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**TEACHING AND EVALUATION
IN REGULAR AND
SPECIAL SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

Edited by

M. A. Araromi

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Published by:
Royal People (Nigeria) Ltd.,
University of Ibadan Post Office Box 22110,
A7 East Building Office Complex, Oyo/Ajibode
Junction, Ibadan, Nigeria

**TEACHING AND EVALUATION IN REGULAR
AND SPECIAL SECONDARY SCHOOLS**
(An Effective and Creative Approach)

Edited by

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Junction, Ibadan, Nigeria.
E-mail:royalpeople2004@yahoo.com

ISBN: 978-32296-4-8

First Published 2013

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Creative and Effective Teaching of Yoruba

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Introduction

Yorùbá language, according to Ojo (2006), is assuming greater sociolinguistic and socio-cultural functions at home (Nigeria) and abroad (West Africa, Europe, Americas and the Caribbean), and acquiring new speakers (of various proficiency levels) at an all time high. Yorùbá cultural values and religious beliefs continue to dominate the cultures and religions of various parts of the African Diaspora and beyond. The language has also been the subject of a significant number of theoretical and descriptive linguistic investigations at home and abroad. This suggests that there are enough linguists interested in the language. Unfortunately, the high level of interest, strength and growth has not actually translated into a high level of applied linguistic research in the acquisition of the language by non-natives.

In the Yoruba community, for example, the mother tongue is the manifestation of traditional education *per se*. The goal of making the individual functional within the society and of good character in all its ramifications is entrenched in the mother tongue. Hence, reflection of the philosophy of life, the trade, traditional medicine, value of tolerance, perseverance, honesty, truthfulness, *et cetera* are all effectively inculcated in the individual through the mother tongue.

All these realities have so much influenced the conviction of many scholars on the great strength of the mother tongue that, Awoniyi (1978), even claims that no other subject taught in schools has a greater influence on a child's all-round education than his mother tongue. Even to European writers like Tiffen, (1975), it seems highly reasonable that very young children learn best through their mother tongue. That may explain why the Phelps-Stokes Commission 'of inquiry noticed the failure of the missionaries to adapt school work to African conditions and, hence, in its reports of 1922, recommended, among other things, that the tribal language be used in the lower elementary standards. This conviction, as it has been pointed out, promoted the Federal Government to make it a policy to provide an education at the primary school level, grounded in the children's mother tongues.

While the level of research into the acquisition of the Yorùbá language by natives is significantly low, there is however a better understanding of how native speakers acquire their language and gain cultural proficiency. It is therefore judicious on the part of those interested in the teaching and learning of Yorùbá language to consider how it can be taught creatively and effectively.

Creative Teaching in Yorùbá Subject Lessons

According to the NACCCE report (1999), creative teaching is defined as 'using imaginative approaches to make learning more interesting and effective'. Teaching for creativity is defined as forms of teaching that are intended to develop young people's own creative thinking or behaviour.

Techniques for creative teaching

In order to teach creativity, one must think creatively; that is, it will take a great deal of creative effort to bring out the most creative thinking in classes. Of course, creativity is not the only required element for creative instructors, they must also know content areas of the subject and know how to create an appropriate learning environment. Certain questions must also be answer by any creative teacher. When will it be most important for you to offer direct instruction? When is discovery most important? What are your expectations and how can you best communicate them?

Because answers to these questions are so diverse — even for individual instructors teaching different courses or at various times of the semester — no one technique will fit all needs. Here are some approaches or techniques for teaching creatively as summarized by Craft(2004).

i. Brainstorming

What it is: Brainstorming, a useful tool to develop creative solutions to a problem, is a lateral thinking process by which students are asked to develop ideas or thoughts that may seem crazy or shocking at first. Participants can then change and improve them into original and useful ideas. Brainstorming can help define an issue, diagnose a problem, or possible solutions and resistance to proposed solutions.

How to use it: Define the problem clearly; lay out any criteria to be met. Keep the session focused on the problem, but be sure that no one criticizes or evaluates ideas during the session, even if they are clearly impractical. Criticism dampens creativity in the initial stages of a brainstorming session. Ideas should be listed, rather than developed deeply on the spot; the idea is to generate possibilities. Accordingly, participants should be encouraged to pick up on ideas offered to create new ones.

One person should be appointed as notes-taker, and ideas should be studied and evaluated after the session.

Example: This technique can be used to teach 'Àlò Àpamò' and 'Àlò Àpagbè' in the secondary school.

ii. Role-playing

What it is: In most role-playing exercises, each student takes the role of a person affected by an issue and studies an issue or events from the perspective of that person.

How to use it: Role plays should give the students an opportunity to practice what they have learn and should interest the students. Provide concrete information and clear role descriptions so that students can play their roles with confidence. Once the role play is finished, spend some time on debriefing.

Example: This technique would be effective for the dramatization of any dramatic text in Yoruba and some specific aspects of Yoruba culture such "Àsà Ìsomolórúko ní Ilè Yorùbá"

iii. Storyboarding

What it is: Story-boarding can be compared to spreading students' thoughts out on a wall as they work on a project. Story boards can help with planning, ideas, communication and organization.

Benefits: This method allows students to see the interconnections, how one idea relates to another, and how pieces come together. Once the ideas flow, students become immersed in the problem and hitch-hike other ideas.

How to use it: Use a cork board or similar surface to pin up index cards, or use software such as *CorkBoard*. Begin with a set of topic cards, and under each place header cards for general points, categories, etc. Under these, place sub-heading cards that will contain ideas and details generated that support the

headers. During a story board session, consider all ideas relevant, no matter how impractical they appear.

Example: This technique can be used to research into the culture of some Yoruba tribes e.g. 'Aró dídá ní Òsogbo', "Isé ose dúdú ni Aáwé".

iv. DO IT

What it is: DO IT stands for *Define* problems, be *Open* to many possible solutions, *Identify* the best solution and then *Transform* it into effective action.

Benefits: DO IT accelerates and strengthens one's natural creative problem-solving ability and to stimulate a large number of good, diverse ideas. When time allows, students can take advantage of incubation (unconscious thinking) and research processes (find out what ideas have already been tried).

Example: Yoruba composition can be taught with this technique.

v. Questioning activity

What it is: In this exercise of questioning, students create a list of 100 questions. There are no directions regarding what questions to ask and no judgments or criticism of questions.

Benefits: Students will ask a wide range of questions, increasing students' productivity and motivation. As students focus on what they want to discover and generate their own questions, they pursue answers without prodding. Questions can be general or based on a particular topic or reading; instructors can give several examples from their own lists.

Example: With this technique excursions (*Irin Ajo*) to various cultural places can be carried out e.g. Òsun Shrine at Òsogbo, Òpá Òrànmíyàn at Ile-Ife, Òkè Olósuntà in Ìkéré-Èkìtì and a host of others.

vi. Slip writing

What it is: This method can gather ideas from large groups,

numbering from the dozens to the hundreds. Participants are given slips of paper and asked to write down ideas which are discussed or evaluated.

Benefits: This method collects a large number of ideas swiftly and creates a sense of participation or ownership at the same time.

How it is used: Each student is given a stack or note-pad of at least 25 small slips of paper. The pads can contain idea-jogging graphics or be designed so that ideas can be sorted and separated easily. A question or problem is read to the group (e.g., "How do we?" or "What would it take to?"). Students write down one idea per sheet, in any order. When writing begins to slow down, collect pads from students and offer quick feedback in the form of examples. If the group is very large, present examples from a limited sample of booklets. After the early feedback, analysis and evaluation can continue at a steadier pace to identify the most useful ideas and develop them into practicable proposals.

Example: Research (*Iwadi*) in Yoruba can be carried out with this technique. Students could be asked to supply information about idols or deities of their fathers' houses or about traditional festivals in Yorubaland.

vii). Reversal

What it is: The reversal method takes a given situation and turns it around, inside out, backwards or upside down. Any situation can be reversed in several ways.

Benefit: Looking at a familiar problem or situation in a fresh way can suggest new solutions or approaches. It does not matter whether the reversal makes sense or not.

Example: In treating essay writing that centres on "Isé Àgbè" students could be asked to look at what happens when farmers refuse to farm or what will be the outcome of flooding to the nation in the succeeding years, especially in a situation where no efforts are made by a country to arrest food shortage that could arise from such an occurrence.

Tips on Creative Teaching

There are usually situations when as a teacher you are not satisfied, why? Because all that your students do is just yawn or chat with their friends whenever you talk. How do you avoid that? Teaching creatively is highly essential to ensure your lesson with the students is made into full use.

Here are some tips as highlighted by Jeffery and Craft (2003).

- i. *Check if you're creative:* You need to tap your creativity first, only then will it flow into your classroom and finally reach your students. Know your lessons and how far out of the box can the lessons go e.g. stories, role-playing.
- ii. *Know what they need:* Be aware of the level you are teaching and the absorption of information according to age:
 - a. Kindergarten: Attracted to vibrant colors and huge fonts, high absorption of information.
 - b. Elementary: Fill them with more information in a 50 % text/ 50% pictorial method.
 - c. Secondary: Chances are they know what you're saying, but there are many things that they could be ignorant on, tap on that. Study the style of each student, cater accordingly. You must always be more knowledgeable than them to awe them.
- iii. *Study your students:* Remember names, start with ambitions, their level of understanding and compliment them. Talk on their likes/dislikes. Study their character. e.g. If the student is a quiet one, make him answer some questions moderately (else you may be mistaken to pick on him), joke about, make him feel safe to share his thoughts.
 - a. The chatterboxes: Play along with them, divert their conversation to the topic, let them get excited and bring them back to the classroom topic.
 - b. The sleepy ones: Ask them why they are sleepy, if reasonable, let them sleep for 5 minutes and let them be fresh

for the rest of the session. (You will be respected and appreciated by some students at the same time. The lesson goes through amazingly well when the student is done with his power nap.)

iv. *Vary and rotate the lesson tools:* Make them become teacher for one day – this helps them get rid of fear of getting attention. Next, use pictures/puzzles/out of the box activities to make them alert. Have competition/quizzes/tests to let them be the winner. Mix and match the lessons, so that it is not too paper-centric/rigid. Connect lessons with their likes and dislikes. Challenge their level, tease their ego a bit to make them improve themselves

v. *Change the environment:* Change the classroom environment: change seats every week, just for one lesson. Have fun making seats face each other or in a circle – focus on you being able to reach out to all students, no one sits in a corner where you can't go near them or catch them dozing away. Say please and thank you if they rebel – feed them with compliments later on.

vi. *Admit mistakes:* If you wet their books in the rain, admit your fault, and buy them new books. You become a step closer to them – make a connection then. Maintain your integrity and always be humble to your students. Be assertive to those who are stubborn, or, if they rebel too much, focus on those who require your attention. Ignorance is bliss for that day.

vii. *Break your lessons into your time > their time > lesson time.* If it's language, try explaining in local language, slowly (after a month) mention that they should start converse in that language and finally (the next month) give them small penalty if they do not speak in the language taught (use fun and interesting way of punishing, it should never embarrass the students). If it's numbers, try to experiment with the speed level of each student.

Tips

- i. Rewards and punishment should be done moderately – it should never make them vain or embarrass them in front of their peers.
- ii. Bring the kid out in them; only kids know how to have fun.
- iii. Check your mood before walking into the classroom.

Effective Teaching in Yorùbá

Teaching is a highly individualized activity, and the student-teacher interaction is an intense human relationship that encompasses a broad range of personalities and behaviours. There is no "best" or "most effective" teaching style which will work well for all teachers. Many beginning teachers attempt to imitate the style of a favourite teacher from the past, but the most successful styles are those that develop as naturally as possible from a teacher's own personal characteristics. The most effective teaching style for you will be one that reflects a combination of sound teaching techniques, knowledge of the subject, enthusiasm for teaching, and sensitivity to your own personal characteristics. For example, if you are by nature a formal person, an attempt to assume an informal manner may appear to your students to be just that, an assumed posture. Whatever your style, you can generally perform in a more relaxed manner if you simply maximize your own best personality traits. In general, if you come across to your students as a caring person, their appreciation for your personal sincerity will enhance their impression of you as a teacher.

Understandably, new teachers tend to pick the teaching method that they found the most comfortable as a student. However, an effective teacher will become proficient in a variety

of instructional methods. Since some teaching strategies may be more appropriate than others for attaining a specific educational goal, you may wish to vary your instructional method based on your daily lesson, your learning objectives, and your students' needs.

According to Tenedero (2010), how you organize a lecture can make all the difference in whether students retain the material or understand it in the first place. While you may have been thinking about your lesson for weeks, months, or years, your students are often hearing the information for the first time in your class, and their attention is divided between listening to you and deciding what to write down. With this in mind, it is paramount that you do not try to put too much information into a single lesson, and that you indicate—by emphasis, repetition, and summary—your major points and how they connect. You could bullet-point your main points in 10-15 minutes on the board or via power point presentation, but students need time to reflect on the materials. A good teacher should devote much of the class period providing examples, case studies, and reformulating the main points into questions.

Listed below are some suggestions to develop a well-organized lesson to make for effectiveness:

- a. Your lesson plan should contain not more than three to four major points, as this is all that can be feasibly covered in a fifty-minute class. If you have more than five main points, you should have more than one lesson.
- b. Once you have developed the body of a lesson, you will need an introduction and summary conclusion. A good general rule of thumb here is, "Tell them what you're going to tell them, tell them, and tell them what

you've told them." Some teachers begin the class with a review sentence from the previous class to refocus students' attention as well as to create continuity. From there, they raise questions or outline the major points in their introduction, develop the points with examples, and recap their findings in their lesson conclusion.

- c. In lessons, unlike with the written word, repetition is crucial. Repeat your main points early and often.
- d. Good teachers know that most students can concentrate for five to ten minutes at a time. Present your material in five to ten minute blocks, and shift activities to retain students' attention. You may want to do a short classroom assessment or simply solicit or answer students' questions. Some teachers integrate discussion into the lesson to maintain students' attention.
- e. Follow each mini-summary with a clearly signaled transition to the next section. You can structure discussion, students' questions, or even pause around these major blocks. The pause signals to the class the end of a major point and encourages better students' ingestion of material.
- f. Consider alternating lesson notes with student presentations, small group work, and/or multi-media clips to keep students engaged.
- g. Pay attention to your audience. Puzzled looks suggest you need to explain a concept more clearly, and frenzied notes-taking is a good indicator that you need to slow down your lesson.

According to Zimmer (2003), teaching can be made to be more effective with the use of multimedia. Students respond to information differently. Thus, it is often to our advantage as

teachers to use many different formats and modes to teach the subject matter of a lesson. This is why teachers normally use some combination of lecture, text and hands-on laboratory for conveying information. With the advent of the internet and the multiple formats that can be communicated over the World Wide Web, we now have several new and exciting ways to present information. The Web allows the incorporation of animation, moving pictures, and sound into lessons, which extends abilities to present materials that encourage students' interaction with the subject matter. Multimedia allows students to take a more active role in learning: they can use a mouse or keyboard to navigate images, simulations and interactive material. One of the advantages of using multimedia is to convey information quickly and effectively to all students – and keep them interested in learning (Savage and Vogel, 1996).

Skills Required of an Effective Teacher

Effectiveness in teaching is a gradual and continuous process which is arrived at over a period of time and through many means because most teachers do not begin their careers with a full complement of those skills. An effective teacher is required to possess the following characteristics:

- a He/she should be calm.
- b He/she should be approachable.
- c He/she should be logical.
- d He/she should be imaginative.
- e He/she should be passionate.
- f He/she should be knowledgeable.
- g He/she should be a role model.
- h He/she should be enthusiastic.
- i He/she should be a leader.
- j He/she should be a mentor.

- k He/she should be a learner.
- l He/she should be patient.
- m He/she should be a facilitator.
- n He/she should be flexible.

Conclusion

Education is a lifelong process and much as everything is changing in the world system today, an effective teacher should update his knowledge in order to be relevant. To effectively do this, the teacher has to read extensively in order to deploy relevant and current information on the topic to the students. The teacher has to surf the web and subscribe for current books. He/she must also be able to refer his/her students to relevant sites where they could get more information on the topic being taught.

In addition, an effective teacher should observe and discuss teaching methods with experienced teachers. Gone are the days when teachers fall back on notes given to them while they were in the university or college years back. While not ruling out the fact that some language courses have the same points, methods of delivery vary and these could yield the desired results in the learners.

Similarly, the Yoruba teacher should discuss with and or have mentors who are experienced teachers who could offer constructive criticisms and guide the upcoming teacher in order to be thorough and successful in his/her career as a teacher.

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