

UTILIZING FLIPPED LEARNING STRATEGIES IN TEACHING TRUMPET TO JUNIOR SECONDARY STUDENTS OF AUSTICA MEMORIA COLLEGE NANKA

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Abstract

The challenges associated with the traditional method of teaching seem to have bored the Nigerian junior secondary school students over the learning of trumpet and other western musical instruments; although many scholars have come up with numerous methods. This study investigated flipped learning strategies in teaching trumpet to junior secondary school students of Austica Memorial College, Nanka in Orumba North LGA of Anambra State. The study aims to make the learning of trumpet simplified for junior secondary school students to attain professional level even as young students. The study which is hinged on Benjamin Bloom's theory of Mastery learning adopted practical methods of instruction that advocates for students to move forward at their own pace as they master knowledge, skills and dispositions. Findings show that students exposed to learning using the flipped method achieved higher than those taught with other traditional methods. It was recommended that music teachers should revisit the instructional methods employed in teaching while parents will also see to the basic educational needs of their wards.

Keywords: Flipped learning, Traditional methods, Secondary School Students, Teaching trumpet

Introduction

Over the years, music has been thought to younger people. There is evidence to suggest that people do better when they are exposed to music at an early stage of life even when they never knew it will become their career. Numerous Nigerian music stars started their music career at a very young age. Flavour Nabania started his music career at the age of 13. Another Nigerian Artist who started at an early age is Tiwa Savage and so many popular musicians. The importance of exposing younger persons to music cannot be overemphasized. Yue (2012) shared her life experience on the importance of early music involvement thus:

Last year, I went back to my home town in Nanjing, China for my holidays. When I saw my piano in the living room, I was very excited to try it and see whether or not I could play it again. I just tried several single tones on the piano and then automatically played my favourite melody very smoothly. This action surprised me as I have not touched the piano for more than two years! Then, I endeavoured to ask my father, as he is a musician and also an experienced music teacher, why I could still do it. He simply said, "Because you started when you were five". It is best to learn music at an early stage from my experience (p.40).

She went further to opine that "Music is an active mediator leading brain activities which assist different parts of the brain to develop at the same time, such as motor and auditory areas" (p.41). Music builds up the retentive memory of the child and makes him have a smart brain which has a positive effect on the child's upbringing and even in his education. Esimone (2014) illustrated that 'music is one of the ways for children to remember stories and learn about the world around them. And using music as a stimulus can affect one's emotion and makes information easier to remember and this is more in children" (p.70)

Historically, music as a subject of study in Nigeria has existed since 1842, marked by the introduction of mission schools that created an atmosphere for teaching and practice of European music in Nigeria (Adegbite, 2001 and Omojola, 1994). The current form of music education, however, takes off from the Nigerian National Policy on Education (1981), which highlights that the Federal Government, realizing the importance of arts and culture in the development of science and technology, has given Arts and Cultural Education their legitimate right in the nation's educational system from the primary, post-primary and post-secondary institutions with their educational goals stipulated. Hence, the subject Cultural and Creative Arts, which comprised, arts & crafts, music, and drama was properly enshrined in both the Junior and Senior Secondary Schools' curriculum by the National Education Research Council. The music curriculum, which is available only at the JSS 1 and 2 levels, focuses on harmony and counterpoint, aural training, history and literature of music, and performance. In primary schools, the teaching of music is limited to nursery rhymes and singing, with only a few private schools teaching the playing of musical instruments. Some organizations such as the Musical Society of Nigeria's School of Music at Onikan, The Ademiluyi Music Foundation at Surulere, Ten Strings Music Academy also at Surulere, Parara Music School at Egbeda and Masha Music Academy at Victoria Island, all in Lagos, teach children how to play musical

instruments and prepare them for formal examinations such as the Association Board of Royal School of Music, Trinity College of Music, and also the MUSON Theory and Practical Music Examinations. These institutions have children choirs and orchestras that hold seasonal concerts. There are also scores of private music teachers offering home teaching services in piano, trumpet, saxophone, singing, and the strings. Youths organizations and para-military outfits such as the Boys' Brigade, the African Lass & Lasses Brigade, the Salvation Army, and the National Civil Defence Corps organize music and band-training workshops for their members (<https://www.musicinafrica.net/magazine/music-education-nigeria>). From the existing music curriculum, music is mostly studied at the Junior Secondary School level as a compulsory subject, apart from being a course on its own at the tertiary institution.

Although trumpet has not been one of the major instruments studied in the junior secondary school section (the keyboard is the basic instrument used, based on its versatility and arrangement, it is used for comprehension and exponentiation of music theory and sometimes the recorder is also used as the major and affordable melodic instrument) but some schools who believe in exploring the skills of the students, provided some western orchestral instruments to form an orchestra and to build the musical skills of the students, one of such schools is Austica Memorial College, Nanka (AMC).

Austica Memorial College is located at Nanka in Orumba North Local Government Area of Anambra State. It is a boarding school with over six hundred students (all boys). The school has some skill acquisitions that are mandatory for every student to participate and learn at least one of the skills. Instrumental music is one of them. AMC Nanka has a guitar chamber orchestra with about 30 students with their guitar each, a keyboard class with about 30 students with their keyboard each, a pop band with 5 talking drummers, and a symphonic orchestra (over 70 players) with over 100 students involved.

Music learning at AMC Nanka has had its ups and down based on the system or method used in teaching music. The trumpet is one of the instruments that pose a serious challenge on the students due to the prior knowledge they have about it that it is the most difficult instrument. This negative thought has scared away too many students from learning the trumpet. Suffice to say that trumpet is not a difficult instrument but like any other instrument which has a particular method of learning it, but the problem lies in the method or system some teachers use in teaching the trumpet which has made the learning of trumpet seem difficult or create the impression that trumpet is a difficult instrument to learn.

Problems that Necessitated this Study

The trumpet is a brass instrument that uses just three valves in playing all the keys and musical notes. Too many people have this orientation that the trumpet is the most difficult instrument because they feel it is very hard to make a good sound not to talk of playing all the musical notes with just three valves, unlike the Saxophone that has all the keys that represent all the musical notes on it. The learning of trumpet has been a serious problem over the years; too many people who engaged in playing the trumpet easily lose interest, thereby discontinuing the learning because it takes utmost concentration, time and patience to produce sound on the trumpet. Nearly all trumpet players will, at some point in the course of their studies, encounter occasional problems. These problems are temporary, in most cases, and are caused by different factors such as incorrect practice habits, lip sores, defective equipment, or illness. The three major problems encountered by nearly all trumpet players are (1) air in tone (2) inability to play softly (3) double buzz.

It is imperative to know that the traditional method used in teaching trumpet proved to be ineffective in AMC Nanka and the above-mentioned problems encountered in learning trumpet necessitated this study because it was obvious that the majority of the students of Austica Memorial College learning trumpet at a time, discontinued and opted for another instrument while it took others who persevered a longer time to learn the instrument.

Some of the problems of teaching trumpet at AMC Nanka that necessitated this study include:

- Students find it difficult to produce sound with the instrument making them believe it consumes and requires too much energy to produce sound;
- The trumpet is an instrument with just three valves, some students believe it will be difficult to memorize all the twelve diatonic scales in music; and
- Students have not been exposed to professional trumpeters, the internet and other sources that aid effective learning.

This research involves a practical method by engaging a group of students into trumpet learning for some time. Therefore, the study is aimed at Utilising Flipped Learning Strategies in teaching trumpets to Junior Secondary Students of Austica Memorial College, Nanka.

Conceptual Classifications

Flipped Learning

Jonathan Bergmann and Aaron Sams started the Flipped learning concept and were further developed by Salman Khan. Bergmann and Sams in Suwarna and Balakrishnan (2016) have described the Flipped Classroom approach in a wider view. According to them, the Flipped Classroom approach is a setting where students take charge of their learning and this increases communication and contact time between students and teachers. In support of the assertion above, Arnold-Garza in Ojukwu & Onyiuke (2021) explain that flipped learning is a pedagogical approach in which the conventional notion of classroom based learning is inverted, so that students are introduced to the learning material before class, with classroom time then being used to deepen understanding through discussion with peers and problem solving activities facilitated by teachers. Ojukwu and Onyiuke further highlighted that in traditional learning, students acquire knowledge in a classroom context and then sent away to synthesize, analyse and evaluate this after the class but in the flipped classroom, students acquire knowledge before the class and use classroom period to practice and apply concepts and ideas through interaction with peers and teachers.

The Flipped Classroom approach then gives priority and responsibility to students where all students are engaged in their learning and the teacher becomes the “guide on the side” and not the “sage on the stage” as described by Baker in Suwarna and Balakrishnan (2016). Flipped learning concept promotes dependability and democratization of learning where the autonomy is in students’ hands to view the lecture videos anytime and anywhere before coming to class. Sams & Bergmann in Zamzami and Siti (2016) opine: “Flipped classroom is known as a student-centred approach to learning where the students are more active than the instructor in the classroom activity. In this case, the instructor acts as a facilitator to motivate, guide, and give feedback on students’ performance” (p.315).

The fact that science and technology have infused a great impact on the music education system cannot be overemphasised. Flipped learning can be defined as an E-Learning system where the students are allowed to discover the topic of discourse on their own using electronic devices after which the teacher lays more emphasis on the students' findings in an interactive class. Mathews (2015) asserts that “Flipped classrooms are a form of blended learning in which students

engage with materials in an online environment and then practice concepts in the classroom with teacher's support" (p.58).

Flipped learning can be applied in any classroom where the students have access to the internet and other electronic devices that can aid learning because flipped learning from every indication is an E-learning system where students are fully in charge and also have the opportunity to have versed learning that they can get ideas and knowledge from different sources, evaluate it and bring out a tangible result. Flipped Learning Network in Jenkins, Bokosmaty, Brown, Browne, Gao, Hanson & Kupatadze (2017) describes flipped learning as a pedagogical approach in which direct instruction moves from the group learning space to the individual learning space, and the resulting group space is transformed into a dynamic, interactive learning environment where the educator guides students as they apply concepts and engage creatively in the subject matter.

Too many scholars have opined their view on flipped learning; from the synthesis of these exponents, it is gathered that Flipped Learning is a technical system of learning that proposes a check and balance between "Online learning" and "on-campus face to face learning" activities. In this study, the students of AMC Nanka will be introduced to flipped learning strategy through the use of electronic gadgets and the internet to enhance their learning of trumpet.

The Trumpet

The trumpet is a Western wind instrument that belongs to the brass family and is very versatile with a wide range of playing techniques. These techniques made most people feel that the trumpet is a very difficult instrument to learn. Sound is made by blowing air through pursed lips and into the mouthpiece which courses a vibration that excites the air into the trumpet, which then produces a sound. The trumpet as an outdoor instrument does not transmit sound into any machine; most of the sounds stay inside where it forms standing waves that draw energy from the player's lips. The pitch produced by the embouchure is amplified by the instrument and the pitch is largely determined by the position and tension of the lips (Embouchure). A compendious expatiation on the constructive nature of the trumpet was made by Boštjan (2013). Trumpets are among the oldest musical instruments, dating back to at least 1500 BC. The oldest surviving examples of trumpets are two instruments that were discovered in the tomb of Tutankhamun in 1922. The trumpet is constructed of brass tubing bent twice into a rounded oblong shape. The modern trumpet has three valves and a

bore that is partly cylindrical, partly conical. Careful design of these parts is critical to the intonation of the instrument. The trumpet and trombone have a cylindrical section of considerable length, while the fluegelhorn, French horn, euphonium, and tuba, often referred to as instruments of conical bore, are tapered throughout much of their length. The three valves of the trumpet add lengths of tubing to the instrument to lower the pitch. The segments of tubing that can be added by the valves lower the fundamental by a tone (1st valve), a semitone (2nd valve) and a tone-and-a-half (3d valve). Based on a length of about 140 cm [3], valve 1 would have to add 17.9 cm, valve 2 8.6 cm, and valve 3 would need to add 27.8 cm [4]. Used singly and in combination, these valves make the instrument fully chromatic.

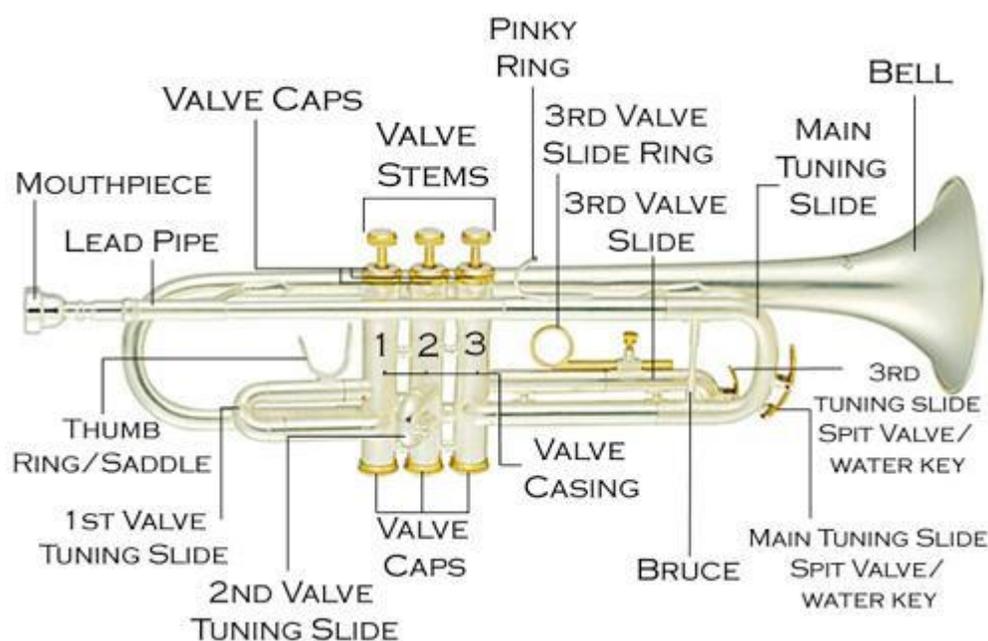


Figure 1: The figure shows all major parts of a trumpet: bell, valves, lead pipe, mouthpiece and others.

A musical wind instrument consists of a very nearly linearly-behaved resonator closely coupled to a nonlinear acoustic generator – the reed, lips or air jet produced by the player. The resonator is usually a tube, in which a column of air is set into vibration by the player blowing into a mouthpiece set at the end of the resonator. The playing frequency is determined, to first order, by the resonances in the bore of the instrument and the frequency of the vibrating lips. Upstream from the lips lays the player's vocal tract with acoustic resonances that has a large effect on performance technique.

The fact that the trumpet based on its usage in Nigeria is a versatile instrument cannot be overemphasized because the trumpet can serve as an outdoor instrument and also serve as an indoor instrument depending on the player and the method of playing unlike other western instruments in Nigeria. The trumpet, as a kind of normal instrument, is very popular among students, teachers and relevant music workers and lovers. Compared with the playing of other instruments, the trumpet has its uniqueness either in the form of tune or the contents of the music. Trumpet player not only can demonstrate the softness of music but also can present the passion and strength of the music. Quite a few music lovers have been working hard, studying various methods in trumpet playing, to develop the speciality of trumpet playing and to play their favourite music.

Bloom's Mastery Theory

Mastery learning (or, as it was initially called, "learning for mastery" is an instructional strategy and educational philosophy, first formally proposed by Benjamin Bloom in 1968. Mastery learning maintains that students must achieve a level of mastery in prerequisite knowledge before moving forward to learn subsequent information. If a student does not achieve mastery on the test, they are given additional support in learning and reviewing the information and then tested again. This cycle continues until the learner accomplishes mastery, and they may then move on to the next stage.

Mastery learning methods suggest that the focus of instruction should be the time required for different students to learn the same material and achieve the same level of mastery. This is very much in contrast with classic models of teaching, which focus more on differences in students' ability and where all students are given approximately the same amount of time to learn and the same set of instructions. In mastery learning, there is a shift in responsibilities, so that student's failure is more due to the instruction and not necessarily lack of ability on his or her part. Therefore, in a mastery learning environment, the challenge becomes providing enough time and employing the right instructional strategies so that all students can achieve the same level of learning.

Guskay (2005) highlighted that Benjamin Bloom in 1968 outlined a specific instructional strategy to make use of feedback and corrective procedure, labelling it "learning for mastery" and later in 1971 shortened the name to simply

“mastery learning”. With this strategy, teachers first organize the concepts and skills they want students to learn into instructional units that typically involve about a week or two of instructional time. Following initial instruction on the unit, teachers administer a brief “formative” assessment based on the unit’s learning goals. Instead of signifying the end of the unit, however, this formative assessment’s purpose is to give students information, or feedback, on their learning. It helps students identify what they have learned well to that point and what they need to learn better. Paired with each formative assessment are specific “corrective” activities for students to use in correcting their learning difficulties. Most teachers match these “correctives” to each item or set of prompts within the assessment so that students need to work on only those concepts or skills not yet mastered. In other words, the correctives are individualized. They may point out additional sources of information on a particular topic, such as page numbers in the textbook or workbook where the topic is discussed. They may identify alternative learning resources such as different textbooks, learning kits, alternative materials, CDs, videos, or computerized 3 instructional lessons. Or they may simply suggest sources of additional practice, such as study guides, independent or guided practice activities, or collaborative group activities. With the feedback and corrective information gained from a formative assessment, each student has a detailed prescription of what more needs to be done to master the concepts or skills from the unit (Bloom, Hastings, & Madaus, 1971:3).

Having examined this theory, the summary and its implication supported the flipped learning method, which encourages and exposes the students to the use of alternative learning resources such as electronic gadgets and the internet.

Application of Flipped Learning Method in Teaching Trumpet to Students of Austica Memorial College, Nanka

Stage 1

Fifteen (15) Junior Students between the ages of 12 and 15 were selected for the study through random sampling, having known their perception about the trumpet, the instructor devised means to correct the wrong perception of the students about learning trumpet by taking them on a class where they watched a video of some little children of their age-grade and even below, playing the trumpet at ease with a clear tone. The majority of the students were surprised because they did not believe that a child of their age or even below can play the trumpet so effectively without much stress or energy. This made most of them

declare interest and developed the zeal to learn and be like the children they watched playing on the screen.

Stage 2

The first trumpet teaching class started with fundamentals and background to playing the trumpet after which the students were taught the basic way of positioning the lips to produce a good sound and a good articulation. Due to individual differences as regards the shape and size of the lips, the students were given homework on the basic way of positioning the lips to produce a good sound that was described by the teacher. They were instructed to learn how to produce a good sound on the trumpet before the next class by browsing on the internet, other devices or learning from other professionals.

Stage 3

In the next class which was a discussion class, most of the students were able to produce a good sound while some went as far as playing some notes of a scale with a clear tone. The instructor did not spend much time in teaching articulation and producing of clear and soft tone again rather little emphasis was made on it and went to another topic. The teacher continued with this method and was able to record a huge success in a very short time, unlike the previous traditional method that took a long time for the students to learn how to play the trumpet effectively.

Discussion of Findings

Flipped learning strategy proves to be one of the best methods that could be used to teach students musical instruments. Come to think of it, the best method of learning is that which allows the students to work hard in search of extensive knowledge. The instructor, having taught trumpet to the first set of students and recorded success in about six months, embarked on teaching trumpet to the new set of students by applying the flipped learning strategies, a better success was recorded in just three months. The flipped method went a long way in helping the students to be busy because the concept creates a flexible environment for learning for the students. This method of learning made the students learn how to work hard and get extensive knowledge without being dependent on the teacher. When students go in search of extensive knowledge based on the topic

of discourse, they will be opportune to get too many ideas that will even help them in further learning and also widen their knowledge.

Finally, the concept also helped in creating an avenue for interaction between students and the teacher and students to students with more face to face and in-class time, and also created opportunities for the students to interact with others especially during collaborative group activities.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this research, the following recommendations are made.

1. Parents should provide and allow their wards to make use of video and internet accessible gadgets irrespective of their age though; they should be monitored to make sure they do not digress from their assignment.
2. Secondary schools should provide enough internet-accessible gadgets and make them available to be used by the students (including the Junior Secondary School Students) but should be monitored to avoid digression.
3. Teachers should strive to change from the traditional method of teaching and avail themselves of the opportunity to learn new technology and other methods of teaching.
4. Music educators should encourage the use of flipped learning strategies especially in teaching musical instruments to Junior Secondary School Students.

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