

EFFECTIVE TEACHING STRATEGIES FOR MUSIC LITERACY IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

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Introduction

Music as a subject has historically been considered an integral part of learning. The importance of music was also recognized by the Nigerian government hence, the inclusion of music as one of the subjects to be studied in the elementary (Kindergarten, nursery and primary) classes. One of the objectives of elementary education in the Nigerian Policy of Education is to 'inculcate in the child spirit of enquiry and creativity through the exploration of nature, the environment, art, music and the use of toys etc.'(Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2013). Music as a component of learning is thus integral to children education because it helps children in learning about different emotions through listening to different types of music. They also learn body awareness through dancing and moving to the rhythm. This helps them gain an understanding of their environment (culture) and music traditions around them. As they grow, music is useful in helping them to reduce and relieves stress and tension. Music is a natural and important part of young children's growth development. It serves the expressive, emotional, intellectual, social and creative needs of all children. Music has also been found as a subject that enhances and accelerates learning in school children. This is because it possesses an attribute that aids memory. Music is one way to use the whole brain; most people remember the song they learned in early childhood because lyrics combined with music are easier to learn. Music plays a major role in the life of a school community just as it plays in the society at large. It contributes to a group's sense of identity and to an individual's sense of belonging to a group. It performs an indispensable function during get-together, celebration

of festivals and occasions and other events in the school or the community at large. If children interact with music early, it positively affects the quality of their lives (Odunuga, 2012).

Children are born with the potential to perform their culture's music just as they are born with the potential to speak and understand their native language. When a child has developed musical representations of his or her culture's music, the inner reality would enable the outer performance to be more accurate. Any child that passes through this age will automatically internalize the music of her culture and will do well in the future performance of music. The essence of music is to communicate and give pleasure to the listeners and the performers, but this effect cannot be felt if there is no music literacy. This means that music literacy is an important phenomenon in the life of every human being. Music literacy involves the acquisition of enough adequate musical knowledge needed to appreciate music. It entails the knowledge of reading and writing music for the purpose of enjoying music and performing it. Teaching music literacy in the elementary school requires strategies that will keep the students engaged and at the same time learn adequately. This means that at the elementary level, students will learn to listen to music, play with and experiment on a variety of musical instruments, sing, dance, create their own music and perform it accordingly.

The best way to keep students engaged is to make sure they have plenty to do all the time, this means that as the teacher plan the lessons, they should build in as many opportunities as possible for students to be active and work with all parts of their bodies and minds. In this light, this paper tries to put forth strategies that will assist music teachers in developing in the elementary students, the art of creating and performing music. This will serve a sound foundation on which future music education will be built. This is because 'in all the societies of the world, musical practices, like other forms of artistic expression, represent an integral part of the total culture' (Omojola, 2006:13).

The Problem

One of the objectives of music education in schools is to perpetuate the indigenous and other world cultures. This cannot be done without proper documentation of music and its cultural elements. There are variations of some folk songs because there was no proper documentation of cultural music, music,

like other cultural elements were transmitted through the oral method. This has resulted in the eradication of some musical styles and cultural practices. There is need therefore for young children to be well versed in their cultural musical knowledge so as to imbibe and portray societal norms and values. In modern Nigeria, an average Nigerian child lives in the city where cultural practices that are available are either adulterated with acculturation or are non-existent at all. Music literacy at the primary school level is expected to eradicate these anomalies. Moreover, the teaching strategies that are indeed for music instruction to be meaningful and skillful is not fully utilized, this is because music teachers are not exposed to some of them. This paper thus seeks to portray effective teaching strategies for music literacy in Nigerian elementary schools.

Research Questions

1. Do elementary school pupils have interest in studying music?
2. Does the curriculum implementation suit the teaching of music in primary schools level?
3. Does the music teacher have enough knowledge about music while teaching the pupils?
4. What are the outcomes of teacher's method on the pupils?
5. Is there any solution provided by the music teachers on the factors affecting teaching of music in primary schools?

Music in the Curriculum

Music was brought into the curriculum during the period of the 'three R's' (reading, writing and arithmetic). Music was taught then by a specialist teacher who plays the piano or a guitar or any other musical instruments. Most often, children are taught to sing as a group to the collective worship in the school religious service, or to strengthen the school identity or to strengthen the sense of nationalism through patriotic songs. Music teaching here is to serve as an accompaniment to other 'serious' subjects like arithmetic and the sciences. According to Onwuekwe (1998:81) in Onyiuke (2005),

The music component has been relegated to the background to such an extent that it has become a mere classroom singing and dancing. In the few schools where the musical arts are taught, the teachers are most often inadequately prepared due to lack of the necessary materials. In addition, contents and methodologies

adopted are not culture -sensitive. The children are often packed together in one classroom during the last period under the custody of a teacher whose area of discipline may not likely be music....Many teachers as well as parents and pupils see little relevance for music in the curriculum beyond viewing it as a pure recreational activity (p4).

There is an urgent need for a redress so that our musical culture will be saved from total extinction by relating school music to the community's musical culture so that music education, like other disciplines will start generating trained personnel to meet the needs of the society. Musically, if learners are aligned to their cultural heritage before being exposed to foreign cultural traits and practices, there will be increased learning because learning from known to the unknown will incorporate practical demonstrations on how we do it... (Anya-Njoku & Onu, 2016:396). Early childhood stage of learning is very important because the foundation for most of the attitudes and achievement in later life is laid at this stage. Ige (2009), states that the early years are essential in a young child's development. Gordon (2011) also observed that one's potential to learn is never greater than at this early stage of life. The importance of the provision of quality education at this age was prominent in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and in the education for all (EFA) 2009. Early childhood education is designed to enhance cognitive skills, socialization and overall development that cannot be provided at home. The early years of life are crucial for establishing a foundation for lifelong music development. Formal music instruction should commence early when teaching is organized into an allotted time period and specific types of responses are expected from the child. A child's musical experiences have a particularly profound impact on the extent to which she will be able to understand, appreciate and achieve in music as an adult. Young children develop critical thinking through musical ideas. Elementary school teachers should understand that young children love music and recognise that an early introduction to music is important in the lives of children. Philip (1992) reiterates that using the singing voice is a learned complex skill. For it to be properly developed, it must begin early childhood years. If singing is not properly developed, the ability to perform music vocally will not coincide with the ability to think tonally. Drydon & Vos (1997) in Odunuga & Ibikunle (2012), emphasize that children can learn almost anything if they are dancing, tasting, touching, seeing and feeling information.

Music Teaching Strategies for Elementary School

A strategy is the art of planning in advance acts necessary for achieving success in a particular activity. Thus, methods are made of strategies and techniques. Current methods and strategies of teaching music recognize the integration of a number of skills and activities that promote music learning. In order for music teaching to be effective, adequate teaching strategies are needed. These should be teaching strategies that will make the subject attractive to the learners and equally sustain their interests. Music, like every other school subjects is interesting if relevant teaching methods are used. In teaching music to elementary school children, the aim should be to develop their listening, singing, dancing, playing musical instruments and composition skills. Listening comes first because children can only imitate or reproduce what they have heard and watched. In achieving this, music teachers in the elementary schools could adopt Carl Orff's method of music teaching. This method involves teaching students from known to unknown. The known here are the folk songs of the learners' culture, this will assist the student to familiarize with the culture and transmit same from what has been learnt. Citing Anya-Njoku & Onu (2016),

the learners who are guided from the known to unknown will not only be active participant in the classes but stand better chances of getting labels for what nature endowed them with and integrate new concepts as they come on the sure foundation of what they already know (p.388).

Music Educators National Conference (1981) reiterates that music education for young children involves a developmentally appropriate program for singing, moving, listening, creating, playing instruments and responding to the visual representation of sound. The content of such a programme should represent the music of various cultures in time and place. According to Akinbi (2016), education is a social service occurring in all human societies and entails how society passes on its culture as well as in social, ethical, intellectual, artistic and industrial attainment to others.

The Use of Play as a Teaching Strategy

The choice of teaching children with play is inherent in its role of assisting the child to adapt to his or her environment. Through play, children consciously and unconsciously learn and practice skills necessary to assist them in effectively

participating in the world of activities. Play is the universal language of childhood. It is a central activity in the lives of healthy children (Soretire, 2012). Play has been discovered to be so important to optimal child development because it contributes to the cognitive, physical, social and emotional well-being of children. Cardiff (2005) in Soretire (2012) defines play as a process that is freely chosen, personally directed and intrinsically motivated. During play, children increase their knowledge of self, others and the physical world around them. Pillai (2007) in Soretire (2012), outlines the importance of play as it relates to music, when he says, 'singing along with a child enhance his or her linguistic and vocabulary development'. Oncu & Unluer (2010), sees play as one of the major activities which promote children's imagination and creativity. Therefore, since play is a natural language of children, there is a need for it to be used as the main communication tool in the educational processes for young children to achieve optimal holistic development.

Instrumental Performance Strategy

Children can be assisted to learn by using performance strategy. They should be allowed to have access to African musical instruments that are available in their locality. Children could provide themselves with instruments such as drums improvised from tin cans or any discarded utensils from their homes. They could use these with bamboo sticks and twine to make string instruments, bamboo branches and the midribs of pawpaw stalk for wind instruments. With these instruments, children can be assisted to play and imitate what adults do. Garner (1980) in Odunuga (2012) opines that, intelligence is galvanized by participating in some kind of culturally valued activity and the individual's growth in such an activity follows a developmental pattern, each activity has its own time arising in early childhood. This strategy will arouse the student's interest and also assist in their knowledge of rhythms. These instrumental performances should be accompanied with singing and dancing.

Creative Process Strategy

Creative process strategy is a unique and special method of teaching based on principles derived from observation and research. It does not result from imitation; rather it is something new, different from a unique result. In using this strategy, the teacher should adhere to the following:

1. Children are part of planning the work and are responsible for the creative output.
2. Differences, uniqueness, individuality, originality are stressed and rewarded.
3. The process is as important as the product.
4. Self-initiation learning is encouraged.
5. Students are encouraged to generate and develop their own ideas.
6. Divergent thinking processes are stressed.
7. Motivational tensions are a necessary prerequisite to the creative process.
8. The outcomes are unknown (culled from Smith, 1966:157-162)

Music educators have recognized the importance of the creative process approach as a method of music instruction. Creative process includes improvisation. According to Ekwueme (2010), improvisation can be regarded as an aspect of creativity. It should be emphasized in the music education of the child. A child that improvises creates, composes, and experiment with musical reality. It is the only way of assuring a deep and lasting personal contact with music and the instrument. In addition, it is a deep form of self-evaluation, a positive procedure with which to establish solid foundations, physically and mentally in musical work. Baker in Ekwueme (2010), adds that one of the most important reasons for using improvisation as a means of music learning is the total involvement necessary both on the part of the teacher and the student. Since Nigerian indigenous music practice employs a good deal of improvisation in its music-making, it is expected therefore that any curriculum and instruction on music for African schools should include improvisation as a strategy for instruction.

Interaction and Exploratory Strategy

This strategy focuses on musical experiences and musical sound for primary school students. It is based on the belief that all children enter school with some degree of musical background upon which new musical concepts can be built. According to Ekwueme (2010), the programme is designed in a way that children are involved as a creative musician. They learn through experience and participates in the discovery of basic concepts of sound manipulation and organisation. This idea is enhanced in a framework of exploration called the Developmental Phases of Musical Exploration (DPME) propounded by Biasini &

Pogonowski (1979). This strategy is described in five phases of creative process in music for young people. The phases are:

(i) Free exploratory phase: Students collect sounds, objects and songs with which they explore creative possibilities. This is done by children themselves in their environment or from the media. They collect sounds in their memory or by writing it down in their books.

(ii). Guided exploration: Here, students extend initial exploration to broaden their range of creative possibilities. This is done by forming small groups under the supervision of the teacher to explore musical sounds through singing, dancing or playing musical instruments. Nigeria, being a multi-cultural country, has a rich and wide repertoire of music and dances which should be explored and introduced to schools starting from the kindergarten through high school.

(iii). Exploratory improvisation: Students are encouraged to repeat the sounds they enjoyed and to relate them to other sounds. Here, they learn the relationships and contrasts among sounds and musical ideas. Through improvisation, the sounds can be combined and arranged.

(iv). Planned improvisation: At this stage, students are gaining performing skills to help them try out and produce their own compositions. With the help of the teacher, the students identify the ways in which they can group and arrange their sounds into meaningful music.

(v). Reapplication: Students may find a need to change or expand their compositions. This is where the knowledge of rudiments of music comes in. This method can be used for primary and secondary school students. This strategy helps the students to develop musical thoughts and organisation. There is a great deal of improvisation in this method, this is the reason why this approach is useful in Nigerian schools. Improvisation is a vital activity in the music making process among Africans. When the outcome of an improvisation is notated, it becomes a composition. All these experiences combined, promotes musical literacy in the students.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Table 1: Gender distribution of respondent

GENDER	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
MALE	8	40
FEMALE	12	60
TOTAL	20	100

Table 1 shows the gender distribution of the respondents. The table shows that the majority of the respondents are females which accounts for 60 % of the population while the remaining 40% of the population are males.

Table 2: Teaching experience of the respondents

TEACHING EXPERIENCE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
5-10years	8	40
11-15 years	7	35
above 16 years	5	25
TOTAL	20	100

Table 2 shows the years of teaching experience of the respondents. The table indicates that teachers with higher years of teaching experiences are fewer than the majority of the respondents whose teaching experience are within the range of 5 – 15 years.

Research question 1: Do elementary school pupils have interest in studying music?

Table 3

S/N	QUESTION	AGREE	%	DISAGREE	%
1	Pupils have interest in studying music	10	50	10	50
2	Pupils participates in school music performances	16	80	4	20
3	Pupils music academic achievement is high	12	60	8	40

From table 3, it was discovered that pupils have interest in studying music from their academic achievement in music and observed performances in school music activities.

Research question 2: Does the curriculum implementation suit the teaching of music in primary schools level?

Table 4

S/N	QUESTION	AGREE	%	DISAGREE	%
4	The music curriculum of primary schools is well implemented	5	25	15	75
5	There are enough specialist music teachers to teach music	3	15	17	85
6	There are enough music textbooks used in teaching and learning in primary schools	10	50	10	50
7	My school have a well conducive environment for teaching and learning music	1	5	19	95
8	Educational equipments and musical instruments are available for teaching and learning of music in primary schools	5	25	15	75
9	School monitoring and supervision of primary school are not adequate	16	80	4	20
10	Provisions of instructional materials in primary schools are not adequate for teaching and learning of music	16	80	4	20

Table 4 reflects that the music curriculum is not well implemented due to lack of specialist teachers, “unconductive” environment, shortage of musical instruments and equipment inadequate supervision and monitoring.

Research question 3: Does the music teacher have enough knowledge about music to teach the pupils?

Table 5

S/N	QUESTION	AGREE	%	DISAGREE	%
11	Teachers have enough pedagogic knowledge to teach music in the classroom	17	85	3	15
12	Music theory knowledge of the teachers are adequate	17	85	3	15
13	Teachers have adequate musical instrument skills	8	40	12	60
14	Teachers have good listening abilities	10	50	10	50
15	Teachers perform music with the pupils at school functions	10	50	10	50

Table 5 shows that music teachers at the elementary schools have average knowledge of music as a subject. This is evident in their possession of teaching and musical skills. But the teachers have low musical instrument skills. This could be a resultant effect of non-availability of musical equipment and instruments.

Research question 4: What are the outcomes of teacher’s teaching method on the pupils?

Table 6

S/N	QUESTION	AGREE	%	DISAGREE	%
16	Teaching method attracts primary school pupils in studying music	20	100	0	0
17	Pupils opt for music instead of	16	80	4	20

	fine art				
18	Pupils are encouraged to learn music	20	100	0	0
19	Pupils academic achievement in music improves	15	75	5	25
20	Pupils perform music during school programmes	14	70	6	30

Table 6 reflects the outcome of teachers quality teaching method which attracts pupils to study music, improves academic achievement in music and improves pupils art of music performance

Research question 5: Is there any solution provided by the government on the factors affecting the teaching of music in primary schools?

Table 7

S/N	QUESTION	AGREE	%	DISAGREE	%
21	Government lack effort in training primary music school teachers	11	55	9	45
22	Government provides incentives for pupils in other to encourage them in studying music	0	0	20	100
23	Government provides teaching equipment and musical instruments for teaching music in primary schools	0	0	20	100
24	Government provides in-service training for music teachers	0	0	20	100

25	Government provides music studios and music room to enhance music teaching and learning in primary schools	0	0	20	100
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The table shows that there are little or no efforts from the part of the government in solving problems that are inherent in music teaching and learning in Nigerian elementary schools.

Summary of the Findings

The first and perhaps the greatest factors affecting teaching and learning of music in primary schools in Nigeria is inadequate funding by federal, state and local governments to the extent that funding has been in response to conditionality imposed by international financial institutions (IFIs). The findings from this research showed that many primary schools lack adequate resources for effective teaching and learning. The unstable condition of teaching staff in Nigerian primary schools has drastically crippled the system.

It was also discovered that students' don't offer music at primary level, one of the reasons is that they do not have music teachers in primary schools, also music is not recognized on the time table. This finding is in line with Okafor (1988) who observed that; the staffing of music department in our primary education is poor. A musician is thus seen as the jack-of-many trade. Music has many faces and he cannot master them all. He practices what he knows and thinks with the rest. At best he teaches the theory only out of the rest. All these deficiencies contribute to the factors affecting teaching of music in primary schools.

Lack of training on implementation of new education policies affect primary schools and most of the schools lack conducive classroom management and also lack of musical equipment, drums, *sekere*, *agogo*, piano, guitar, trumpet, furniture (chairs and tables, bookshelf etc.) Teachers in most of the schools lack monitoring and supervision by the state ministry of education. The study revealed that lack of facilities and equipment such as music laboratories has demoralized the teachers and that the teachers and students are handicapped. In emphasizing the importance of facilities and equipment in education system,

it was observed that facilities and equipment make music studies more practicable which will invariably produce students who will have the knowledge of music for totality. Knowledge of music for use extends from simple to advanced skills through practical illustrations.

The finding that in-services training of music teachers should be encouraged and recruitment of music teachers should be based on competences not on paper qualification agree with the view of Adeogun, (2001) who observed that for one to be trained in a particular skill, such person must first of all be recruited into the group. For instance, teachers in music should first of all be recruited into the system before one thinks of in-service training. Recruitment and in-service training go hand in hand.

The music teacher has to arouse and hold the interest of the learner else his traditional role as a conveyor of knowledge will fail. Holding his pupils' interest is a basic issue in the teaching and learning process of music.

Conclusion

Music in early childhood creates a foundation upon which future music learning is built. These experiences should be integrated within the daily routine and play of children. In this way, enduring attitudes regarding the joy of making and sharing are developed. It was discovered that many student have interest in music but they are not privileged to study music formally during their primary school days. Though, the societal perception of music studies are not favourable, one can develop interest if he/she is properly guided, encouraged, and motivated. Therefore, for one to develop interest in something that person might have been in constant practice. Interest does not develop from a vacuum. It has to emanate from somewhere. It was the opinion of the respondents that the strategies for the improvement of teaching and learning of music studies at the primary levels include: governments involvement in teaching and learning of music as a priority; talented music students should be given award and scholarship; providing teaching materials and building music laboratories for effective teaching and learning of music; recruitment of qualified teachers based on competency; creating an avenue for in-service training for music teachers as well as close supervision of instruction. Teachers and parents being a good model to encourage students to develop an interest in music studies were also

spotted out as strategies for improving perception.

Recommendations

From the above viewpoints, this paper thus recommends that: there should be recruitment, of specialist teachers to teach music in our primary schools. Provision of infrastructures, teaching aids and good condition of service to teachers should be provided in addition to adequate funding of the system.

A music curriculum for young children should include many opportunities to explore sound through singing, moving, listening, and playing instruments. Content of the curriculum should include traditional children's songs, folk songs and music from a variety of cultures.

Children's play is their work. They should have opportunities for individual musical play, such as singing games. Music learning contexts will be most effective when they include play, games, conversations, stories e.t.c. Creative musical environment is essential to the development of young minds. Music teachers should interact with children and music in a playful manner. Musical experiences should be play-based and planned for various types of learning opportunities.

Teachers should use developmentally appropriate music teaching strategies. They should be sensitive and flexible when children's interests are diverted from an original plan.

Time should be made available during the day for activities in which music is the primary focus.

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