Rethinking Media Arts Instruction in Nigerian Universities

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Abstract
This paper explores the pedagogical challenges and dilemmas surrounding film and media arts education within Nigerian tertiary institutions against deficient teaching facilities and infrastructure. Teaching film and media arts has rapidly developed in recent years. Many Nigerian universities now recognise the necessity of robust film/media pedagogy to complement and respond to the escalating growth of the country's indigenous film and entertainment industry. The onus is increasingly placed on Nigeria's tertiary institutions to spearhead the advancement of film and media arts education, premised on disseminating adequate practical knowledge, skills acquisition, and integrating international best practices. However, a pivotal issue emerges regarding whether Nigerian tertiary institutions possess the requisite facilities to fulfil and drive this pedagogical mandate. This paper argues that most Nigerian universities continue to emphasise theoretical instruction over practical application, constrained by the unavailability of resources required to execute a technologically immersive media pedagogy tailored to the needs of the nation's thriving creative industries. Drawing insights from a recent experimental pedagogical model undertaken at Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, this paper highlights how an integrated pedagogical methodology combining conventional teaching formats with social media tools and platforms may potentially mitigate the difficulties imposed by insufficient practical teaching facilities for film education in most African tertiary institutions.

Introduction

This paper explores how the principles of outcome-based education (OBE) and technology-aided learning have enhanced the teaching and learning of filmmaking in a Nigerian university. The fact that filmmaking in Nigeria has recently attracted much international attention from scholars and film distribution firms is not in doubt. Husseini and Sunday (2019) carefully explored the growth of the Nigerian film industry from celluloid to video and, subsequently, from video to the new wave of digital cinema, observing that what is now known as "Nollywood" emerged as a child of circumstance, an attempt to mitigate the collapse of an emerging indigenous film culture. Earlier, other scholars like Haynes (2000), Oyewo (2003), Shaka (2003), and many more had also examined the growth, challenges and prospects of the video-film industry in Nigeria. In its developmental stage, most industry critics described Nollywood as a pedantic art growing without development (Ukadike, 2000; Olayiwola, 2007; Ebewo, 2007). However, Nollywood is gradually overcoming its teething problems and expanding in frontiers to become "the most visible cultural machine on the African continent" (Kring & Okome, 2013, p. 1). It is also gradually incorporating other regional film industries like Kannywood and Yoruwood into a broad canvas of national cinema (Alamu, 2005; Omoera, 2008, 2013; McCain, 2009).

Admittedly, the digital revolution, having democratised filmmaking equipment and made it more accessible to an average Nigerian filmmaker, has ushered in a new group of contemporary filmmakers, described by some scholars as "New Nollywood" (Haynes, 2014; Ryan, 2015) who are revolutionising the indigenous film form and globalising the industry. According to UNESCO, filmmaking and distribution are growing exponentially in Nigeria due to the digital revolution, enabling "a local industry of production and distribution with its economic model" (UNESCO, 2021, p. 1). Perhaps in doubt is whether film pedagogy has been able to measure up to the strength and stature of the fast-growing motion picture industry. It could be argued that the status attained by the Nigerian film industry today is a product of the resilience of its practitioners,

despite the biting social and economic ineptitudes surrounding the industry and the 'trial and error' method adopted by them. Nigeria has not fully established a rich pedagogical modality for recruiting artists, talents and production artisans into the growing film and entertainment industry. Femi Shaka vividly captured this in his keynote lecture delivered at the second edition of the Uniport-Nollywood workshop:

> A key area where Nollywood is currently not doing well is the area of training. Nollywood is the only primary film industry in the whole world that does not have a solid academic foundation. By this, it is the only primary film industry without well-established educational and institutional backing. Even though the industry is 26 years old, no single Department of Film and TV Studies exists in the country (Shaka, 2018, p. 6; Okwuowulu, 2019, p. 433).

This paper argues that the training and re-training of industry practitioners and new entrants should focus more on developing skills to ensure that Nigeria's film industry has a competitive advantage in the international market.

Watkins and Mortimore (1999, p.3) define pedagogy as "any conscious activity by one person designed to enhance learning in another". To Lars Qvortrup (2007, p.2), the term "pedagogy" can be regarded as "the theory of education, i.e. the theory of how external influence – teaching and upbringing –can change the object of this influence". According to Bernstein (2000, p. 78), pedagogy "is a sustained process whereby somebody(s) acquires new forms or develops existing forms of conduct, knowledge, practice or criteria from somebody(s)or something deemed to be an appropriate provider or evaluator". Hence, pedagogy imparts knowledge to learners to ensure behavioural change in them. It is a knowledge impartation, sharing and acquisition process engendered towards behavioural change. As further enthused by Ovortrup (2007, p.2), media pedagogy is a unique educational theory focusing on "media teaching and training". On media pedagogy, Qvortrup (2007, p.1) identifies three variants:

1. The first possible meaning is the theory of media education. How does one teach the pupils and students to use media, and how does one prepare them about media as a social phenomenon? This may be called the theory of media education.

2. The second meaning is the theory of education under such special conditions that mass media represent a particular aspect of specialisation concerning pupils. Pupils know the world through the media and are experienced and competent media users. This may be called education of media socialised children or – in brief – the theory of media socialisation.

3. The third possible meaning is the theory of education utilising the media. How are media used in and for teaching, from school radio and television to e-learning, e-portfolio and learning management systems? This may be called the theory of educational media.

The concern of this article relates to the first definition. With emphasis on film as a form of mass media, I wish to concentrate on the intricacies of developing practice skills in Nigerian filmmakers. Filmmaking pedagogy in Nigeria has its precursor in theatre and, perhaps, mass communication scholarship. Most trained practitioners acquired basic film training as students of these two broad but intricately linked art disciplines. On the other hand, there are students taught by the Nigerian Film Institute and Nigeria Television College in Jos, Plateau State. Apart from graduates of these institutions, the majority of practitioners had their basic training through the apprenticeship style of joining a production company as an intern or a unit of an entertainment association such as the Actors' Guild of Nigeria (AGN), Association of Nigerian Theatre Arts Practitioners (ANTP) and a host of others. Sadly, few graduates of the Nigerian Film Institute made it to the heart of the industry at its inception, although that is gradually changing. At the same time, most graduates of Nigerian universities end up primarily as front-of-the-camera personnel rather than behind-the-scenes artists such as directors, cinematographers, gaffers and editors. These latter artists are majorly sourced from the apprenticeship stock, thus attracting strict critical reviews to the resultant films.

Currently, the possibility provided by online platforms like YouTube, Vimeo, Skillshare and a host of others are providing alternative training platforms for film enthusiasts who cannot go through the formal and semi-formal traditional models mentioned above. Undoubtedly, YouTube has become the modern tuition-free film college/university providing online modular instruction encouraging hands-on experience. I will later elucidate how I have utilised YouTube as an essential instrument of education in my interaction with media arts students at the Department of Dramatic Arts, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, in Nigeria. Indeed, film pedagogy in Nigeria is bedevilled by two main issues: first, there is a lack of the required production equipment, such as standard cinema/digital cameras, sound recording equipment, lighting and editing facilities, etc. Hence, the teaching of filmmaking has tilted more towards theoretical exploration than practical exposure of students to the basic principles of filmmaking through hands-on experimentation. Most film students in Nigeria end up more as film critics and reviewers than filmmakers, even though the curricula of Nigerian higher institutions anticipate a composite of theory and praxis. Second, the majority of film lecturers are not practitioners themselves. They, therefore, emphasise their bias for approach. Thus, where the lecturers want production equipment and technical know-how, teaching and learning have shifted more towards the theoretical.

According to Wong et al. (2011, p. 40), "Outcome-based education has become a major focus in teaching and learning enhancement in many fields of study". It is a "student-centred instruction model that stresses judging student performance through outcomes" (Rathy et al., 2019, p. 1026). These outcomes include knowledge, skills and behaviour. Outcome-based education emphasises learning outcomes rather than inputs; its primary objective is "what students will be able to 'do' instead of what they will 'know'" (Rathy et al., 2019, p. 1026). In the words of Davis (2003, p. 258):

> An outcome is a cumulating demonstration of learning. It is what the students should be able to do at the end of a course. Outcome-based education is an approach to teaching in which decisions about the

curriculum are driven by the exit learning outcomes that the students should display at the end of the course.

As argued by Harden (2007, p.625), the most significant catalyst for change is a language that will allow us to discuss what we expect students to learn and how we should assess them. These are the prime issues explored within the narrow precinct of outcome-based education. Once learning is targeted on outcomes, the model's other features follow as a natural consequence. Many of the problems we face in education and training can be solved with this model" (Harden, 2007, p. 625). According to Ali (2009, p. 1):

> Outcome-based education contrasts with the traditionalist approach to teaching and learning, where teachers are the primary or even the only source of knowledge. In the traditionalist approach, the students act as passive receivers of knowledge, whereas OBE promotes active learning. In addition, OBE encouraged life-long learning, an essential aspect of the current education system, as what the students had learnt in college and University is not enough for them to function well in the industry.

Outcome-based pedagogy is, therefore, a learner-centred model that aims at participative and interactive teaching and learning meant to develop teachers and learners. Rathy et al. (2019) identify four basic principles of outcome-based education: (1) Clarity of focus – teachers must focus on what they want students to know, understand and be able to do; (2) Designing down – curriculum/course design must clearly define the learning outcomes; (3) High expectations – teachers must establish a high standard of performance to encourage students to engage deeply in what they are learning and; (4) Expanded opportunities – teachers must provide opportunities for students to learn based on individual differences and diverse entry behaviours. To Puscaand Northwood (2015, p. 268), these principles can be condensed into three: i) identify desired learning outcomes, ii) identify assessment evidence; iii) identify/plan instructional activities.

Exploring Social Media Pedagogical Possibilities

The digital age is undoubtedly a blessing to a resourceful film teacher as he can appropriate its possibilities to their classroom interaction. More importantly, where production facilities are inadequate, the Internet provides online resources for film pedagogy. According to Chou and Chang (2008, p. 203), "the rise of the internet and associated IT technologies have already caused a transition of learning activities from face-to-face type to web-based type known as E-learning". Dwelling on the strategies for using new media in teaching and learning, Duffy (2008) submits that "new media websites, such as YouTube, make new demands on learning equally as they provide new support to learning, even as they also dismantle some of the learning supports upon which education had depended in the past" (p. 32). He therefore observes that as changes occur within the learning ecology, "some care must be taken to think deeply about the impact of the new media on the processes and practices of pedagogy and our student context".

YouTube is the largest video-sharing website and a prominent online depository of audio-visual content (Djahida, 2017, p. 26). In modern society, it has become a communication medium, an engagement tool and a collaborative platform. As an online resource, YouTube has also lent itself as a veritable learning tool in how it is currently integrated into teaching-learning activities within and outside the classroom. Pratama, Arifin and Widianingsih (2020, p. 124) note that "YouTube has a high potential for improving students' learning skills". This also resonates with the view of Kumar and Vasimalairaja (2018, p. 725) that:

> Using social media can enhance the learning experience. Inviting students to participate in the different learning activities available on social learning platforms would support academic engagement by extending the amount of time a student spends doing homework or related school projects.

Duffy (2008) contends that: "YouTube can be used as a virtual library to support classroom lectures by providing students access to historical, contextual and sometimes obscure video clips" (p. 40). According to Rice et al. (2011), deploying the Internet has numerous educational benefits, especially when handling classes.

In related research, Jaffar (2012) reports that 98% of students use YouTube as an educational tool, while 86% confirm that it helps their learning.

However, some scholars are apprehensive about using social media in classroom interaction. For instance, while admitting that social media are beneficial to teaching-learning, Zeng, Hall and Pitts (2012, p. 113) observe that: "Multimedia became the next venue for distributing information. Smart classrooms advanced this concept, and suddenly, the classroom became a TV show. How entertaining could the Professor make the lecture? How much media could be used in the classroom to keep the students' attention?" Hence, the issue of attention span becomes essential in such mediated learning. How can the teacher sustain learning and prevent multimedia facilities from distracting the classroom? This becomes an issue that scholars must continue to engage in. At the same time, other scholars believe that individual involvement in social media interaction can ultimately affect the learning outcome when social media are engaged and may determine how they are better adjusted for such instruction (Morrow, 1999; Yu et al., 2010). While scholars agree that social media content can be helpful within the classroom setting, such involvement should not be pushed to a stage where it becomes detrimental to the educational outcome.

In interacting with my Media Arts students at Ife, I carefully incorporate YouTube tutorials in teaching-learning. This is to assist in enhancing teaching and learning outcomes of practical courses like DRA 309(Techniques in Electronic Media Production), DRA 425 & 426 (Film, Radio and Television Production I & II) and DRA 641 (Advanced Film, Radio and Television Production and Management). Some of the YouTube channels that have become part of our classroom interaction include Tom Antos, Film Riot, DSLR Video Shooter, DSLR Guide on general filmmaking; Aputure, B & H Photovideo on cinematography and lighting; Chinfat, This Guy Edits and Olufemii Tutorials on Editing; Audio University, Rode Microphone, Deity Microphone, Jason Levine, Film Sound Tutorials and Cinema Sound on Sound design and post-production sound mixing. Rather than replace traditional teaching, pre-downloaded videos deepen

the classroom experience by providing practical, hands-on examples that further illustrate the course content. Sometimes, students are directed to watch tutorials on relevant topics from specific YouTube channels before the lesson(s), while the contents form part of the following classroom discussion. This approach has been so successful because these new millennials (that is, our students) "absorb information quickly, in images and videos as well as text, from multiple sources simultaneously" (Duffy, 2008, p.32), thereby operating at what Prensky (2004) regards as "twitch speed". As Clark and Mayer (2002) rightly opine, for the new media to be appropriately deployed in improving learning, media must (a) be aligned with expected learning or performance outcome, (b) reduce cognitive load, (c) exclude superficial text or graphics; (d) be appropriate for target learners' learning literacy.

Accordingly, each course outline is structured to favour hands-on practical exposure to filmmaking, with selected YouTube videos serving as complementary instructional material. During practical sessions, students are encouraged to come with personal production equipment like DSLR cameras, lighting gadgets and editing laptops to complement the few equipment available in the Department. Interestingly, the learning outcome has been most encouraging, as students can extend teaching-learning activities beyond the classroom space in their interaction with the selected YouTube channels. Therefore, learning becomes more interactive as students approach each new class with ideas and questions about their discoveries. The teacher in this learning ecology thus plays the role of a facilitator rather than a traditional instructor who hands knowledge to students. According to Tsang, Kwan and Tse (2008, p.233), there is a "paradigm shift in teacher's roles. As facilitators of learning, they are no longer the authority or the most knowledgeable of the knowledge they teach. Learners in the information age no longer take whatever it is from the facilitator". Hence, the class becomes more learner-driven and learner-centred.

Quite significant is the fact that the availability of these online resources has extended the periods of teaching and learning beyond the approved three hours

per week for each course to an unending possibility, as students are encouraged to practice, on their own, concepts and ideas taught in the classroom (following hands-on demonstrations in the YouTube videos), thereby increasing the rate of learning for dynamic and enthusiastic students. They are given practical assignments on shot construction, editing and sound mixing as they are instructed to reproduce or follow what is done in a YouTube video. At the same time, they are given group assignments to encourage collaborative participation since filmmaking is notoriously an eclectic and participatory adventure. Students are, therefore, made to develop not only the skill sets requisite for filmmaking but also a cooperative spirit that is mandatory for success in the film industry. Argarwal (2011, p. 40) has rightly argued that social media tools provide ample opportunities for students to take responsibility for their learning. They provide "easy to use, interactive, inexpensive, collaborative and unregulated" tools. This is because students can "share their opinions; share in discussions; communicate ideas, thoughts and beliefs; and become active agents in their learning experiences" (Holder-Ellis, 2015, p. 7).

To deepen the student's learning experience, I also encouraged hands-on participation by taking the class through the process of producing short films and documentary films from ideation to realisation. This was designed to provide students with an intensive involvement in industry experience of production difficulties. According to Sisson (2001, p. 12), hands-on training "promotes the integration of on-the-job training into a system or structured approach to training". To this effect, students were made to play different roles as actors, cinematographers, gaffers, production designers, props and costume designers, etc., and thus engaged in physical involvement in the nitty-gritty of filmmaking. As such, the class carefully observed the six methods Sisson (2001) recommended for practical hands-on training: 1. Prepare for training; 2. Open the session; 3. Present the subject; 4. Practice the skill; 5. Evaluate performance; and 6. Review the issue. Hence, mistakes were made, and the required knowledge was gained.

The Varsity Project: Beyond Classroom Experience

Evaluation of the courses is based significantly on the learning outcome: students' ability to produce a short film, a music video or a documentary. At the end of a course, each learner must present an individual production to the departmental examining body, demonstrating their ability to write a script or develop a concept, handle the cinematography and edit the final footage. The scoring of this practical component of the course(s) takes 60% of the grading for the course, while written examination, which may also include a discussion of the experiences gained during the production, takes 40% of the assessment.

The success of the various projects undertaken by students as individual productions annually to test their readiness for the film industry and their understanding of the course contents achieved two purposes: first, it served as an encouragement that the hands-on system adopted is paying off and the learning objectives are being achieved. Second, it showed the need for an in-depth industrial experience that will push the learning curve beyond the pedantic acquisition of fundamental concepts to an arduous, outstanding and exhaustive emersion into industry practice. I agree with Bernstein (1967) that practice is "repetition without repetition", signifying less of an emphasis on the reproduction of an identical movement pattern over practice trials and more attention to the adaptation of movement patterns during practice to achieve consistent outcome goals" (quoted in Davids, Button and Benneth, 2008, p. 154). This idea led to The Varsity, a fifteen-episode television/web series based on students' experiences in a fictitious Nigerian university. The primary aim was to ensure repetitive practice that will engender the acquisition of required skills. Specific issues necessitated the choice of a campus-based story. First, we wanted a story that may not significantly move us outside the confines of our University since students will also need to attend courses outside the Dramatic Arts Department. Second, we found campus stories inexhaustible and heavily malleable as they promised impregnable mines of story contents. Third, the production resources needed to execute the project are primarily available within our University; we are surrounded by beautiful architectural landscapes that are both filmic and aesthetically pleasing, costumes

and properties that are commonplace and many other technical and artistic resources available within our Department.

The Varsity features congeries of different but carefully interlaced stories to achieve an educational and didactic end. It "focuses on the interesting experiences within a fictional university setting, dwelling heavily upon the enviable precept of the Obafemi Awolowo University in tackling anti-social vices that cannot be wished away in every human society" (Ekechukwu, 2020, p.13). The drama explores African belief in diligence, uprightness, patience and long-suffering. It condemns anti-social activities, cultism, exam malpractice, pre-marital sex, bribery and corruption, as well as sexual harassment that are prevalent in Nigerian post-secondary institutions. It is, therefore, premised on the concept of 'African didacticism' (traditional African education premised on moral education).

The plot of the visual narrative reflects six primary story spines. First is the story of Funmi Lawson (Judith Bada), whose dream is to become an acclaimed musician and thus wishes to study music at the University to hone her singing and performance skills. This runs contrary to the goal of her father (Yemi Oyewo), an accomplished lawyer who wishes to have her take after him. All persuasions to bend his will in favour of his daughter's career dream fall on deaf ears as he ensures Funmi becomes an outstanding lawyer like him. Funmi is eventually admitted to study law, but she often gravitates towards music, thus pitching her against her father's aspirations for her. Second, we have the story of TokunboCoker (Kayode Ojuolape), the son of a single parent, a disciplinarian Professor of Law (Tunde Adeyemo), who gains admission to study Engineering and thus enjoys unusual financial support from his father. He later finds himself in the company of a clandestine group often involved in financial fraud, cultism and, later, armed robbery.

Kayode thus becomes ingrained in nefarious demeanours that corrode his bright academic future and occasion his Waterloo. Next is the story of Chidinma (GotemiFadunsi), a young, naïve, promising girl whose educational dream is beclouded by infantile love drive towards Lanre (Kelvin Obanijesu),

a final year undergraduate. She is soon distracted from her academic pursuit to enjoy the tantalising aroma of premature illegal marital affairs by living with a young, unproductive man he is never married to. Both of them eventually suffer rustication by the school management after attempting several abortions that leave her uterus perforated. We are also introduced to the ludicrous world of Steven (Samuel Owolabi), a handsome and ingenious playboy who specialises in sexually defrauding young, innocent girls looking for a serious suitor. He successfully manipulates three girls to his sexual advantage until his nemesis catches up with him. Along the same line, we are confronted with Mr Johnson (Taiwo Ibikunle), a promiscuous lecturer involved in sex-for-marks with a young girl of his daughter's age. Finally, in the case of Silvia (Princess Obuse), a wannabe deceptive lady in the penultimate year, and Kasali (Muideen Oladapo), a personal driver to Professor Coker (Tunde Adeyemo), Kayode's father. They both get involved in a love affair that is awash in falsehood and wanton deception, leading to unbearable pain when the eventual truth is discovered. Indeed, *The Varsity* is a tele-novella premised strongly on fair play, honesty and agility as the only valid means of ensuring societal good. When these principles are disregarded, the culprits are brought to book by applying social justice laws.

Significantly, *The Varsity* was conceived by this writer to provide "students of the Department of Dramatic Arts as well as those from other departments a robust opportunity to hone their skills in various areas of film production" (Ekechukwu, 2020, p.2). The script for the project was written through a workshop by students specialising in Media Arts and playwriting in Dramatic Arts, and it was edited and reworked by Adetokunbo Shittu, a post-graduate student in the Department who also doubled as the Assistant Director for the production. Notably, the fifteen-episode drama created the much-needed collaboration, first between students and members of Awovarsity Theatre Company (the resident troupe of the Department of Dramatic Arts) as well as Nollywood actors like Peter Fatomilola, Tunde Adeyemo, Taiwo Ibikunle, Muideen Oladapo and Tunde Oladimeji. This helps to establish a robust interaction among students, members of staff, the university community and industry practitioners. It also provides a

substitute for industrial attachment lacking in the BA—Dramatic Arts programme curriculum. As Chu et al. (2017, p. 35)   noted, "traditional didactic approaches to teaching and learning are often criticised for stifling learners' development of deep thinking as well as their ability to apply knowledge and reasoning skills". The Varsity was conceived as project-based learning, pivoting to collaborative learning ecology. It was intended as a participatory instruction and learning where students and teachers interact towards achieving a specific creative project.

Post-mortem: Interrogating the Pedagogical Gains of The Varsity

The Varsity is perhaps the first audio-visual production of that grandeur attempted by staff and students of a department within the Nigerian university system that employs a production crew that is entirely drawn from the same University without any external professional support. The tele-drama was conceived by a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Dramatic Arts at Obafemi Awolowo University in 2016, but principal photography did not commence until February 1, 2018. Costumes for the production were designed by the 2009 AMAA award-winning costume designer Toyin Ogundeji, a lecturer in the Dramatic Arts Department. Members of the University's Awovarsity Theatre Company (the resident performance troupe of the Department of Dramatic Arts) like Afolabi Dipeolu, Adewuwo Adeyemo and Michael Anjorin, Wuraola Adesiyan, among others, also played significant roles as Production Manager, Production Designer, Props Designer and actors. Undergraduate and post-graduate students of the Department handled other roles.

In addition, the production provided a training ground for students to develop their technical skills in filmmaking as the gaffer, camera operators, production sound mixer, set designers and decorators, production assistants, etc., through creative experimentation within a controlled institutional environment. Umukoro (2001, p. 38) observes:

> Experimentation is an inalienable part of scholarship and pedagogy and the principal gateway to progress and innovation. The most successful

experiments are typically carried out within the ivory tower, without the professional world's usual economic and cultural-political constraints.

Therefore, dramatic arts students were introduced to an intensive industry experience of professional filmmaking with an extended production schedule. They were confronted with stack realities of production uncertainties, as a production initially designed to take about six weeks of principal photography spanned almost a year of fragmented shooting due to unforeseen contingencies. First, the protracted strike of members of the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) brought the producer/director to loggerheads with agents of the University. Second, the uncooperative attitudes of some students, for whom the programme was intended as an in-depth industrial experience, also made the shooting experience tortuous for the committed cast and crew. Since the project was conceived as an extra-curricular effort, the students saw it as an unnecessary burden with little or no connection with their coursework, as it is not attached to any course unit. Noteworthy is the fact that rather than see the loftiness of the project in projecting the image of the institution, some overzealous agents of the management also erroneously described it as a personal, commercial project of the producer that lacked any intrinsic pedagogical benefits for the participating students and therefore attempted to truncate the artistic effort. However, when the fifteen-week episode drama premiered in May 2020 on YouTube, both the students and the institution's officials were convinced of the educational possibilities of the drama project as a work that emphasises the sanctity of the ivory tower and instils moral and production skills in the participants.

The Varsity project, more than anything else, emphasised the dynamism involved in transmuting a script from script to screen. Despite careful preparation during the pre-shooting stage, many things had to be changed to meet the realities of production. For instance, the ASUU (Academic Staff Union of University) strike, which brought the project initiator at loggerhead with the agents of the University who prevented him from continuing the shoot within the carefully chosen and serene confines of the university environment, necessitated the search

for new locations. The shooting schedule's progression was truncated as recent locations were sought in Ife town and redesigned to suit the production peculiarities. Although the management of Oduduwa University at Ipetumodu afforded us their campus for most of the exterior scenes, the new locations provided new realities that necessitated creative adjustments. As a result, the production design had to be reconceived, the shooting schedule redesigned, and other necessities needed to be reworked. However, rather than discouraging core members of the production team, we saw it as a way of re-inventing the production and creating an extended teaching-learning experience for both staff and students.

The post-production stage also offered an avalanche of opportunities for learning and experimentation. First, it was this researcher's first attempt at editing a commercial project of this grandeur. The footage was numerous and overwhelming, requiring many days of sorting, synchronising, editing and colour grading. Though few students were involved at this stage, it was a remarkable training experience for them. The three students involved at this stage, namely Qudus Ajayi, Babatunde Jimoh and Tomipe Oluwaferanmi, have graduated to become professional editors and colourists due to intensive practical exposure, having commercialised their newly acquired skill sets in filmmaking. One vital lesson collectively learnt in editing The Varsity project is post-production sound editing and mixing. The attempt at creating an immersive sonic environment for the production ignited the desire to interrogate new frontiers of knowledge on film sound. Due to the inexperience of students who handled the production sound, many errors were committed, especially recording too close to the noise floor, thereby introducing unwanted noise to the dialogue. This necessitated Automated Dialogue Replacement (ADR), which required a new learning curve from all of us on the job, as some conversations were irreparable. Overall, it was an unusual opportunity for learning by doing and researching. As we discovered a problem, we were forced to explore a solution(s).

Since the project's primary purpose was to create a controlled environment for skills acquisition in all the areas of filmmaking, producing the theme music

was not left out. We, therefore, collaborated with a post-graduate student of the Department of Music at Obafemi Awolowo University to actualise this lofty dream. Adegoke Afe, who is also a lecturer at the Department of Performing and Film Arts, Elizade University, Ilara-Mokin, Ondo State, gave the needed professional impetus as a professional musicologist in producing the theme song composed by Qudus Ajayi, who is a musician in his own right. The recording was done in the office of the present researcher. Although the music produced could not be convicted perfectly because of the crude implementation method and insufficient professional equipment, it provided a basis for experimenting with form and talent.

Indeed, the creative process of taking the television drama series through redefinition and refining at the cutting bench remains the most significant learning curve for me as producer/director/editor of this fifteen-episode serial drama. It exposed me and my students to the enormity of the work required to create the invisible performance at the edit. Moreover, it revealed our deficiencies as editors, sound designers, post-production sound mixers and film colourists. It gave us the impetus for further learning as we make conscious and concerted efforts to improve our skill sets and become better storytellers. In all these challenges, YouTube has become our constant rescuer, as we often than not resort to instructional videos on YouTube to update our knowledge and galvanise the production to the desired end. The production will be eternally grateful to YouTubers like Jason Levine, Chin Fat, FilmSound Tutorials, Cinema Sound (by Mark Edward Lewis) and others for their free learning tools.

Conclusion

Although non-availability of necessary and required equipment may have crippled the advancement of film and media arts scholarship in Nigeria, the new media, through numerous online learning resources, are helping to salvage this segment of the education industry. There are diverse teaching-learning tools, paid or free, that resourceful and curious teachers and students can appropriate to make teaching-learning enjoyable in a depressing economy like Nigeria. There is no doubt that YouTube has become the modern tuition-free online University

through which students and teachers alike can acquire new and evolving knowledge in filmmaking and media technology. The only difference between YouTube and conventional universities is that while the latter has a well-organised curriculum of instruction and a structured method of evaluation, the former is a cesspool of instructional materials that students have to navigate through and organise into a personalised schedule of instruction. Hence, a comprehensive benefit of online education can only be realised when a teacher carefully integrates YouTube resources into a formalised teaching programme. I often adopt this approach when interacting with my film and media arts students.

In the same way, producing a fifteen-episode serial drama for YouTube uploading and possible television transmission was the single most significant approach towards a comprehensive immersion programme for the students. Apart from providing staff and students with industry experience in television and film production, the project also launched students-participants into filmmaking as they interact with industry practitioners. Some of these students have already been absorbed into practical filmmaking at a professional level, either as actors or crew members. The experience also encouraged the production of *Busola Abel,* a full-length Yoruba language movie produced and directed by this researcher in August 2021. The film was also made up of a cast and crew of predominantly staff and students of the Department of Dramatic Arts, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria. Film scholarship could be more enduring and enjoyable when discreetly integrated into theory and practice.

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