to emerging trends in teaching methods. To effectively use methods that will incorporate all the intelligences, Armstrong advices teachers to draw on their colleague's expertise, “regard your colleagues as important sources of assessment information about students' multiple intelligences” (41) and meet with them periodically to compare notes, entrust responsibilities on the students to express their ideas and most importantly to be creative and make up your own story, song, or play for teaching the idea of multiple intelligences” (52) and use of available technology like tape recordings of music, picture oriented video tapes, calculators.

Teaching methods which are participant oriented help the learner to build self-confidence; motivate them to recognize, respect the feelings and uniqueness of others in the class. By varying the teaching methods, it creates the opportunity for the students with unique and similar intelligence to work together. This results to self-fulfillment and realization of the student's goal. The above theory exposed the need to properly take care of the child's interest into consideration when planning his curriculum. Most importantly, it stressed the need to involve the student in doing, inculcating practical exercises to make the child an active participant in the teaching learning experience. Hence, this work, bearing in mind the multifarious composition of the students, designed instructional materials that are student friendly and participant oriented.

The Experiment:

Patriotism: Love for my Fatherland. (The biography of Lt. Col. Abu Ali transcribed from audio recording of Dream FM programme, "The Patriot")

Lt Col. Mohammed Abu Ali was a member of the 50th Regular Course. He joined the Nigerian Defence Academy in 1998 and was commissioned in September, 2003. Being described by his colleagues as a gallant soldier, he participated in many operations in the North East, including the liberation of Mubi and many other towns in the hands of Boko Haram. Abu Ali enjoyed accelerated promotion from the rank of Major to Colonel and was decorated by the Chief of Army Staff in September, 2015. He went through many courses to sharpen him and took part in the United Nations Peace Keeping in Liberia, Dafur, Sudan, and other International Peace Keeping Operations. Lt. Col. Abu Ali was not one who shies away from battle. Under very difficult circumstances, he and his men have successfully recovered scores of towns from the Boko Haram insurgencies. Abu Ali was often described as an epitome of excellence and an unyielding force to enemies of Nigeria's nationhood because he gave his all to the service of his fatherland. Through fearless and dogged determination, Abu Ali and his battalion defended the territorial integrity of our father land, to liberate Nigeria from the scourge of terrorism and insurgency of Boko Haram. They were brave, precise, professional and inspiring. He led the battle to recapture towns and villages such as Baga, Barma, Gwuzo, Yale, Duro, Abaga, Mallam Fatori. In these battles, they rescued women and children, fathers and mothers, young and old and restored peace and hope to Nigerian citizen.

Lt. Col. Abu Ali and six others namely: Mauzu Ibrahim, HussanJaffau, Basseyy Okon, Chukwu Simon, Simon Patrick Paul, SalihuLawal who fell in combat from an ambush were decorated by the Nigerian Chief of Army Staff. Abu Ali was promoted to his next rank and decorated as a Lt. Col. in September, 2015 for his gallantry. The others were equally promoted to their next rank. According to military statement, the attack took place by 10am. The troop fought gallantly, repelled the attack, killed 14 insurgents and retrieved a lot of arms and ammunitions. However, six soldiers were killed including Ali, Commanding Officer, and 272 Tank Battalion. At a funeral service, encomiums were showered on Lt. Col. Ali and his men. President Buhari, the Senate President and the Chief of Army Staff, Lt. Gen. Buratai, all showered encomiums on the fallen officers who were killed at the battle of Fatori. Abu played a major role in the areas once controlled by Boko Haram especially Munguno and Barga in Northern Bornu State. According to account, Abu Ali was a skilled handler of the Russian T72 Man Battle Tank.

Ali began his brave conquest in Yola, Adamawa State from where he was moved to Bornu. His battalion recovered towns from the no go areas of Boko Haram. He was reputed for telling his men to load him up with 95% of the engagement. He was a dutiful officer and will be missed by millions of Nigerians who have come to the realization of the challenges of Boko Haram insurgencies. Lt. Col. Abu Ali has been described as an

irreplaceable asset, a source of towering inspiration and a rallying point for a united reassessment of support required by men and officers for the fight against Boko Haram. In recognition of his gallantry, the House of Representatives called on the Federal Government to give Abu Ali an accelerated promotion to the rank of Brigadier General. Abu Ali lay down his life in order that his country knows peace. According to media reports, Lt. Col Ali was preparing for his Sambisa operation before he was shot and killed by Boko Haram on Friday, November, 4th 2015 in Mallam Fatori.

Instructional Steps

The story of Lt. Col. Abu Ali was recorded by the researcher from Dream FM Enugu programme “The Patriot”. The audio was played to the students using a CD player with external speakers. The CD was duplicated into five copies. The researcher divided the class into 5 groups for the transcription of the recorded audio into text. With the help of the pause mode in the audio player, it was able to stop from time to time to enable each group to catch up with the transcription. After the initial transcription phase, the students interchanged their scripts with one another. The researcher then replayed the story for the class while they now followed from the transcribed script. This is to crosscheck transcription error(s).

Having ascertained that the audio and the script is the same and correct, the researcher rearranged the sitting position of the class to a semicircular position. An improvised platform was made using student's desk. The researcher first allowed few minutes of “self” reading by the class. Here, the students were allowed to use any style of reading. Though the class was a little rowdy, it was fun for the students. The students were called to order by the researcher, who first used choral reading method to read the passage. Choral reading as used here means that the whole class was reading aloud together at the same time. The essence was to provide support for students who were nervous and may feel ashamed of reading aloud in class as well as to give them shield initially as to help them to regain their confidence. After this, the researcher then used echo reading where the class read after the researcher, following his tone, pitch, expression and pacing.

Five voluntary readers were selected. The researcher divided the story and the class into five groups of six students each for the readers to read “in-chain”. Time was allowed for the reenactment. After the first round of reading and reenactment, three best readers/groups were selected, using the simple elimination method. The story is now merged into three parts. The class was again rearranged into three groups. The groups took another turn, reading interpretatively. The situation to be reenacted becomes a little longer. The reader doubled as a narrator. Each group reserved the right to change their reader. Again through the simple elimination method the best reader and group was selected. The story was merged into one as the winner group read the whole story to the class. The class was now fused together, but the winning group formed the core of the reenactment team while the whole class formed the chorus and the audience. The whole class was involved.

This session was followed by the discussion, reflection and evaluation on the life of Lt. Col. Abu Ali. First was the general discussion of the enactment. The situation here was likened to the postmortem period after a drama production. Here, the interpretative readings, explorations and enactments were diagnosed and constructively criticized.

This was followed by the hot seating technique. Hot seating is like a press conference where a guest answers questions from journalists. The concept became clearer when the researcher mentioned “Who wants to be a Millionaire?”. The researcher explained the motive to the students and asked for volunteers to sit on the hot seat. Many of the students signified interest to joyfully sit. The researcher after taking the counts divided them into groups. Each group selected who will be on the hot seat to answer questions from the other groups. The groups took their turns, asking pertinent questions and getting answer from the “experts” and some clarifications where necessary from the researcher. According to Wolf, Mary Hunter; Miller and Victor B., it is important to note that the “reading and re reading sessions are to make the students to understand what is behind the words, under the words, through the words and the emotions that made the word necessary”. (www.eric.ed.gov) According to them, learning was not necessarily accomplished through what someone said, but much was discovered by means of . . .listening to the tones of voice, experiencing (participating) as an audience. What the above assertion is saying is that the participatory nature of reader's theatre “traps” the student and directs his intuition into absorbing the lesson.

The story of Abu Ali typically exemplifies the Civic Education topic- Patriotism. According to Encarta dictionary, the word patriotism is derived from patriot which simply means “supporter of own country: a proud supporter or defender of his/ her country and its way of life”. Its origin is linked to Greek word Patris meaning “fatherland” and late 16th century Latin, Patriota “fellow countryman” a patriot is regarded as one who defends his country while patriotism is the impulse to defend one's country. It means standing for and defending one's country, not a president, or political party. Therefore, a patriot must think of his country first as one indivisible entity, love his fellow citizens and be totally committed to the development of his country.

Findings/Impact of the Experiment on the Students

The students were fully involved in the teaching/learning process. They partially participated in the duplication of the audio CD but fully joined in the transcription of the audio recording. The audio CD greatly concretized the topics. The process engaged the student as they were fully involved in transcription of the audio to text. The audio player was used to stimulate their knowledge and thus changed their perception of events. This is evident from the reactions of the students during our discussion segment after the enactments.

One of the dramatic techniques employed by the researchers in teaching Civic Education (Patriotism) was Role-Play. After taking up roles and playing the characters, the students were able to weigh and judge matters objectively as people who have experienced it. For instance, the real meaning of patriotism and what it takes to be patriotic through placing the nation or community above self-came to the fore. According to Okechukwu, a student who played the role of the Commander, the need for citizens to fully volunteer to defend the territorial integrity of their nation was fully recognized and appreciated by him. According him, the experiment has:

enhanced my imaginative and listening skills, sense of cooperation and observation. It has assisted me to look at issues from other people position but most importantly, to place the nation above self. For instance, I now know that it is better to volunteer to defend our nation than to sit on the fence.

The above technique (Role play) instantly removed rote learning, cramming of notes but induced internalization of lessons which was intrinsically driven. According to Chinyere, another participant in the experiment,
The lessons, especially the dramatization of the story of Col Ali became

simplified. I can now see and relate patriotism from my own understanding because I participated. No more cramming of notes. It was very practical and clear. Also having participated in the transcription of the script, I have also learnt the techniques of transcribing an audio recording.

The researcher observed that during reflection, the class was relaxed and some students who, hitherto, were shy and lacked communication skills at the beginning of the lesson were able to communicate freely through the contribution of ideas, thereby improving their self-expression and awareness. Eventually, they became fully integrated with their mates. According to Iroh (133), this finding is in line with the findings of Pemberton-Billing (1977), McCasline (1987), Slade (1980), who also got similar results from the use of dramatic methods to teach children. During reflection which also served as the discussion time where evaluation and appraisal of all activities and experiences are reviewed to determine the level of absorption. The technique afforded the researcher an opportunity to review and rethink what had taken place during the lesson to see the level or extent of absorption of the students.

Here, roles which were played by students were discussed, evaluated and properly digested. Reflection remains a very critical period in the use of the dramatic method because it is here that learning takes place as opinions are crystallized and decisions taken. Another student Chisom speaks:

The discussions were very friendly as some of the confusing ideas were clarified. For instance, I was wondering why somebody would choose to die for his country. During reflection, the class was made to understand that we have no other country to call our own but Nigeria, hence the need to protect it from any insurgency.

Conclusion

The primary objective of this experiment which used the participatory approach in teaching transcended to building a total individual. More so, the participatory approaches both in the decision making on matters affecting the students (learning period) culminated in full achievement of the objectives. This is because the students were fully involved in the whole process of learning. Furthermore, the process-concept structural approach of the dramatic methods which the researchers adopted understands the developmental needs of children as well as their full participation during the experiment; taking care of the multifarious composition of the class and giving equal opportunities and accommodation for them to function optimally. The process makes the teacher to be sensitive to the individual child within the scope the demand of the creative drama experience makes on each child. Again, the transcription of recorded audio borrowed the practical process centered approach which made all the students to be involved and active.

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