E–ACTIVITY, TECHNOLOGY AND VISUAL ART: IMPLICATION FOR UNIVERSAL BASIC EDUCATION SCHEME

Kasi Jockeil – Ojike and Orifa, Cornelius Olorunmoto

Dept. of Fine and Applied Arts Federal College of Education (Technical), Olokuta, Rivers State Nigeria
Email: kasi.jockeilojike@yahoo.com

Abstract

With the e-activity assuming a determinant factor in our today’s quest for knowledge, and rapidly assuming significance as a vehicle in our desire for quality foundational education which in turn has opened spaces for improvement in our technological advancement in this rapidly changing environment. This paper therefore, strives to examine how the visual art properties are needed and can be systematically manipulated in order to deliver and our society benefit maximally in the achievement of Universal Basic Education using the technology of e-activity as a driving force. And to achieve this, some relevant issues were raised and recommendations to solving the identified problems proffered.

INTRODUCTION

In every aspect of history, there must be certain innovation of events or policy at one time or the other that advances the growth of society, especially the development and advancement of human capacity. This capacity can only be brought about by education, which indisputably is the soul of any society, as it passes from one generation to another with modifications or innovations. Adding impetus to this facts, Dafinone (2008) agreed that the twin phenomena of globalization and information and communication Technology have brought tremendous challenges and opportunities to bear on government agencies, corporate bodies and individuals with the result that no section of the society is immune to these development advancement. He concluded that the old way of doing things is fast giving way to the new with agencies and institutions adopting new approaches.

This dynamic necessitated the launch of Universal Basic Education Scheme in September 1999 by the regime of Chief Olusegun Obasanjo. It is a laudable programme that has come to stay, a scheme that is meant to alleviate Nigeria of its literacy and technological problems and placed her on the same pedestal with other developed society. Though, according to Tabotndip (2009), the UBE Scheme seems to be a precautionary programme built on the failed Universal Primary Education (UPE) programme, which the lapses that prevailed during the Universal Primary Education (UPE) are still having incursions into the scheme. Lapses such as inadequate statistics of the recipients to be able to track the programme, inadequate manpower, mismanagement of funds and inadequate facilities among others.

As compelling as the lapses may seen, so also is the positive intents of UBE. Universal Basic Education as presently conceived is a scheme that has been designed to offer free, compulsory education for the first 9 years of schooling to the Nigerian child comprising of 6 years of primary and 3 years of junior secondary. This vision of Nigeria government regarding child education is aimed at providing quality education that enables the individuals attain full potential to be self-reliant and contribute positively to national developments. However, one of the major challenges in the realization of the goals is advancement of “quality” education using the benefits of information and communication technology (ICT), and visual art properties as a driving force. The benefits of this
trend can not be over emphasized as it has allowed for exploration of distributed learning teaching environment.

The need to rethink and recast the aims and teaching strategies especially in our foundation level of our education became imperative, for effective teaching of our educational goals as envisaged by the UBE scheme, as the type of teaching strategy that can best ensure the realization of the objectives of the school and the Nigerian society which promote problem-solving, logical as well as independent and innovative thinking. The “traditional approach to teaching in our Basic level of our education is time worm and therefore negate the objective of UBE scheme. Suitable teaching styles that will enable learners to use knowledge acquired in other situations and permit the learners to be contributing members of the teaching learning process which technology and visual art properties provide. A critical look at the way apathy seems to have enveloped the adaptation of e-activity at the basic level, which is indisputably the critical stage of our educational development call for strategic turn around as our nation can no longer pretend in this globalized society.

Most teachers even at this height of technological advancement at all level, persistently uses abstract method that infers only those who remembers these facts and method normally “pass”, while those who forget “fail” in evolution processes. These teacher-centred method can only reduce the essence of teaching especially at the basic level to a mere storage of facts and methods and the resuscitation of these facts and methods on demand during examination which run contrary to the goal of the UBE. However, in order to achieve the objective of UBE and therefore promote technological development through e-activity of our children, the use of move effective teaching learning strategies where children’s creative endeavours can flourish using the window of opportunities created by visual art and technology, need to be encourage.

UBE AND VISUAL ART EDUCATION

Though before the establishment of the UBE programme, the Nigeria teacher according to Tabotndip (2009) has been trained and fully equipped with different skills, competencies and techniques to cope with the challenges in the education sector. However, this training was basically on literary and grammar studies with little or no technical knowledge, this policy innovations in educational sector.

Consequently, the Universal Basic Education model as currently practiced, Stresses Early childhood Care and Development care (ECCDE). As observed by Tijani (2011), the importance of art in early childhood cannot be over emphasized. The anther opened that while learning and development occur naturally in young children, they will not occur automatically without conscious contributions from adults either as parents or as teacher. The another conclude by adding that the one way to nature child development is through art, because if properly taught saves as basic to individual development since they move than any other subject, awaken all “sense”, however, this development should not be considered separately from the rest of the child’s development or evolving capacities.

Art generally and visual art in particular contained some psychological attribute that can help in the growth of a child, which include; motor output, imaery memory, meaning, perception and aesthetics. However, a significant proportion of our primary, Junior and even Senior Secondary pupils and Students find it difficult to understand and embrace this underlying attributes of arts just like mathematics. This is largely attributed to the persistent use of traditional teaching methods, which mostly emphasized abstractism even in the teaching and learning arts subject, as if the entire nation was and still inn a slumber. Many institutions producing teachers are still toeing the old lines of literacy and grammer studies to the detriment of the current demands of technological knowledge. Though not entirely their making as most of the institutions either have antiquated technical facilities
or none at all. Even where there are, there are no experts to man them to the benefit of the recipients.

Similarly, learning result-oriented UBE programme, Robert – Okah (2000) agreed that instructional materials that has art attributes such as audio visual assets, graphic packages, pictures, models and illustrated materials are indispensable for effective teaching and learning. Their use does not only make learning enjoyable, but practical and lively. He added that proper deployment of these instructional materials helps to create material pictures of lesions in the minds of the taught. Regrettably, the UBE scheme designers did not adequately exploit these, even where the seem to have little input about arts attributes, the teachers lack the technological know-how and basic materials.

CONCEPTS AND STRIVE FOR QUALITY EDUCATION AND TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCEMENT

Generally speaking today’s quality service delivery, be it in our educational drive or in our technological advancement, has assumed a make or break factor, the difference between success and failure. Consequently, education as a concepts according to Obara (2004; 3) in Farant (1980) creates two implicit ideas. One is that of leading out into new knowledge and experience. And the other is that of feeding and thereby growing and developing. Both ideas put to the fact that education is an essential process in human development. Similarly, Bell-Gam (1995), observed that education is the aggregate of all the process by means of which a person develops abilities, attitudes other forms of positive behavior and of positive value in the society in which he or she lives. This also cornfield that, it is developmental and quality transformatory in nature. From the foregoing the institution vested with the above task and responsibilities in ensuring quality education for all is the school, as a concept, education today still retains its original meaning and our society should strive towards creative learning.

On the other hand, technology according to Ogwo (1996), means the systematic applications of scientific or other organization knowledge to practical task. From the education point of view, what can be understood in this definition is the application scientific or other organization knowledge practical task of providing quality education for all. Therefore, this view endorses Buseri, (2001), where he averred that technological development have made very tremendous progress in all facets of human Endeavour worldwide. Some of the areas so well touched are: education, information technology, transportation, health care delivery service, hosing, agriculture, clothing and feeding habits to mention but a few. Hence, this paper emphases the fact that visual art discipline promotes creative and develop imagination for national development. Nigeria in her quest for quality education and technological advancement cannot afford to have a lukewarm attitude towards the acquisition of basic knowledge of visual art education for faster and adaption the concepts.

VISUAL ARTS AND EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

Ellah (1998), while reviewing educational development in Nigeria opined that the earliest days in the history of civilization, the state and its organization have always been intimately associated with education and educational development. He continued that in Nigeria, educational development was greatly influenced by the colonizers who had some educational experience in the early years were thus tremendously influenced by the educational background of the colonizers. But for the development of visual art in particular, this can be traced to the nineteenth century Christian Missionaries who emphasis the use of alphabetical symbols as a tool for basic knowledge.
However, Talabi (1979), while reviewing art education in Africa and most importantly in Nigeria, opined that the changes that took place in the study and practice of art is with the emergence of European influence leading to divergence from native interest. According to the study, this era witnessed a new vogue in the study of art and large-scale marauding of native art and substitution with foreign influence. According to Ganagana (2001), art has helped the individual to appreciate the importance and the study of visual art to the child in particular, and the society at large. He also added that this trend contributed immensely in enlightening individuals, the inevitable role played by visual art as it from the bedrock of all discipline. Curiously, Odesanmi (2000) affirmed that creativity and visual arts are two inseparable bed-mates, the products of their romance are inventions, break-through, technological achievements and so on. Akolo (1992) agrees that creativity is the foundation of technology. He concluded that no country should take her education system with a light hand as it affects creativity. These views no doubt confirmed that creativity is one of the tendencies that will give way to invention and then to technological achievement.

Consequently, there arises the challenges of global networking in learning which technological advancement has thrown up, this challenges has also given right for necessary adaptation of visual art related courses, since it possesses contents that can accelerate learning, because it has been psychologically proven that what can not be comprehend in text form can be understood and well communicated in pictorial form. Corroborating this fact, Oladumiye (2002), opined that properly fused in our system, the audience (conference, lecture, workshop) would through varieties of visual art properties get a better responses. This view as identified by various studies can no longer appear irrelevant in our quest for the attainment of technological advancement and quality education for all, but will improve and grow with the trends of socio-economic and educational development of our society.

VISUAL ART AND TECHNOLOGICAL BREAK-THROUGH

Obara (2004:5) in Ukeji (199), while appraising the expectations of an educational technologist agreed that in the context of his/her professional practice, educational technologist is that creative artist always looking for new combination of media and teaching strategies in order to achieve better teaching /learning process. Again, in this era of information technology where computer is playing an important role, Abimbade (1999) align himself with the relevant of computer technology and literacy in our educational system as enshrined in the Federal Government National Policy in Computer Literacy launched in 1988. According to the policy, the intent of government appears to centre around the need to ensure that everyone appreciates:

- The impact of information and computer technology in today’s society
- The importance of the effective use of information to the individual and the society.
- The role of computers in information management, and
- The techniques by which information in processed, managed and communicated.

The interest here is on the later, for instance, the ability to create a presentation with Power Point which seems to be one of the benefits of technological advancement in our education sector, depends on the understanding of what tools and recourse that are available to the users for designing and delivery of a good presentations. To prepare a paper or lecture for presentation electronically, one has to be confident about the information that is fielded in a slide. If it is not important to you, then it will definitely n3ot going to be important to your audience. Based on this, it is very important to plan the content of the presentation based on its purpose and your knowledge of your audience.
Interestingly, information technologist equally recognized the important of visual art components. The introduction of power-point software by Microsoft has made it easier as it contained a tool designed, to assist with the creation and delivery of a presentation in slide show, providing text and pictures to help an audience understand what a presenter is telling them. However, like any tool, it must be well used, unless one understand the concept involved in designing a good presentation. Consequently, power point will only enable one to create and deliver professional presentations, but the effectiveness of the presentation is dependant on the manipulation of artistic properties installed into the system like; bullet text, interesting pictures, charts, media elements, colouring and animations. Therefore, denying self the basic knowledge of visual art education as far as the objectives of Universal Basic Education is concerned is highly academically misleading and technologically naive.

CONCLUSION

Information gathered from this paper has no doubt, revealed that in quite a number of instances, basic knowledge or mastery in the manipulation of artistic properties will no doubt be seen as a recipe in effective delivery of qualitative teaching and learning vis a vis UBE scheme, since it has been psychologically proven that what is difficult for a slow learner to comprehend in text form, can be understood in pictorial form even faster. Therefore, stakeholders in our educational sector should look inward and take advantages of abundant resourcefulness of visual art education, if the growth of technology advancement and the component of UBE is to be used as a driving force to attain the vision 2020-20 of the Nigeria.

RECOMMENDATION

In the light of the above, since the acquisition of information and communication technology is assuming a determinant factor in our technological advancement for quality education for all, using Universal Basic Education as a driving force, some useful recommendations are necessary here in other to achieve the set out goals.

1. In other to bridge the communication gap that has existed between teachers and learners, taking cognizance of e-activity, especially in our foundation level of education, every teacher should acquire basic knowledge in art education to make teaching complex and abstract subjects more simpler and meaningful to learner.

2. Since art features has been identified as a recipe for, and linkage between information and communication technology and quality approach to learning, government of Nigeria and other stakeholders in educational sector should give more priority to the training and retraining of visual art teachers in our basic to tertiary level of education.

3. As the country is fast becoming industrialized, Government should now begin to consider the desirability of including competent artists in the membership of the planning group of this nation. And finally, the Federal Government should implement recommendations of related committees or professional groups.

4. Expose our UBE – Teachers to various instructional styles and stages of children’s artistic development.

5. Provide adequate training and retraining for UBE teachers emphasizing importance of the role of visual art elements and characteristics in teaching and learning process.

REFERENCES


