

CREATIVE ARTS EDUCATION

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Abstract

Creative arts education is highly considered as the backbone of any meaningful educational and technological development in the world over. The exponential growth of technology offers an equally increasing set of opportunities and challenges for learning and teaching. Understanding of technology in this context of creative arts education for institutions in the developing society as Nigeria, provide further opportunities for staff and students to develop their creative capabilities and wellbeing. Fostering creativity is fundamentally important because creativity brings with it the ability to question, make connections, innovate, solve problems, communicate, collaborate and to reflect critically. These are all skills demanded by contemporary employers and will be vital for young people to play their part in a rapidly changing world. This paper highlights the recent advancement of creative arts education in our schools today.

Key Words: Arts, Creativity and Education

Introduction

Creative arts include drama or theatre, music, film, TV, video, radio, creative writing, graphic design, photography, advertising and marketing, architecture, painting, sculpting, crafts, fashion, IT, software and computer services, publishing, museums, galleries and libraries, performing and visual arts. Other areas of designs are exhibitions, games, industrial, interior; landscape, product, textiles, software inventions and are studied at various levels in education. Creativity is often thought of as an individual mental process aimed at the production of something new. In the context of arts education that view had (and still has) misleading consequences. It meant that there were no criteria for judging outcomes and anything that was considered 'creative' could be valued as being worthwhile. Art education is precisely one way in which a society elaborates the modes of thoughts and behavior, designed by man. Every man who is himself/herself an art work has a purpose and direction on this earth plane. That direction is guided by creative thinking and creative activities for the benefit of humanity and the environment. No

society developed without these factors in their traditional or indigenous education system. There is an increasing overlap with the media and information technology sectors in relation to the use of digital technology to produce and deliver creative content. This is noticeable in roles such as web design, animation and games design. Today one could be in a practical role as an artist or designer, or in an administrative or managerial role, such as museum curating or arts administration, etcetera.

Art Education in Nigeria

Over the years of educational development, art was classified as a mere vocation other than as art education. This is because art had no distinctive features in the education policy. There was no well-planned pattern of curriculum design as would be termed art curriculum, but was categorised as unspecified subject under technical and vocational education. Therefore, art education was within the exclusive missionary activities, minimal government participation and continued missionary efforts and period of active government involvement. The Nigerian society is no exception;

it was prevalent in Nigeria before the advent of Islam and Christianity. Odeyemi (1997) affirms this: Each society has its indigenous system of training and educating its youths. African education placed emphasis on social responsibility, job orientation, political, participation, spiritual and moral values. Children and adolescents engaged in participatory education through imitation – demonstration. Practical farming, animal husbandry, fishing, hunting, weaving cooking, carpentry, painting, building, decoration, smiting, catering, boat making, pottery making, dyeing, carving and knitting were some of the vocations, in which they were engaged. Their recreational subjects include wrestling, dancing, drumming, acrobatic display and racing while their intellectual training include the study of local history, legends, deities, the environment, poetry, reasoning, riddle, proverbs and story-telling. The end objective of traditional African education was to produce an individual who were honest, respectful, skilled, cooperative and who conforms to the social order of the day. The various skills training were largely run through apprenticeship system and not any formal setting, as we know them today. However, when the missionaries came in 1842, their focus was on the religious beliefs. Art and craft were not much important. Even when the colonial government became involved in education, it was only interested in clerical staff to help it govern. Therefore, indigenous arts did not have a place in the education policies of the British colonial Government. Nevertheless, arts and crafts continued to flourish in the villages. It is clear from the above that indigenous education system developed the child's latent physical skills, intellectual skills, and made them to acquire specific vocational training and to develop a healthy attitude towards honest labor. Even though art education was not specifically entrenched in the school curriculum, there was growing awareness about the growth and development of individual's creative and aesthetic perception towards his environment.

Despite the fact that Creative Art Education was not given considerable attention, there was strong bias towards the traditional literacy and academic subjects. This is reflected in a lack of respect on the part of the public for manual skills and technical achievement. We strongly believe that the most effective way of correcting, this perhaps was the motivating factor that saw the slight modification of the curriculum of the craft school. The early sixties experience tremendous development in the arts.

They actually produced prolific artists, designers and skilled craftsmen in areas as batik designs portraying wired spirit world and mythological scenes, Yoruba folklore, sculptural design in clay and cement form. The early sixties also witnessed the establishment of Fine and Applied Arts Department at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka and much later the University of Ife, Ile- Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University – OAU). The products of the schools and the university had independent and group exhibitions, which showed relevance of art and artists to national development, and unity and the socio-dynamics of culture. These artists among others created organic relationship between artists to revitalize the spirit of professionalism and also encourage creative professional competitions through a social and intellectual vehicle, that is, the society of Nigerian artists in 1964. With all these developments art was not entrenched in the curriculum of the primary and secondary levels of our schools. That was the situation until the National Curriculum Conference of 1969 that was convened to re- examine and restructure the philosophy and objectives of our educational system. Various workshops, seminars were held to design new philosophies and curriculum for various school subjects at all levels of education. The report of the National Curriculum Conference called “A philosophy for Nigerian Education” was published in 1977 as a policy statement after many deliberations from people in all works of life both of the public and private sectors.

After much deliberation it finally emerged as the National Policy on Education, which was first formulated and published in 1979 and revised in 1981. It is in this that art is given some attention. In section 4 of the policy on secondary education, art and music are entrenched as core subjects. One of the objectives was to teach all basic subjects, which enabled the public to acquire further knowledge and develop skills. Section 7 on adult and non-formal education is where vocational, aesthetic, and culture education are fully or adequately stressed. Sub-section six (6) of section (7) seven says: A new nation-wide emphasis will be placed on the study of Nigerian Art and Culture. The national commission will work out the overall strategy for the inclusion of Nigeria Arts, Culture and Languages in adult education programme” (NPE, 1981). Section 3 (15) 2 and section 7(6) state, further among others,

“government prescribes ... the encouragement of aesthetic, creative and the teaching of local crafts ... A new, nation-wide emphasis will be placed on the study of Nigeria art and culture. The National Cultural Policy emphatically states that: The policy shall promote creativity in the fields of the arts ... ensure harmony with contemporary realities and the demand of change and development and to prevent a mindless sweeping away of our cultural heritage.

Based on the above ideas, the 1970s saw a wide public awareness of the need for cultural revival and creative activities through art. Organization of cultural meetings, production of more artists, and rise of new middle class have been on the increase both at state and national levels and cultural centers are built in almost all states of this Federation. In 1982, the 6-3-3-4 education system was launched in September 29th 1999, the Universal Basic Education. Subsequently, it was launched on the 27th May, 2000, in all states of the Federation. These programmes focus on the Nigerian child to expose him to art education.

In addition, many universities among which are; University of Benin University of Port Harcourt University of Uyo Imo State University, Owerri FUTA – Federal University of Technology, Akure NAU – NnamdiAzikiwe University, Awka University of Lagos University of Maiduguri, Maiduguri OSUA – Ondo State University, Akungba-Akoko ABU – Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria UNN – University of Nigeria, Nsukka OAU – ObademiAwolowo University, Ile-Ife, Osun State LAUTECH - LadokeAkintola University of Technology Ogbomoso, Oyo State AAU – Ambrose Ali University, Ekpoma, Edo State ABSU – Abia State University, DELSU – Delta State University, Abraka NDU – Niger Delta University, Wilberforce Island, Bayelsa Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Port Harcourt Others are: College of Education, Kano Alvan Ikoku College of Education, Owerri Adeyemi College of Education, Ondo NwaforOrizu College of Education, Onitsha Tai Solarin College of Education, Ijebu Campus, Ijebu Ode Federal College of Education (Technical), Omoku Federal College of Education Pankshin, Establishing the department of Creative Arts or Fine and Applied Arts.

There are also some polytechnics that offered fine and applied arts (JAMB, 2000). One major

development in the 1980s is the formulation and publication of the creative arts programme at the Junior Secondary School (JSS) level. In 1985, the Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Technology published the curriculum for the junior and senior secondary schools. The 1980s and 1990s experienced encouraging enlargement of artistic development and actually portraying the academic and intellectual multi-dimensional vision of artists and of art education. Today art education cannot be over emphasized due to its concept of creativity in arts and in the wider context of education.

The Need to Embrace Technological Development of Creative Art in Nigeria

Since the introduction of personal computers, art educators increasingly have adopted new digital technologies into their pedagogy. Many teachers remain still infrequent users of technology or avoid using new learning technologies in art classrooms. Though visual art is considered to be very valuable in developing the creative potentials needed for technological invention and breakthrough, its practical role seem to be absent in developing technology in Nigeria. Obviously the art and design aspect of technology, which seem to have been completely left out of technological development in Nigeria, seem to be the reason for the country's lack of full technological actualization today.

According to Mbahi (2000), science is the "knowing" and art, the "creative mind" involved in the formation or production of objects, while technology is the skillful hand involved in "doing" the craft. That is to say the artist or the industrial designer creates the aesthetic quality of an industrial product. It is therefore imperative to recognize in Nigeria that the desire to make things beautiful must be as the desire to make them useful if technology is to be completely developed in Nigeria. The propaganda by the ministry of information and culture that Nigerians should be patriotic and buy made in Nigeria goods is meaningless. We must examine the reason why Nigeria prefer "foreign made" products and proffer a lasting solution to the problem. The issue is not that of patriotism. It may simply be because of beauty (art or design), procedural know-how (science) as well as skillful execution or craft (technology) are not highly considered in industrial production in Nigeria. It may be argued that in industrial production, the senses must be trained to

appreciate the quality in material, the visual proportion in measurement and the tactile relationship of area in mass.

Equally important, is the aesthetic quality of the production, and such relationship seems lacking in "made-in-Nigerian" products. Undoubtedly, visual arts have contributed significantly to technological development. *International Journal of Creativity and Technical Development* Vol. 1 No. 1 - 3, 2009 51 development today. Indeed, all objects of daily use show a recognizable style in art, and this can be seen in the design element of modern architecture, television, fridge, chairs, clocks, etc. Many manufacturers have realized that though technology may enable the industries to produce items fast, it is however the artist that captures the market.

Creative arts education is an instrument per excellence for effective national development and that Nigeria cannot afford to toy with the education of her citizenry in this regard because the wealth of a nation is a function of the available human resources and not the abundance of natural resources alone. From the foregoing, creative art education is a fertile ground to boost education and development beyond 2020 if harnessed. Modern day educational style encourages more of pragmatic education that could meet the needs of the people.

It is obvious that creative art education is in tandem with this education philosophy. Yet creative art has not been given its rightful place. Hence, Mbahi (1997) disclosed that, people think that the lazy and the average students who cannot cope with science are those that should study creative Arts. This implies that most people have erroneous and lukewarm attitude towards the subject area because of their inherent erroneous notions about the subject (Creative Art Education). The cancerous state of teaching and learning creative art education in Nigeria is covering the people's sense of judgement and the expected impact of the subject on national development. This is partly because unprofessional hands have been made to do the teaching of the subject especially at the primary school level. One of their inexperience approach to the teaching of the subject, it has been replaced with the purchase and submission of detergents, vim, tissue papers and bathing soaps for assessment. The more items a student submits for assessment, the higher his/her grade. Different nomenclatures are

used to describe the subjects at different levels of education for the sake of simplification, identity or glorification of the contextual structure. The subject is aimed at developing the individual to acquire useful skills.

Creative Art education is a vocational education that enhances all round development of individual e.g. affective, cognitive and psychomotor area domains. This is true because of aesthetic values, logical reasoning and practical tasks inherent in creativity. Implication of Creative Art Education for Education and National Development if the teaching and learning of creative Art is encouraged in Nigeria schools, the following implications amongst others will be realized in education and national development beyond 2020.

- ❖ **Job Creation:** if the teaching and learning of Creative Art is encouraged in Nigeria schools, the problem of unemployment in the country will be reduced drastically as those who studied creative Art can be self-employed unlike those that have no vocational training. This is because such individuals who have acquired training in creative arts will not only be self-employed but are also employers of labor. It is obvious that if unemployment is reduced in a country, the economy of the nation will be improved greatly.
- ❖ **Crime Reduction:** It is observed that crime rate is increasing everyday across the globe. So-many people are into prostitution, robbery and advance Fraud (419) to mention but a few. Some people take to such acts because of idleness. This is aptly because they have no other source of livelihood. Despite the efforts of security agents in Nigeria and across the globe, there is no remarkable improvement. It is an established fact that a hungry man is an angry man. Through Creative Art Education, crime rate can be reduced because people can be endowed with relevant skills that can make them to become responsible citizen who has a job doing. Thus, he/she becomes a responsible citizen(s). There will be more development in a nation where crime rate is minimal.

❖ **Functional Education:** Nigeria educational system has over the years been more of theory knowledge because of the nature of her curriculum. Hence, there is little or no acquisition of practical skills. This is not the case with countries like Japan, China and America that encourage pragmatic style of education. If creative Art Education is encouraged in Nigeria, Citizens of this nation will be endowed with functional education. This will to a great extent make education in Nigeria more pragmatic. Creativity, thus Creativity is the mother of invention. Through the knowledge of creative Art education, the level of creativity will be on the increase. To this end, if the level of creativity increases, the citizens can go into producing so-many things or products that the country still imports till date. By implication, the country's (Nigeria) importation of some goods will reduce while her exportation will increase. Note that China is what it is today because of their creativity.

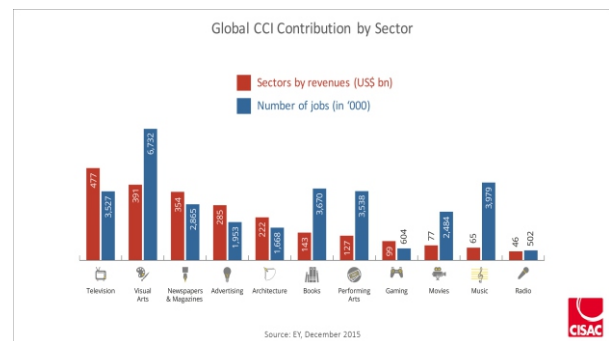
❖ **Creativity in digital art education teaching practices:** This is highly needed in our modern teaching curriculum. For this reason, visual art educators have to be drivers for new technologies in their schools to make it happen. Teachers need to be motivated and prepared to use digital technologies creatively. Arts specialists not only need continued training in basic computer skills, they need professional development in specific hardware and software related to improving the learning experience in each of the arts disciplines.

❖ **Creative contributions to the world economy:** The role of the creative arts in the creative industries have been seen to become increasingly important to economic well-being, proponents suggesting that [human creativity](#) is the ultimate economic resource, and that the industries of the twenty-first century will depend increasingly on the generation of knowledge through creativity and

innovation. A new study has quantified, for the first time, the economic and social contribution of cultural and creative industries (CCI) around the world. Researchers have found out that creative industries are open to people of all ages and backgrounds, and provide a significant contribution to youth employment and careers. Small businesses and individuals are key, and give rise to innovative and agile employers and workers. In the United States, artists are 3.5 times more likely to be self-employed than the rest of the US working population, according to the study.

This graph below shows that Creative industries employ more people than the automotive industry in the United States, Europe and Japan combined.

Conducted by Ernst & Young and jointly presented by UNESCO and the International Confederation of Authors and Composers Societies (CISAC), the study analyzed 11 CCI sectors in Europe, North America, Latin America, Africa, the Middle East and the South Pacific region, focusing on everything from architecture and advertising to television.



Conclusion

Creativity has played a prominent role in art education over time with the focus on creative self-expression in the art classroom. Most recently, the focus of creative art education has turned back to creativity with conferences and numerous articles focusing on how to teach for creativity. The authors conclude that all students should be encouraged to explore their artistic abilities and let their creativity naturally develop. Thus, we need to embrace this technological development in creative arts education to enable us compete with other countries in the world. That is exactly how it should be. A vibrant and successful future for the artists.

Creative Arts Education must lie partly in effective support from politicians and policy makers but also in developing, understanding and practice through continued debate and dialogue.

Recommendations

1. All colleges and universities should offer degree programs in creative arts, While Creative arts should be incorporated into education at the primary school level.
2. Government should supply and keep effective qualified art teachers at various levels by giving special inducement grants as well as ensure that all teachers be taught to use new technologies as either art media or teaching tools.
3. To achieve a quality creative art education at all levels of education, government, private organization, parents, individuals and all stake-holders in the national educative process should jointly work to provide whatever human, material and financial resources to ensure improved quality creative art education programme.
4. All the art clubs and associations should increase their jingle for more effective teaching, preaching, and disciplining the citizenry through art and advertising the role of creative art in the world economy.
5. A review of the creative art programs at all levels of education is needed, because we are in the age of globalisation. Also, the following are needed; a conducive teaching-learning environment, attractive physical structure of studios and classroom, supply of art materials at any given times. Availability of variety of creative art materials will help both art teachers and students develop lifelong creative skills.

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