

MULTIMEDIA BASED READERS THEATRE AND TEACHING: THE ABA MUNICIPAL COUNCIL EXPERIENCE

Emmanuel Iroh

<http://www.ajol.info/index.php/cajtm/v1.14.1.6>

Abstract

The need to give students freedom to interact and participate in the learning process, and make teaching an interesting, attractive and enjoyable endeavour, through the participatory and processcentered teaching method in order to arouse the interest and curiosity of the students, are the problems of this study. This work is predicated on the Multimedia theory of Richard Mayer which asserts that people learn more “deeply” from a combination of words and pictures than from words alone. The research adopted a mix research methodology. Qualitative aspect of the research was done through Participation Action Research (PAR) and content analysis; while quantitative aspects include administering pre and post tests at the beginning and end of the research respectively. The test questions were sprayed to cover five areas of remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing and evaluation of Bloom’s taxonomy. Simple percentage mathematical calculation was used to analyze the results. The findings of the study show that there is significant difference in favour of the experimental group taught with multimedia based readers’ theatre and dramatic techniques than the traditional or teacher-centered method. The work therefore recommends that multimedia based readers’ theatre and dramatic techniques be adopted as a major teaching method in our schools because of their intrinsic and extrinsic values of motivating and sustaining the interest of the child which invariably helps the students to develop their imaginative, creative, cognitive, integrative, artistic and disciplinary skills.

Keywords: *Teaching, Multimedia, Readers' Theatre, Participation.*

Introduction

Teaching method adopted by the teacher and appropriate selection of content as well as adequate preparation for delivering the lesson are important variables that may promote or hinder learning. Okoronkan Ugwumba and Bitrus Zira Wada agree that “a key factor in the teaching and learning process derived from teacher related factors is the strategies used in imparting knowledge to the learner” (np). Therefore, teaching methods need to be constantly evaluated to make it effective. According to Irfan Ullah Khan, Muhammad Ayaz, Muhammad Faheem, “effective teaching needs an effective method” (np). This is corroborated by Onwuka U. where he posits that the method of teaching “adopted by the teacher may promote or hinder learning” (168).

The introduction and usage of educational technologies such as television, radio, photographs and graphics into the classroom changes the traditional composition of the classroom from a mono to a multimedia. Multimedia is the use of more than one medium of communication. That is, in an educational set up, it is the combination or integration or infusion of various media types such as graphics, film, storyboard, text, images, still and moving pictures, (photographs and videos) charts and animation into a medium (in an interactive pattern) to teach or convey a lesson or message. Multimedia based reader's theatre therefore is the combination of the multimedia and reader's theatre techniques in teaching. This approach helps in the clarification and simplification of the subject matter; aid the student in the decoding of encoded materials thereby creating deeper understanding of content and a sense of identity and personal validation by making students responsible for their own learning. It also encourages better interpersonal interaction in the classroom through the body language, voice control, and empathy inherent in the group's working and acting experience.

Multimedia is broad-based and has permeated into almost all spheres of human endeavour, including entertainment, education, advertisements, medicine, engineering, business, and researches (scientific and non scientific) etc. The mere fact that multimedia brings variation in teaching method acts as an energizer or impetus to the child. In a conventional classroom arrangement, the students' seat in rows and a teacher writes on the board for them to copy notes. This situation is different with multimedia. Here, the students have the opportunity to move furniture and seat around to suite the medium being integrated or used at a particular time. Most importantly, multimedia is interactive, catchy and appealing to the student. Multimedia has a media hook that can sustain the interest of the student. For that reason, multimedia affords the learner the opportunity to select, organize and integrate information. According to Richard Mayer, "perhaps the most crucial step in multimedia learning involves making connections between word based and image based representations" (www.etc.citl.ubc.ca).

Therefore, the study will focus on the aspects of multimedia that facilitates the teaching/learning process such as television, audio and video recorder and player in addition to the traditional reader's theatre approaches. This will aid the student to fully comprehend the lesson thereby creating deeper understanding of content and a sense of identity and personal validation by making students responsible for their own learning. It also encourages better interpersonal interaction in the classroom through the body language, voice control, and empathy inherent in the group's working and acting experience.

Through participation and practice, the child becomes perfect. It then becomes pertinent that the child should be allowed to participate in the teaching/learning process against the practice of sitting to hear "the gospel from the teacher" A situation where the teacher heaps all his ideas about a topic or lesson on his students is unacceptable, Therefore, doing (participation) is very important. This is because in the teaching/ learning situation, it enables the

student not only to remember what is taught but most importantly to understand the lesson as to be able to transfer the knowledge in his future endeavours. Invariably, it can be concluded that a successful lesson depends to a large extent on the technique or method adopted by the teacher. This is where multimedia comes to the rescue. Multimedia helps to facilitate the teaching/learning process. While outlining the importance of Multimedia, Santosh Bhaskar, observes that multimedia provide students with suitable learning resources according to their ability and improves the student's reflective thinking which empowers him to create. Concluding, he posits that "It's easy to remember a picture than a paragraph" (<http://www.twitter.com/SantoshBhaskarK>) What the above statement simply means is that the use of multimedia in teaching will touch the affective, cognitive and psycho motor domains of the student which invariably results in total assimilation of the lesson being taught in the classroom.

Multimedia is very useful in improving students language skills. Video/film makes use of printed texts. Ashvin Joshi affirms that "Through their interactions with multimedia texts on topic of interest, students become increasingly familiar with academic vocabulary and language structures." This is because the complex intermingling of meanings embedded within different texts encourages students to accumulate knowledge necessary to understand future texts and resolve problems. The process of accumulating and storing this knowledge will further "stimulate their imagination, engage their interest and introduce them to the raw materials for analysis and interpretation of both language and context." Concluding, Ashvin, advises that the use of multimedia in the classroom should be encouraged because it will prepare all our students for lives that are becoming more and more complex" (www.cwejournal.org).

Problem of the study

The need to give students freedom to interact and participate in the learning process, and make teaching an interesting, attractive and enjoyable endeavour through the use of teaching methods to arouse the interest and curiosity of the students are the problems the researcher hopes to solve. The method must be participatory and process-centered. Therefore, multimedia reader's theatre methods which are process-centered and participatory in application, when used in teaching, satisfy these need, hence this study.

Aim and Objectives of the study

The unattractiveness of the traditional teaching method has continued to deny the students from being active participant in a process that determines their future. This has necessitated the need for an alternative teaching method. Thus, this work is aimed at proffering alternative ways of teaching basic subjects with the objective of achieving optimum understanding among students and to actively involve the students in the teaching-learning process by making them active participants through the use of participant based teaching method(s). This will enliven the teaching process and arrest the attention of the students through their active participation in the teaching-learning process.

Furthermore, the study will examine the potentials of multimedia based reader's theatre methods in teaching and learning in Secondary Schools; assess the educative attributes of reflection, evaluation and think-back in the learning process and popularize multimedia based reader's theatre methods of teaching and learning in secondary schools.

Research Design and Methodology

The research adopted a mix research methodology. Qualitative aspect of the research was done through Participation Action Research and Content Analysis. Quantitative aspects include administering pre and post tests at the beginning and end of the

research respectively. The test questions were sprayed to cover five areas of remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing and evaluation of Bloom's taxonomy. Simple percentage mathematical calculation was used to analyze the results. 120 JSS 1 students from four secondary schools were randomly selected and divided into control and experimental groups. The control group was taught through the teacher centered method while the experimental group was taught through a combination of multimedia based readers' theatre and dramatic techniques. The experiment lasted for 12 weeks.

Theoretical Framework

This work is predicated on Multimedia Theory of Richard Mayer. According to Mayer, multimedia learning involves building mental representations from words and pictures. Popularly acknowledged as the Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning (CTML), Mayer asserts that people learn more "deeply" from a combination of words and pictures than from words alone. The theory has generally led to the definition of multimedia as learning combined with text and pictures. It is an improvement of Allan Paivio's dual coding theory where words and images (visual and verbal messages) are received, processed and stored in each channel, Baddeley's model of working memory, and Sweller's Theory of Cognitive Load. The CTML encourages the learner to build a coherent mental representation from the presented material (visual and verbal information) to improve memory (recall).

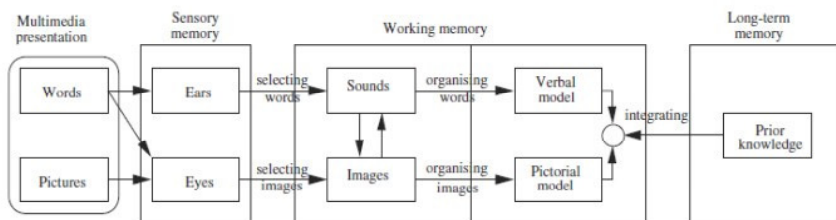


Fig.2.1 Mayer's Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning

Mayer's multimedia theory popularly called Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning (CTML) is based on three assumptions that learning occurs through: dual channel; limited capacity and active processing. The dual channel (sensory channel) assumes that learning occurs through two channels, auditory and visual channels.(ears and eyes) and holds what is learnt for some seconds; working memory where information received from the sensory channels are processed and can hold information for a relatively longer period than the dual channel. Hence it can only process limited materials received while long term memory acts as memory bank where what is learnt is stored and can hold an individual's knowledge for an indefinite time. It is also known as active processing unit.

To put it straight, multimedia learning requires a combination of auditory and the visual (ear and eyes) that passes information to the working memory which converts auditory and visual signal or representation into sounds and images which are transmitted to the deep working memory that makes verbal and pictorial models while the long term memory is searching for and retrieving relevant known/prior knowledge and piecing them together with the signals so received to make a whole (meaning). Hence the researcher uses multimedia to radicalize readers' theatre and reposition pedagogic approaches of the readers' theatre for effective teaching and learning. According to Mayer, learning can only occur when learners pay attention, organize the material into a coherent mental structure and integrate it with their prior knowledge. This will occur through the following five cognitive processes of selecting relevant words for processing in verbal working memory; selecting relevant images for processing in visual working memory; organizing selected words into a pictorial model and integrating the verbal and pictorial representation with each other and with prior knowledge. The significance of Mayer's theory is that each channel can process only a few chunks of information at a given time in working memory before the two

models are now integrated with prior knowledge retrieved from long term memory. Therefore, one of the gains of multimedia is that it affords the learner the opportunity to select, organize and integrate information. According to Mayer, “perhaps the most crucial step in multimedia learning involves making connections between word based and image based representations” (www.etcctl.ubc.ca).

Data Analysis

This aspect of the research deals with the impact analysis of the performances, pre and post tests on four Secondary schools in Aba Municipality. The presentation and the analysis were done using Bloom’s Taxonomy of remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing and evaluating. Simple percentage mode of calculation was used in achieving set objectives because the researcher is convinced that it would lucidly help him in the data analysis and presentation.

Table 1: *Pre Test Distribution*

Schools	Control Group 50% and above	Experimental Group 50% and above	Total
Friedel Kropps	15	15	30
Girls High School	15	15	30
God First Academy	15	15	30
Word of Faith	15	15	30
Total in Figures	60	60	120

In table 1, it reported that a total of 120 students who scored 50% and above from the pre test administered to all the JSS one students from four different schools in Aba Municipality were

selected. The selected students were then divided into two groups; control and experimental groups. Both the control and experimental groups all had 60 students each.

Post-test Analysis

Table 2: *Understanding the Lesson*

Schools	Control Group 50% and above	Control Group Below 50%	Experimental Group 50% and above	Experimental Group below 50%	Total
Friedel Kropps	9	6	14	1	30
Girls High School	7	8	13	2	30
God First Academy	10	5	12	3	30
Word of Faith	9	6	15	0	30
Total In Figures	35	25	54	6	120
Total in %	58%	42%	90%	10%	200

In table 2 of the post test, the control group had 35 students who participated in the control group scoring 50% and above in the post test which is an average of 58% in the lesson understanding while 25 students scored less than 50% representing 42%. The experimental group had 54 students scoring 50% and above which is an average of 90 % of the participants in the group. 10 students in the group scored less than 50% representing 10%

Table 3: Remembering the Lesson

Schools	Control Group 50% and above	Control Group Below 50%	Experimental Group 50% and above	Experimental Group below 50%	Total
Friedel Kropps	10	5	14	1	30
Girls High School	9	6	12	3	30
God First Academy	8	7	12	3	30
Word of faith	11	4	10	5	30
Total in figures	38	22	48	12	120
Total in %	63%	37%	80%	20%	200

In table 3 the students in the control group who scored 50% and above were 38 representing 63% of the students in the group, while 22 students in the group scored below 50% representing 37% of the 60 students in the group. Similarly, 48 students in the experimental group scored 50% and above representing 80% of the students in the experimental group while 12 students scored below 50% representing 20%.

Table 4. *Applying the Lesson*

Schools	Control Group 50% and above	Control Group Below 50%	Experimental Group 50% and above	Experimental Group below 50%	Total
Friedel Kropps	9	6	15	0	30
Girls High School	11	4	10	5	30
God First Academy	9	6	14	1	30
Word of Faith	10	5	12	3	30
Total in figure	39	21	51	9	120
Total in %	65%	35%	85%	15%	200

In table 4, 39 students in the control group scored 50% and above representing 65% while 21 students in the control group scored below 50%, representing 35%. 51 Students in the experimental group scored 50% and above representing 85% of the students in the group while 9 students scored less than 50% representing 15% of the students in the group.

Table 5: Analyzing the Lesson

Schools	Control Group 50% and above	Control Group Below 50%	Experimental Group 50% and above	Experimental Group below 50%	Total
Friedel Kropps	8	7	12	3	30
Girls High School	9	6	14	1	30
God First Academy	10	5	15	0	30
Word of Faith	11	4	10	5	30
Total in figures	38	22	51	9	120
Total in %	63%	37%	85%	15%	200%

In table 5, 38 out of 60 students in the control group scored 50% and above representing 63% of the students in the group while 22 out of 60 students in the same group scored below 50%, representing 37%. In the experimental group, 51 out of 60 students scored 50% and above representing 85% while 9 students out of 60 students in the same group scored below 50% from the group representing 15% of the students in the group.

Table 6: *Evaluating the Lesson*

Schools	Control Group 50% and above	Control Group Below 50%	Experimental Group 50% and above	Experimental group below 50%	Total
Friedel Kropps	10	5	13	2	30
Girls High School	9	6	14	1	30
God First Academy	8	7	14	1	30
Word of Faith	10	5	13	2	30
Total in Figures	37	23	54	6	120
Total in %	62%	38%	90%	10%	200

In table 6, 37 out of 60 students in the control group scored 50% and above representing 62% of the students in the group while 23 out of 60 students scored below 50%, representing 38%. In the experimental group, 54 out of 60 students scored 50% and above representing 90% while 6 out of 60 students scored below 50% from the group representing 10% of the students in the group.

Discussion of Findings:

This section discusses the findings of this study in relation to the following research questions formulated to aid the data analysis. They are:

1. What is the impact of using dramatic and multimedia methods of teaching on the students?
2. Of the two methods experimental and traditional mode of teaching, which is preferable?
3. What is the degree of student’s engagement/participation in the two methods of teaching?

4. Is there any change in the behaviour of the students from the lesson?

5. How would you appraise the two methods of teaching?

Question 1: What is the impact of using dramatic and multimedia methods in teaching?

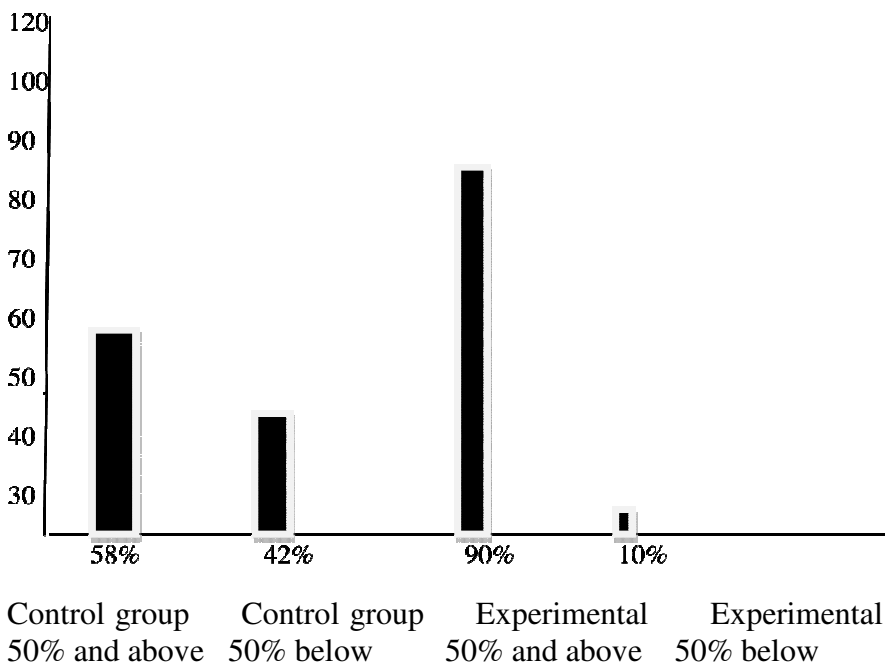
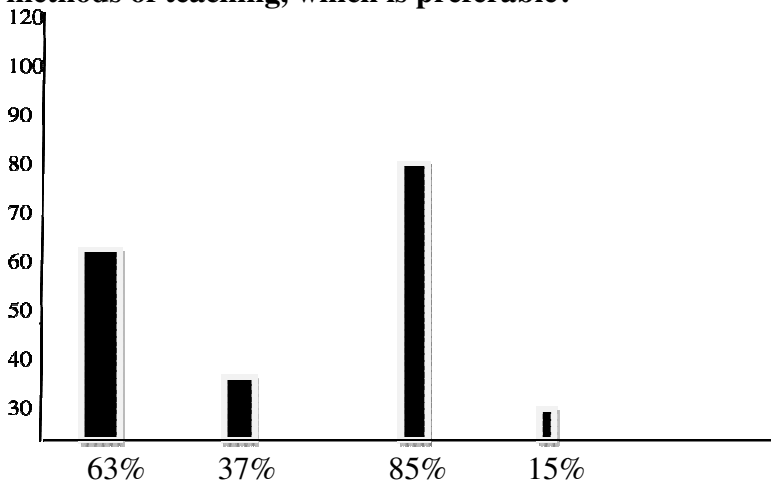


Fig. 1: Graph of percentage distribution of post test on understanding.

To respond to this question, the researcher will refer to table 2 illustrated in the graph of percentage distribution of the post test in

fig. 1 on understanding the lesson which tested the students ability to “demonstrate understanding of facts and ideas by organizing, comparing, translating, interpreting, giving descriptions, and stating main ideas” (www.apu.edu) as to show the impact of the methods on the students. The experimental group, having been exposed to the dramatic and multimedia methods, understood the lesson more than the control group. In the four schools, out of 60 students, 35 students who participated in the control group scored 50% and above in the post test which is an average of 58% in the lesson understanding while 25 students scored less than 50% representing 42%. The experimental group had 54 students scoring 50% and above which is an average of 90 % of the participants in the group. 10 students in the group scored less than 50% representing 10%. With 54 students scoring 50% and above from the experimental group representing, 90% while 35 students of the control group scored 50% and above representing 58% shows that the experimental group understood the lesson and it is a known fact that what you understand will impact on you.

Question 2: Of the two methods, experimental and traditional methods of teaching, which is preferable?



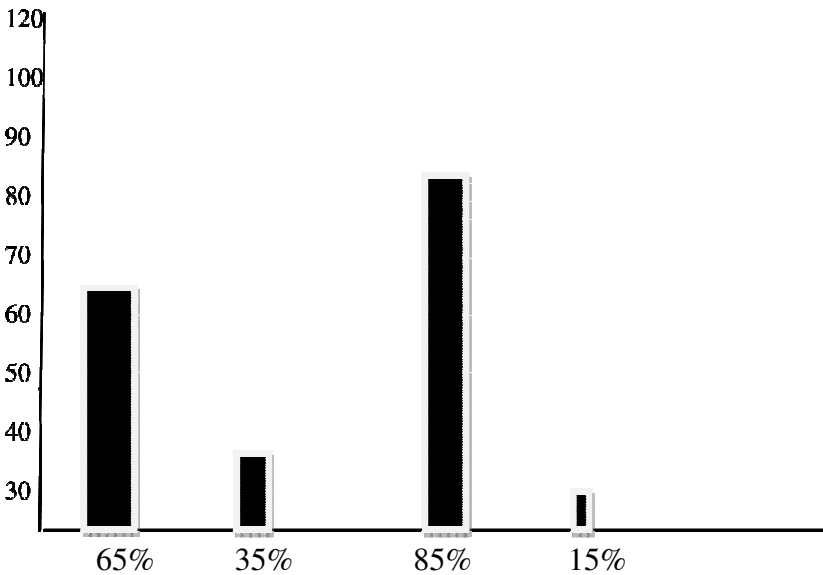
Control group Control group Experimental Experimental
50% and above 50% below 50% and above 50% below

Fig 2 Graph of percentage distribution of post test on analyzing.

The data presented in table 3 and illustrated in the graph of percentage distribution of the post test in fig 2 on analyzing which tested students on the ability to “examine and break information into parts by identifying motives or causes. Make inferences and find evidence to support generalizations” (on line) will be helpful in providing answer to this question. This is because you must be able to separate something into its constituents, collate or gather them together before you make judgment.

In the light of the above, 38 out of 60 students in the control group in the four schools scored 50% and above representing 63% of the students in the group while the remaining 22 students in the control group scored below 50%, representing 37%. The experimental group, having been exposed to the dramatic and multimedia methods, understood the lesson more than the control group. 51 of the 60 students in the schools scored 50% and above representing 85% while 9 students scored below 50% from the group representing 15% of the students in the group.

Question 3: What is the degree of student’s engagement/participation in the two methods of teaching?



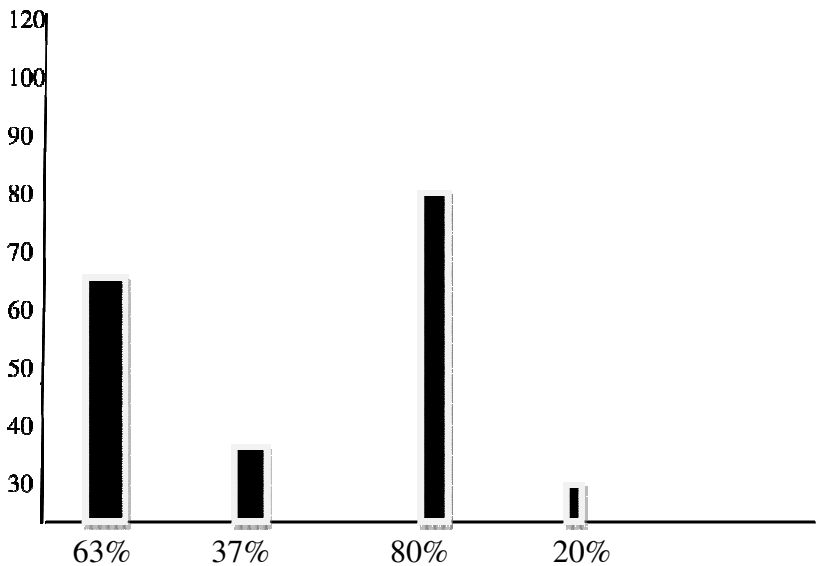
Control group Control group Experimental Experimental
0% and above 50% below 50% and above 50% below

Fig 3 Graph of percentage distribution of post test on application.

To respond to this question, the researcher will refer to table 4 and illustrated in the graph of distribution of the post test in fig. 3 on applying the lesson which tested the student’s ability to “Solve problems to new situations by applying acquired knowledge, facts, techniques and rules in a different way”. Consequently, 39 out of 60 students in the control group scored 50% and above representing 65% while 21 out of 60 students in the control group scored below 50%, representing 35%. 51 out of 60 Students treated with dramatic

and multimedia techniques in the experimental group, scored 50% and above representing 85% of the students in the group while 9 out of 60 students in the same group scored less than 50% representing 15% of the students in the group.

Question 4: Is there any change in the behaviour of the students from the lesson?



Control group 50% and above Control group 50% below Experimental 50% and above Experimental 50% below

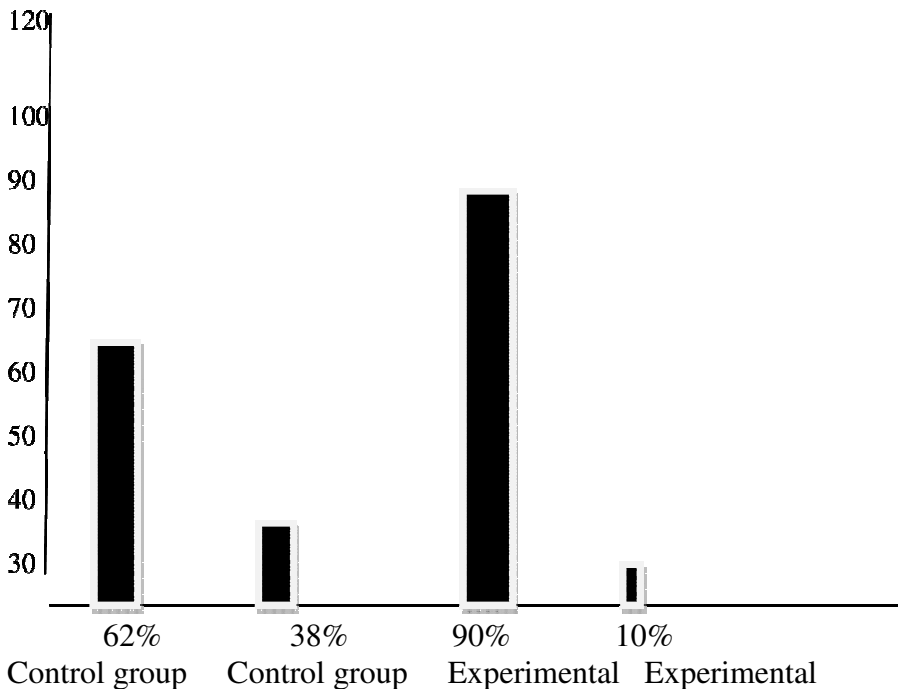
Fig 4 Graph of percentage distribution of post test on remembering

The data presented in table 5 and illustrated in the graph of percentage distribution of the post test in fig 4 on remembering which tested students on the ability to exhibit memory of previously

learned material by recalling facts, terms, basic concepts, and answers will be used to answer the above research question.

In table 5 38 out of 60 students in the control group scored 50% and above representing 63% of the students in the group, while 22 out of 60 students in the group scored below 50% representing 37% of the 60 students in the group. Similarly, 48 out of 60 students in the experimental group who were treated with dramatic and multimedia methods scored 50% and above representing 80% of the students in the experimental group while 12 students out of 60 students scored below 50% representing 20% of the students in the group.

Question 5: How would you appraise the two methods of teaching?



50% and above 50% below 50% and above 50% below

Fig 5 Graph of percentage distribution of post test on Evaluation

To get this answer, the data on table 6, illustrated in the graph of percentage of the post test in fig. 5 on evaluation which tested students on the ability to present and defend opinions by making judgments about information, validity of ideas, or quality of work based on a set of criteria. In table 6, 37 out of 60 students in the control group scored 50% and above representing 62% of the students in the group while 23 out of 60 students scored below 50%, representing 38%. In the experimental group, 54 out of 60 students scored 50% and above representing 90% while 6 out of 60 students scored below 50% from the group representing 10% of the students in the group.

Summary of Findings

Table 7 *Comparative table of the Experimental and Control groups*

Subjects	Experimental Group Above 50%	Experimental Group Below 50%	Control Group Above 50%	Control Group Below 50%
Understanding	90%	10%	58%	42%
Analysis	85%	15%	63%	37%
Application	85%	15%	65%	35%
Remembering	80%	20%	63%	37%
Evaluation	90%	90%	62%	38%

Table 7 gives a basis for a clearer understanding of the results of the study which had a total of 120 students in JSS1 from four secondary schools in Aba Municipal Council, Abia State. The participants were divided equally in two groups of experimental and

control groups. From the table above, it is evident that the use of multimedia based readers' theatre in the experiment results in an increase of the retention of students' knowledge quality in all categories: remembering, understanding and applying analyzing and evaluation compared to the traditional teaching method.

Again each learning experience was fully explored along with the players. This is as a result of the emphasis of the process-concept structural approach which is on participation. This makes it imperative for all to participate either in writing during transcription, acting during exploration, reading during the reading and rereading process, operating the machines (video, television remote control, audio player) or as a member of the audience or chorus. There was always something for everyone in the class to do when using multimedia based readers' theatre to teach. Closely related to the above is that the process-concept structural approach makes classroom management very easy and simple for the teacher or leader. This is because when every student is engaged, concentration of the students is assured. Everyone is on cue, waiting to take his turn. There is no time for frivolities. The students are focused and busy. Additionally, lessons presented through multimedia readers' theatre are more effective and better comprehended as the percentage recording of students' performances as shown in the above result are all excellent. This may be attributed to the multi-sensory ability of the multimedia readers' theatre methods which stimulates many senses of the learners making them active participants instead of being passive learners. This is in line with the submission of Neo & Neo, (2001), Shah & Khan, (2015) and Visser, (2013) who consent to the effectiveness of the teaching techniques of dramatic and multimedia towards the cognitive and attitude development of the students than the traditional method. However another examination of the above table will further reveal that the control group did not perform abysmally as they were able to record some success though they have higher percentage in scores below 50%. Therefore, the need

has arisen for the classroom teacher to properly select his teaching styles and content to suit the multifarious composition of his class. The researcher hereby advocate for a mix method of teaching to take care of these challenges.

Implications and Impact of Multimedia Readers Theatre on Students and Teachers.

The theory adopted for the study-The Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning (CTML) is multisensory. It enables the students to learn more deeply through a combination of words and pictures which are participatory oriented. Again, the principles of Participatory Action Research (PAR) allow participant to fully understand not only the “how and why” of learning/participating but also what the results of the learning were and what was learnt from the process. This is because PAR is a collaborative and participatory oriented approach which affords the participants the opportunity to actively participate and control the process and allows the teacher the opportunity to use a variety of methods to achieve set goals. PAR is iterative and frequentive as it is imbued with a systematic and cyclical process of observing, reflecting, planning, acting and sharing. Therefore, the action of the participants in PAR is guided by the goal which they aim to achieve and the gain of the actions to the participants and further allows the teacher the opportunity to use a variety of methods to achieve set goals as well as reflecting on group processes.

Furthermore, the principles allows for the use of different methods like “group discussion, interview, diagramming, video, photography...” (2); hence its suitability with the methods (multimedia readers’ theatre and dramatic techniques) adopted by the researcher. Consequently, multimedia based reader’s theatre employed by the researcher during the experiment enabled the students to take full charge of their learning and learning process. This is because as the students are involved in the reading, rereading, interpretation and reenactment of the text, they invariable

have taken charge of their learning and to an extension, their destiny in their hands. They are now empowered to determine their learning.

Through proper interpretation of the script, they are able to decode the thoughts of the author and bring the text to their level of understanding and internalization. Since the students were actively involved in the learning process, the meaning of reading is changed as the student who is engaged in the process is no longer a passive listener but an active participant in the process. Moreso, when every student is involved, classroom management becomes easier for the teacher because every student as a participant is busy, waiting for his cue. The bye-product of this as observed by the researcher is the increment in the concentration rate of the student. Cohen S.A succinctly puts it thus: “when information is presented in a way that children can relate to, they enjoy learning what is being taught” (47)

Conclusion

The high percentage scores of the experimental group who were taught with the multimedia readers’ theatre evidently reveals the practical nature of the multimedia based readers’ theatre as a teaching method. Furthermore, the approach recognized the developmental needs of the students and properly took care of the multifarious composition of the class by giving each student equal opportunity to function optimally. This is evidenced from the above result where the experimental group outscored the control group in all the five categories.

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Author's Name and Address

Emmanuel Iroh, Ph.D

Department of Theatre & Film Studies Nnamdi Azikiwe University,
Awka.

irohemmaogbo@gmail.com