

VISUAL ART CURRICULUM FOR SELF-RELIANCE

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Abstract

One problem that has adversely affected instructional processes in the visual art is the curriculum. Over the years, educational planners do not think it necessary to draw a broad based curriculum in the visual art that will actually define the four elements of curriculum as presented by Tyler and other prominent educational philosophers — a curriculum (hat will emphasize academic, technical and commercial implications and prepare the learners to be productive after graduation. This paper looks at the issue of visual art curriculum and self-reliance since current educational issues are advocating for self-employment. To discuss this topic, the constituents of visual art, objectives of visual art, concept of self-reliance, curriculum issue in visual art and conclusion are examined.

Introduction

The primary goal of education is to modify a man and make him become useful in the society. For education to truly achieve this goal in man, all the processes must be adequately planned, effectively arranged and implemented in stages. Hence, education is the ground on which the foundation of a nation is formed. Therefore, as improvement in other fields of education grows on a daily basis, visual art still seeks ways to solve rising problems on the best form of instruction in the various levels of education. This problem is the result of observable defect in the curriculum.

The structure of the visual art curriculum is not planned against the broad outline of the social, technological and economic base of the society. As a vocational course that is expected to turnout self reliant and self-employed individuals after graduation, the curriculum must be channelled to emphasize the goals and objectives in a way to make for a systematic process from one educational level to another. In this way, learners will be able to acquire the necessary technical skills to become self-reliant and self-employed after school. Uzoagba (2000), states that education must prepare the youth of the nation to be useful citizens and fulfilled members of the society.

Consequently, one of the four national educational goals of the Federal Ministry of Education (1998) is the acquisition of appropriate skills and the development of mental, physical and social abilities and competencies as equipment for the individual to live in and contribute to the development of the society. To achieve this goal, art teachers must be well trained to understand the visual art syllabus and scheme, they must be very broad in the theory and practical art, "they must also be knowledgeable in both the cultural and contemporary arts of the society. This should be so because the visual art curriculum cannot be planned in isolation of the calibre of art teachers that will implement it.

Visual arts are those artistic endeavours that sought to. communicate primarily through the eyes. For the purpose of the study, this paper will not engage in any classification but only list them. The constituents of visual art are painting, sculpture, drawing, architecture, art education, history of art, art appreciation, graphics, ceramics, textiles, photography, industrial art, printing, commercial art, and craft technology.

The planning of visual art curriculum tend to appear tedious, however, in the light of the foregoing, this paper makes effort to discuss the topic "the issue in visual art curriculum for self- reliance", by examining the constituents of visual art. objectives of visual art. concept of self-reliance, curriculum issue in visual art. conclusion and recommendations.

The Objectives of Visual Art Education

This paper considered it necessary to exhume the objectives of visual arl education for a proper understanding of the discussion. These objectives as presented by the UPB teacher and secondary school syllabus (1977) include:

- (1) To develop a language for expressing ideas, feelings, emotions, and mood through a variety of art experiences.
- (2) To learn the proper use of tools, equipment and materials.

- (3) To help students to develop their mental and physical capabilities.
- (4) To stimulate the student's power of imagination and cultivate vision.
- (5) To help students develop interest for future vocation in visual art and
- (6) To widen the student's scope of general education through which they acquire patience, perseverance, spontaneity, inspiration, originality, resourcefulness and sympathy.

Concept of Self-Reliance

The concept of self-reliance is built around the production of people who have good leadership qualities - leaders who are capable of taking initiatives, commercial risk, appropriate decisions as well as effectively managing their productive endeavours. These qualities are found in the objectives of visual art education. While this means is that the academic and skill acquired while in school by learners must not be separated. Oka for (1984) in Akudolu (2001) states that what makes a man to live and to function is the concern of education.

Self-reliance simply means being independent. In the opinion of Anyakoha (2003), self-reliance is the ability of an individual or nation to be dependent on himself or itself for a living by process of self-employment. Therefore, a self-reliant person is an individual who engages in a worthwhile career such as in the visual art. In the process of making this individual, the visual art curriculum must carefully spell out the stage-by-stage instructional processes intended to develop the learner.

Self-reliance in visual art is a process by which an individual acquires not just skills of literacy, numerical and vocational efficiency, but also inculcates in the person a totality of experiences that will enable the individual to live effectively and efficiently within the human society. Any meaningful educational process of this nature will establish and sustain personal and societal self-reliance.

Curriculum Issue in Visual Art

Curriculum is an orderly arrangement of activities that is intentionally developed to provide educational experience for one or more students. In this conception, the curriculum consists of activities in which the student is to engage and which are presumed to have educational consequences irrespective of who plans it. Eisner (1972) defines curriculum as a series of activities designed to engage the student in some content that is intended to have educational consequences. The curriculum must define the educational ends to be attained, the educational contents, the educational experiences likely to attain those ends, and the effective organisation of those experiences and evaluation.

Ughamadu (1992) in Akudolu (2001) quotes Tyler and Taba as proposing four elements of curriculum which are goals and objectives, learning content, learning experiences and evaluation.

The question now is, what is the best type of art that can meet the demands of the current society? What kind of approach to art will help prepare the student for career which will gain him a livelihood and at the same time enable him to perform a constructive service to society. In the creation of art forms, one needs skill with which to express ideas, images, and feelings. Some of these skills can be developed in instructional contexts, contents which aim not at the development of expressive art forms but at the exploration and mastery of material. Once such skills are developed, they can be used in expressive contexts, context in which those skills are used imaginatively and sensibly for future economic benefit.

A curriculum in visual art can have a rhythm to it, one that oscillates between the instructional and the expressive. The instruction helps learners acquire a repertoire of skills that make expression possible; the expressive intentionally encourages learners to expand and explore the ideas, images, and feelings through the use of skills in that repertoire.

Visual art curriculum needs sufficient continuity so that skills can be developed, refined, and internalized and hence become a part of an expressive repertoire. If learners are to acquire, for instance, the ability to critically appraise visual art, they need an opportunity to do so. They need a chance to look at visual art to compare visual art forms, and to talk about them.

A studio-oriented curriculum emphasizes the productive realm of the visual art curriculum; it is concerned with helping learners externalize through visual form their internal feelings and ideas. It places high priority on the productive aspect of art.

Conclusion

Since ways are sought to provide learners in the visual art with the needed skill for self-reliance, it is expected that educational planners should come out with a well prepared curriculum for effective and

efficient instructional processes that will provide enjoyment and enrichment of both practical / vocational skills and aesthetic faculties in the learners,

For this reason, therefore, the following recommendations are made:

(1). If visual art education must be adequately carried out in the best form, it must not only teach learners to construct and manipulate art materials but also offer opportunities for art appreciation and the study of history of art. (2). The curriculum of art in general education must be orderly organized and arranged to give the

background of ideas in the aspects of visual art including art theories and crafts. (3). Parents should recognize and encourage not only the academic faculties of their children, but the display of honest vocational skills that will refine their integrity for self-reliance. (4). Both the Federal and State Governments are urged to set up a machinery that will encourage honest and devoted self-reliant attitude through recognition and awards, and discourage laziness and avarice.

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