

IMPROVING TEACHING AND LEARNING EXPERIENCE IN PRIMARY SCHOOL USING MUSIC

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Abstract

The goal of every teacher is to produce students with very impressive and outstanding performances at the end of teaching and learning exercise. Sometimes, it seems as if the efforts of teachers are not productive. This may be traced boredom, loss of interest in learning and low attention span found in learners especially lower primary pupils. Looking at this challenge, this study seeks to investigate how music can be used to improve teaching and learning experience pupils, get them actively involved in lessons and reduce low attention span. Using two classes of Eternal Excellence Christian Academy Lugbe Abuja, an experimental group and control group was created. A total number of thirty (30) pupils were used. Fifteen (15) pupils made up the experimental group and fifteen (15) made up the control group. Active learning built on the theory of constructivism was adopted for the study. This theory postulates that learners who are actively involved in learning come out with excellent performance. The result showed that the experimental group's performance was high and impressive than the control group. Based on this finding, the work concluded by suggesting that simple short melodies should be incorporated in classroom so as to help break down concept and facilitate easy transition from board to the minds of the pupils. Provisions such as training and workshop for teacher on the effect of music towards learning should be made.

Key words: music, education, learning, and effective teaching

Introduction

Teaching is not all about finishing a given scheme and rolling over to the next task. But teaching is more than doing just a "talk and write" job. A teacher is one whose mandate is to spur learning interest, positive attitude and enthusiastic character from a learner. Osele & Obiesie (2017) points "the great teacher, who is also an outstanding and inspirational teacher, obliges one to have an enthusiastic character, a caring attitude, and a passion for learning" (p.1). NTI (2011) in

Ojukwu & Onyiuke (2014) defining the concept of teaching and learning says “teaching is a process of manipulation of the environment to bring about the learning while learning is a deliberate change in behavior of learner(s) through activities, experiences leading to permanent improvement in skills, attitude, and modes of adjustment” (p.78). In order for effective transition from black board to the minds of the learners to happen, teaching has to be approached with a mind set to make a lasting knowledge impartation in the lives of the learners. This has to be deliberate and intentional. In the classroom, strategies for effective transition of concepts need to be adopted by the teacher so as to facilitate assimilation and make the classroom environment conducive for learning. Some children have been labeled non-brilliant; academically dull due to the fact that they find some concepts or topic difficult to assimilate and understand but the fact remains that no child is dull. It only depends on what knowledge the child is exposed to and how the child is exposed. Musical activities can turn the so called “dull child” into a brilliant and smart child.

Every learner has great potentials. A learner with good brain may have learning challenge. Teaching this kind of learner, the teacher may need to first of all try to get along with the learner. The teacher may also need to make the child feel comfortable with his presence only then will the child be able to open up and feel relaxed for learning exercises. The challenge of breaking down topics and ideas a teacher is trying to convey in the classroom can be tackled by employing simply melodies in the classroom that will engage the learners and command practical participation from them which does not need special training and expensive resources. According to Ojukwu & Onuora-Oguno (2015) declares that learning invariably commands practical participation and exploration (p.38).

Learning gaps can occur when the learner has not gain full understanding and mastery of the said concept and this can create loss of interest in the learner. Learning is not complete if the learner does remember is learnt outside the school walls. Onuigbo (1997) in Ojukwu & Onuora-oguno (2015) affirms “if learning is not remembered or made use of, there is no need learning at all, because learning involves applicability to life” (p.36).

At every level of a child’s development, different learning approaches are required. There is certain knowledge the child must acquire and the ways of assimilation differ at different stages of the child’s growth. The way a child in upper primary assimilates is very different from the child in lower primary school. Therefore, teachers in schools are expected to bring in different learning

styles and enjoyable activities that will facilitate learning. Children in lower primary most times learn and comprehend when the learning is fun. Children do not like boredom at any time. They like to be engaged with so many enjoyable activities because they have much energy to exert. Therefore, learning through play most likely is advised for pupils in lower class. This can be achieved by relating the topic with music. The teacher can introduce a song and accompany it with some facial expressions, dance steps and demonstrations of which the children will joyfully participate in. With this approach to learning, whatever the teacher may have taught the child will be difficult to escape the memory of the child because learning is said to have happened if a student remembers what had been taught outside the learning environment. Esimone (2015) explains that:

Children hate boredom and appreciate things that can put them on the move, because they have much energy to exert. They hate our remote way of teaching and learning but love it when play, singing and dancing is involved in whatever they are being taught (p.168).

This work therefore, projects the importance of short simple melodies in classrooms especially in primary schools which help in easy transition of concepts to the learners. It stresses that integration of short melodies as learning aid in primary schools would spur learning interest. The following questions are put into consideration for the purpose of this work:

- What is the difference between the performance of pupils who learnt using short simple melodies as learning aid in schools and those who do not
- What are the possibilities of incorporating musical aid in primary schools?

Overview of concepts

Learning

Learning is an experience encountered by individual through activities which causes a change in behavior and improves skills, attitude and mindset of a learner. Ojukwu & Onyiuke (2014) defines learning as a deliberate change in behavior of learner(s) through activities, experiences leading to permanent improvement in knowledge, skills, attitude and mode of adjustment of learners" (p.78). Ojukwu (2016) explains learning as "an integral part of education which should aim at preparing the learner for the future and ought to extend to all aspect of life for a learner to be a balanced individual" (p.134). Learning is a

process that brings together cognitive, emotional, and environmental influences and experiences for acquiring, enhancing, or making changes in one's knowledge, skills, values and world views (Ojukwu 2016). Music is an unseen vehicle through which learning can be achieved and has the ability to cause a permanent change in life of the listener. Learning is a process that does not happen automatically. Learning happens as a result of investment in training, education, personal development. Learning in this case is seen as knowledge impartation from teacher to pupil with deliberate intention to improve the pupil's knowledge which involves active participation from the pupil.

Effective teaching

Oxford Dictionary of Current English (2006:283) defines effective as "successful producing a desired or intended result". Eyibe (2000) defined teaching as "an activity which a more experienced and educated person can engage in so as to enable others learn or get ideas" (p.3). Chukwugozie (1998) in Ocheje (2016), defines teaching as "as those series of activities, part of which are performed in the presence of the learners and part performed elsewhere all aimed at fostering learning in pupils" (p.27). Based on this, effective teaching could be said to be an act of bringing activities in order to produce a desired result in learning. Music is usually full of activities. It can be used to engage a learner in a powerful lesson. Music can be expressed through demonstrations such as dancing, clapping, and stamping of feet. Integrating music and musical activities in class will discourage learners from being passive listeners in class because they will be actively involved in the teaching and learning exercise in class. It has been noted that for learners to produce outstanding performances in class, they must be actively involved in the learning process.

Music

Music on its own has a force of penetration into the mind of the hearer. It has a way of creating a mental picture of the main idea. According to Chukwu (2006:21) "whether the individual is born with some innate abilities or that the mind is blank; this external stimulus (music) has a great tendency of penetrating the same mind; conditions the mind and helps to reshape its thinking waves". Music simplifies learning and makes knowledge impartation easier and fun. Introducing simple and short melodies in a classroom situation engages the learners and ensures they participate in the learning process. Why simple and short melodies? This is because the simple the melodies are the easier for the teacher and for the learner.

Education

Education is part of human life. It is a fundamental experience every individual is expected to go through either formal or informal from childhood to adulthood. Education however, is bound to happen because every sphere of the society has been structured in a way that people are educated directly or indirectly. The greatest asset of any society is its human resource. Education is a means through which a society seeks to open its life to all the individuals within so as to enable them take part in it (Akinbote 2008). Nnamani (2017:1) states that “education is important for the development of an individual. It aids the spiritual, psychological, academic and moral well-being of the individual. Education the world over has become a veritable tool for determining the level of development of any nation”. (Psacharopoulos and Woodhall (1985) in Adebowale (2008) opine that education is regarded as a fundamental enterprise by virtually every society both in the developed and developing world. This is because it is through education that a society generates that a society generates the knowledge necessary for its continued existence and sustenance and transmits this from one generation to another. It guarantees a constant and relevant supply of human resources to facilitate her development process.

Theory of constructivism

Active learning is centered on the theory of constructivism which states that learners construct or build their understanding. Constructivism, according Piaget focuses attention on the need of the child, and emphasizes the importance for educators to allow learners explore their environment. Neaum (2016) explains Piaget’s theory of constructivism as a theory that “provides rational for play as effective way for children to learn” (p.122). Incorporating music in learning processes makes the pupils in primary school learn while playing. Active learning places the learner at the center of a lecture’s objective and its outcome. Learners in these lectures are not just engaged in learning but also involved in cognitive processes such as comprehension and evaluation. These processes then translate in improved and deeper learning, better grades, and lower failure (Nisha, 2019).

Methodology

This study is conducted in Eternal Excellence Academy Lugbe, Abuja. Two classes form primary two have been selected and thirty (30) pupils have been involved: fifteen (15) from primary two (2) gold which was used as experimental

group and fifteen (15) from primary two (2) blue as control group. The researcher taught the pupils two times a week. And the teaching sessions lasted for four weeks. The researcher at first taught the experimental group in a conventional way afterwards, the researcher re-introduced the topics using musical aid. The researcher demonstrated the topics by setting them to music. The researcher also included some activities/demonstrations which go hand in hand with the songs such as dancing, clapping and stamping of feet. The control group was taught without musical aid just the conventional “talk and chalk” method. The subjects used for purpose this work are Social studies, English composition, Mathematics. The subjects taught and set to music are based on the scheme of work of primary two curricula.

At the end of the period, assessments were taken. Below are summaries of the groups performances represented in table below.

Result and discussion

Experimental group

Subject	Total no. in class	10 Marks	Class population score	Population performance percentage	Performance Remarks
Mathematics	15	6	2	13.3	
		8	4	26.7	
		10	9	60	
Total	15	-	15	100	Impressive

Subject	Total no. in class	10 Marks	Class population score	Population performance percentage	Performance Remarks
English language	15	9	6	40	
		10	9	60	
Total	15	-	15	100	Impressive

Subject	Total no. in class	10 Marks	Class population score	Population performance percentage	Performance Remarks
Social studies	15	8	3	20	
		9	5	33.3	
		10	7	46.7	
Total	15	-	15	100	Impressive

Control group

Subject	Total no. in class	10 Marks	Class population score	Population performance percentage	Performance Remarks
Mathematics	15	3	6	40	
		3	8	53.3	
		10	1	6.7	
Total	15	-	15	100	poor

Subject	Total no. in class	10 Marks	Class population score	Population performance percentage	Performance Remarks
English composition	15	3	5	33.3	
		2	7	46.7	
		5	3	20	
Total	15	-	15	100	poor

Subject	Total no. in class	10 Marks	Class population score	Population performance percentage	Performance Remarks
Social studies	15	5	12	80	
		8	3	20	
Total	15	-	15	100	poor

The experimental group had outstanding performances in all the text conducted compared to that of the control group. These results prove that eliminating musical aid in learning processes in primary schools causes low assimilation and performance. The performance of the experimental group is obviously contributed to by the effect of musical aid which as shown spurs learning interest in the pupils. Evidently, there is little a teacher teaching without musical can do to stimulate the pupils' interest. Music on its own is an effective stimulus. Getting and sustaining learners' attention without them losing interest is usually very rare if not sustained with an external element. This explains the cause of the control group's poor performances.

This work establishes the point that incorporation of musical aid (short simple melodies) would make lessons more accessible and it would also help in breaking down complicated concepts in teaching and learning in primary schools. Musical aid would create a platform for teacher's effective expression. On the hand of the pupils, it will enhance assimilation, and comprehension because they are actively involved in the learning.

Days of the Month

... ..

$\text{♩} = 100$

Soprano

Thir - ty days have sep - tem - ber, A - pril, June and No - vem - ber,

S.

All the rest are thir - ty one ex - cept Fe-brua - ry a - lone.

Thirty days have September


April, June and November


All the rest are thirty-one except February alone.


Seven Continents


.....

♩ = 95

Soprano Solo 
There are se-ven con-ti-nents in the world, I can name them

4
S. Solo 
what a-bout you? Je-sus loves all the chil-dren of the con-ti-nents I can name them

8
S. Solo 
all. One, south A-me-ri ca, Two, north A-me-ri-ca Three, A-fri-ca

12
S. Solo 
Four, A-sia Five, E-rope, Six, An-tarc-ti ca Se-ven, Aus-trai-lia.

There are seven continents in world

I can name them what about you

Jesus loves all the children of the continents

I can name them all

One South America

Two North America

Three Africa

Four Asia

Five Europe

Six Antarctica

Seven Australia

Counting

...

♩ = 100

Percussion $\frac{4}{4}$ One, two, bu - ckle my shoe, three, four, knock at the door,

Perc. $\frac{3}{4}$ five, six, pick up sticks, se - ven, eight lay them straight, nine, ten, a big fat hen

One two buckle my shoe

Three, four, knock at the door

Five, six, pick up sticks

Seven, eight, lay them straight

Nine, ten, a big fat hen

Fifty-two weeks

Recommendation

Based on the findings, these follow recommendations are made:

- Curriculum planners should produce a teaching manual for every subject which will include short music that will serve as aid to lessons in primary school level. The music can be put in Cd, Mp3, and DVD format.
- Workshops and training for teachers on the impact of music to learning be organized by ministry of education and private school owners.
- Government and private school owners provide gadget such as radios, televisions.

Conclusion

It has been proven by this study the superiority of teaching and learning method using musical aid and the conventional teaching method. Using two classes of Eternal Excellence Christian Academy Lugbe Abuja, experimental group and control group was selected. The experimental group was taught using musical

aid while the control group was taught in a conventional way. The experimental group performance was impressive while control group performed poorly. The performance outcome of the both groups agrees with the position of this work that musical aid for teaching and learning in primary schools would make lessons in the classroom fun and accessible.

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