

Mastering the skills of Assemblage Art: Challenges of Sculpture Students of Bolgatanga Polytechnic

Rolland Wemegah* Amenyo Dzikunu-Bansah Musah Abubarkar Ibrahim Dey
Industrial Art Department, Bolgatanga Polytechnic, P. O. Box 767, Bolgatanga - U/E Region, Ghana

*E-mail of corresponding author: artcentrix@yahoo.com

Abstract

The study was an action research carried out by a team of lecturers at the Industrial Art Department of Bolgatanga Polytechnic, Ghana. The research, which made use of qualitative instruments such as questionnaires, interviews, observations and journal recordings, sorts to find out the root cause(s) of low interest in assemblage sculpture by second and third year students studying at the Department. Evidence from the study clearly showed that the students were challenged in many ways, which hindered their creativity and general performance. After varying the teaching approaches and taking “action” by introducing innovative measures, it was realized that there was an appreciable improvement in the academic performance and enthusiasm of the students towards the Assemblage course. The findings of the study depict examples of challenges that could be encountered by art students at the tertiary level, and steps that could be taken by lecturers to uncover the constraints and meliorate the situation.

Keywords: Action research, Assemblage Sculpture, Junk Art, Teaching Assemblage Sculpture, Art Education

1. Introduction

The importance of Art in infusing creative thinking, as well as promoting cultural, economic and social development has been underpinned by many researchers around the world. For example, the essential roles played by Art in urban city development have been examined by Amin and Thrift (2007) as well as Landry (2006). Again, Parr, Radford and Snyder (1998) noticed that Art Education cultivates critical life skills, stimulates the school environment and enhances the performance of students in other fields of study. In business, Kao (1996) reveals that Art sharpens creative thinking and aids in solving important business problems creatively.

In Ghana, the desire to benefit from the incontrovertible properties of Art, and the quest to ensure that young graduates are armed with self-employable skills, largely dictated the mounting of Art-based programmes in almost all the ten Polytechnic Institutions in the country. The Bolgatanga Polytechnic in the Upper East Region of Ghana started its Industrial Art programme in 2008, to encourage the study of both two and three-dimensional Art courses, towards a Higher National Diploma (HND) award in the various sub-fields of Art. The programme aims at preparing graduates to establish careers in their chosen fields of specialization, to enable them sustain themselves and contribute to national development.

1.1 Research Problem

Assemblage Art, which is also referred to as Junk or Found Art, has become an important genre of Sculpture, and accepted worldwide. This artistic tradition requires absolute creativity and ingenuity to be able to truly practice the art form. Not only does Assemblage Art contribute to the production of art objects which could be used in beautifying and creating awareness. It is also a special tool for controlling environmental littering as well as instilling ingenuity, critical thinking and empowering the mind to solve societal issues.

The Sculpture course at the Industrial Art Department, even though given accreditation in 2008, commenced fully only in 2010. The assemblage sculpture course, being one of the sub-components of the Sculpture programme, was taught together with other related courses such as Modeling and Casting, Carving, Drawing, History of Sculpture, Sculpture Tools and Materials, Interior and Furniture Design as well as Computer Art.

After teaching the course for one semester, thus first semester of 2012/2013 academic year, it was quickly realized that sculpture students studying assemblage sculpture at the Department exhibited much more interest in the orthodox sculpture genres such as carving, modeling and casting more than Assemblage Sculpture. Indeed by the close of the first semester, an early sign of apathy was quite visible among the students. Practical assignments were not presented on time. Students were mostly observed by the course lecturer, spending much more time carving, modeling or casting. The course lecturer however, thought since the students were new to the concept, more time was needed by them to acquire the practical skills and demonstrate appreciable proficiency.

The students were therefore very much observed during the following semester - second semester of 2012/2013 academic year, by the course lecturer. The lecturer kept a journal on all the students in the class. Information relating to attendance, submission of assignments, enthusiasm and contributions made during lecture sessions were recorded by the lecturer. Off-lecture studio visits were also made to observe the students at work.

By the close of the second semester, it was very much apparent that the students were not keen about the Assemblage course as compared to the other orthodox sculpture courses. Some of them skipped lectures constantly while others gave various excuses for not presenting their assignments on time. These observations were discussed with other lecturers at the department, who believed the students were just not serious. However, some of the students somehow discovered themselves and put in little efforts towards the later part of the semester, most likely, when they realized their insouciant attitudes would prevent them from getting appreciable grades.

Considering the fact that many factors could contribute to academic underperformance and lack of enthusiasm in learners, as noted by Baker, Bridger & Evans (1998) and Kirk & Gallagher (1989), this study was initiated and conducted during the first and second semesters of 2013/2014 academic year, to delve into the cause (s) of their constraints and to formulate appropriate solutions to improve the situation. The researchers also believed the humble efforts of the sculpture students of Bolgatanga Polytechnic should be appraised and encouraged to draw attention to the art form and chart a path for its growth and development.

1.2 Research Objectives

Specifically, the study sought to:

- i. Identify the cause(s) of low interest in the Assemblage course by students studying Sculpture at the Industrial Art Department of Bolgatanga Polytechnic;
- ii. Ascertain the challenges faced by the students in executing their practical Assemblage projects; and
- iii. Use the findings of the study to effect changes in the general methods of instructing and interacting with the students.

1.3 Research Questions

- i. Why do sculpture students in the Industrial Art Department of Bolgatanga Polytechnic exhibit low interest in Assemblage Sculpture?
- ii. What challenges are encountered by the students when executing their practical Assemblage projects?
- iii. How can the findings of the study be applied effectively to improve instruction and interaction with the students?

2. Literature Survey

2.1 Art Education

The role Art Education plays in imparting artistic knowledge and training students to see the world around them with more discerning eyes cannot be overemphasized. Art education trains students to identify and comprehend visual iconographies and how they could be employed effectively to create evocative Artworks (Duncum, 2002). It is known to fine-tune the senses, instills creative thinking and helps us to experience the subtle and complex features of the world with more refined faculties; it also enables us to connect the roles art played in both the present and past cultures with the view of comprehending how society “encounters life” (Eisner, 2002; Hargreaves, 2001; Chapman, 1978). Again, empirical studies revealed that art training develops multiple intelligences, boosts emotional and spiritual synergy, and heightens the ability to learn and understand (Wright, 2003). It is believed that expertise acquired through Art Education could be utilized gainfully in other branches of knowledge (Svendson, 2004).

2.2 Action Research

Action research is specifically used by teachers to study professional practices in their various classrooms; using accepted data collection methods with the aim of solving associated problems and improving professional teaching practices (Zeni, 2001; Parson and Brown, 2002; Kemmis & McTaggart, 1992). Calhoun (1994), colloquially writes that an action research is a “fancy way of saying let's study what's happening at our school and decide how to make it a better place”. Action research is a model which guides practitioners to understand the behaviour of their students (Miller, 2007). Zeni (1998, p.13) elaborates that action research “has the immediate goal to assess, develop or improve practice. Such research activities, according to Zain, belong in the daily process of good teaching, to what has been called the ‘zone of accepted practice’.”

2.3 The Concept and History of Assemblage Art

Assemblage Art could be found in most countries around the globe. This is due to the prominence the concept

has gained over the years, as an innovative way of turning discarded materials into Art, thereby using it as a tool to manage detritus and preserve the environment.

Rogers (2013), explains that Assemblage Sculpture is produced by aggregating independent pieces of discarded materials into an artistic composition, as opposed modeled and carved sculptures, which are usually crafted from homogenous materials. Even though artistic creations produced from assorted materials could be found in many civilizations around the world, the Encyclopedia Britannica (2014) posits that Assemblage Sculpture emerged through “intellectual and artistic movements at the beginning of the 20th century.” The source further explains that the term “assemblage” was first used by Jean Dubuffet in the 1950s. According to The Britannica Encyclopedia, Assemblage Art could be made in three or two-dimensional forms. Gale (2009) adds that the term Assemblage “applied in the 20th century to existing objects, manufactured or of natural origin, used in, or as, works of Art.”

The origin of the Art form has been attributed by many scholars to Pablo Picasso, the 20th Century artist (Watson, 2013; Walker, 2013; Museum of Modern Art, 2014). Specifically however, the Encyclopedia Britannica (2014) explains that it was an artistic movement which started around 1911 – 1912 with artists of the cubistic movement such as Pablo Picasso, Georges Braque, and other “futuristic” artists such as Umberto Boccioni and Filippo Tommaso Marinetti. Artists belonging to the Surrealistic and Dadaist movements such as Marcel Duchamp, Man Ray and Baroness Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven, together with other early 20th Century artists such as Antoni Gandi, Vladimir Tatlin and Alexander Archipenko were also on record for creating Assemblage works (Gale, 2009; Encyclopedia Britannica, 2014; Esaak, 2014).”

Expatriating further on what necessitated the development of Assemblage Art, Kart (2009) writes that as the 21st Century progresses in technological and groundbreaking development, the world evolved into a “global village”, leading to the production and utilization of many goods, which generated so much waste. Artists, Kart articulates, therefore innovatively converted these wastes into Art. The Encyclopedia of Art Education (2014) explains further that Assemblage Art emerged as part of the artistic revolutions of the 20th Century, which saw so many artists revolting against the use of “traditional materials” in producing artworks. These modernist artistic tendencies, the source explicates was born out of the fact that many artists practicing around this period believed art could be fashioned virtually out of anything.

Assemblage works have also been synonymously referred to by many as “junk art”, “found art” and “trash art” (Encyclopedia of Art Education, 2014; Essak, 2014). The sources elaborate that the term “junk art” was first used by the British art critic and curator Lawrence Alloway in 1961, to describe the artwork of the Texan-born artist Robert Rauschenberg .

2.4 Assemblage Sculpture in Africa

The Assemblage Art concept has caught up with some African artists around the continent. In Nigeria for example, artists such as Yaba, Olu Amoda, El Anastui (Nigeria based Ghanaian sculptor) and Dil Humphrey-Umezulike (Dilomprizulike), are on record for using detritus to produce sculptural installations and combines that showcased the cultural, social and political behaviours of people living in these areas (Mostyn, 2010; Gasworks Gallery; n. d.; Eze, 2009 & Williams, n. d.).

Pho (2014) has written extensively on the Assemblage works of Willie Bester, the South African Artist. Willie Bester’s works, according to Pho, are “towering, intricate, and complex pieces of moving parts, representing the tangled, mechanized system of a corrupted government”.

In East Africa, scrap metals were used extensively by artists such as Francis Nnaggenda and John Odoch Ameny to produce junk art (Gacheru, 2012). Gacheru opines that the Ugandan artist Odoch, was the one who popularize the art form during his sojourn in Kenya. The source adds that Odoch created and showcased “life-sized scrap metal caricatures of Amin at African Heritage Pan African Gallery”. Gacheru explicates that from the 80s onwards, many Kenyan Junk artists such as; Kioko Mwitiki, Joseph Bertiers Mbatia, Harrison Mburu, Dennis Muraguri, Cyrus Nga’nga, Ken Mwingi and Alex Wainaina produced significant works using scrap metals.

2.5 Assemblage Materials and Methods

Generally, Assemblage artists use all sorts of discarded items for their works. Many household appliances and industrial equipment such as bottle caps, broken tile, clock pieces, screws, bolts, pieces of glass, broken pottery, rusted metals, buttons, beads, marble, zippers, screws, nails, hinges, old watches and clocks, computer parts, metal tubes, rods, plates, found wood, glass; fabrics, wires and threads, old typewriters, engine components, mirrors, chairs, and many other assorted discarded objects were repurposed by artists into works of art (Wisegeek, 2014; Pam, 2006; Rogers, 2013).

Some of the distinctive techniques employed by artists in assembling objects into sculpture includes; gluing, nailing, screwing, soldering, welding, tying, brazing, bolting, riveting, bonding, dowelling, pegging and hand cut joinery methods such as mortise and tenon, finger joint, dado and dovetail (Rogers, 2013 & McGinnis,

n. d).

3. Methodology

The study was an Action research. Ferrence (2000, p. 6) writes that Action research is usually a systematic and carefully conducted “collaborative activity among colleagues searching for solutions to everyday, real problems experienced in schools”.

This method was selected because the researchers believe it is the most appropriate investigative and reformative approach, which could be conveniently employed to unveil the root cause(s) of the problems detailed above, and take “action” towards the improvement of the deficiency.

The population of the study comprised all Assemblage Sculpture students and lecturers at the Industrial Art Department. Five second year students, three third year students and one course lecturer were subjectively selected, using the total population sampling method for the study.

The primary data collected during the first and second phases of the study were transcribed into Microsoft word processing package. Subsequently, the data was reduced, coded and displayed in thematic tables. This made it possible for the researchers to extrapolate systematic patterns and interrelations from the data. Throughout the analysis phases, the researchers sought to gain deeper understanding of recurrent themes and patterns in order to determine the assumptions that informed the respondent’s view of the subject being scrutinized. The data was revisited severally to cross-check the plausibility of the emergent conclusions. The emerging themes and categories were then developed until they responded to the research questions posed by the study.

Secondary materials sourced from books, journals and the web were also used to support the study.

To delve into the cause(s) of the problem, the study was planned and executed with the help of two other lecturers from the Department. Recognizing the fact that an action research of this nature must be carried out with consent and in collaboration with participants of the study other than the teachers (Kemmis, 2006), the students were duly informed about the study and its purpose before commencing the research. The study was carried out during the 2013/ 2014 academic year. Questionnaires and interview guides were designed to solicit information generally relating to the students’ conception of the assemblage course, sources of their materials, problems they face when working and recommendations towards the improvement of teaching and learning. The questionnaires were given to the students three weeks to the end of the semesters under study, to be completed and returned to the research team. Throughout the semesters under review, the researchers also made use of journals and observation recordings to cumulate data for the study. The recordings captured students’ attendance, contribution during class discussions, submission of assignments, participation in practical demonstration sessions, as well as their overall attitudes towards the Assemblage course. This enables the researchers identify the students’ patterns of behaviour throughout the two semesters. Students’ course works were also studied constantly to assess their quality and how they conformed to the various concepts of Assemblage Sculpture. To enable the students speak freely without fear of intimidation or victimization, they were interviewed by two of the researchers in the absence of the third researcher, who teaches the course.

The second phase of the study commenced the following semester (second semester of 2013/2014 academic year). After transcribing and analyzing the data collected the previous semester, findings of the research were studied by the researchers and interventions developed. These interventions were introduced during the second semester. Data was again collected on the results by the researchers using journal recordings, observations, interviews and questionnaires (completed by the students) to determine the success or otherwise of the interventions.

4. The Setting

The Sculpture programme at the Industrial Art Department is a three-year course, which commences with mandatory foundational courses, which spans two semesters (one academic year). During this period, the students received basic training in Drawing and Illustration, Sculpture, Leatherwork, Textiles, Fashion, Graphic Design and Ceramics; to ground the students in sound artistic knowledge and to help them to glean ideas and inspiration from the above subject fields to enable all-round idea generation and development in course of the programme. Other courses such as Communication Skills and African Studies were also taught.

The main Assemblage course was taught from the beginning of the first semester, when the students were in their second year, and terminates at the close of the second semester of the third year.

During the first semester of the second year, the students were grounded in sound theoretical knowledge on the Assemblage Art form. This covers the History and Evolution of Assemblage Art, Materials and Methods used in producing the various assemblages, Artists associated with Assemblage Art, Art Criticism and Appreciation, as well as information relating to other closely related artistic genres such as Collage, Bricolage, Decollage and Montage. Practically, they were also taught to assemble found junk electronic objects into miniature Sculpture pieces.

The programmes for the remaining three semesters were practically structured. This was to ensure that the students master the practical intricacies of the art form. While the second semester of year two concentrates on using assorted plastics, fiberglass, rubbers and found woods in producing sculpture works, the remaining two semesters of year three, were used to disseminate practical knowledge in assembling found metals (found aluminium, iron, tin, steel and alloys) and mixed-found objects (found metals, wood, plastics, rubbers, fabric, bottles, electronic parts and fiberglass) into assemblage works.

The students were taught to use techniques of gluing, screwing, nailing, tying, soldering, welding, and riveting to assemble their junk objects into relief and three-dimensional Sculptures. Equally, knowledge relating to safety practices, embellishing and finishing methods was also imparted to the students.

Lecture based instruction was largely used to transmit theoretical information to the students. The lecturer however, depended on demonstrations to disseminate practical knowledge. They were met once a week. Instructional periods generally lasted for two hours. Subsequently, assignments were given to the students. The finished assignments were critiqued and appreciated by the entire class the following week, after which they were assessed and marked by the course lecturer.

5. Findings and Interventions

The findings of the study have been organized into two sections. The first finding (pre-intervention) identifies the constraints faced by the students. The second findings (post-intervention) assess the impact of the interventions introduced after reflecting on the outcome of the first phase of the study.

5.1 Findings (Pre-intervention)

The findings that emerged after analyzing the data clearly showed that the students were constrained in varied ways, which to a very large extent, affected their performance.

All the students indicated that they encountered various problems when collecting junk materials for their assignments. The consensus was that they felt like “rubbish collectors” any time they were asked to collect specific junk and found objects to be used in creating their assemblages. They indicated that they were mocked by their colleagues and called derogatory names.

A section of the students pointed out that they sometimes found it quite difficult to generate the relevant creative ideas that would guide them in creating their Sculpture projects. Three of the second year students particularly indicated this in their questionnaires and during the interview sessions.

The students also pointed out that some of the junk materials, predominantly metals and plastic objects were sometimes difficult to come by, since many collectors were moving around various homes and buying them to be sold to factories for recycling.

Interestingly, all the second year students believed Assemblage Sculptures could not be sold in Ghana. They therefore did not see why they should spend much time on it. Ironically, all the third year students believe they could make appreciable money selling their Assemblage Sculptures in Ghana, but not as much as selling other Sculpture varieties such as carved, modelled and cast Sculptures.

All the students interviewed revealed that the times given for executing and submitting practical assemblage assignments were usually inadequate. This made it very difficult for them to submit their works on time. Some of them pointed out that they usually skipped lectures when they realized the assignments could not be completed for presentation.

The third year students cited logistical problems as some of their constraining factors. They pointed out that the welding machine in the studio sometimes malfunctioned; and since that was the only welding plant available for the sculpture students, anytime it failed, it delayed the timely execution of their projects. The various bench vices, they believed were also inadequate. They lamented that it made it difficult for all of them to work at the same time.

Some of the students interviewed by colleague researchers (excluding the course lecturer) pointed out that the course lecturer was too strict on them. They explained that they found it quite difficult approaching him to share their problems.

General observations revealed that only one of the third year students was quite enthusiastic about the course during the study period. The remaining two did not show much enthusiasm during the period. Out of the five second year students, two exhibited varied degrees of ebullience during the study period. All the students were seen sometimes in the studio, doing various practical sculpture assignments. Most of the time, they were encountered doing non-assemblage sculpture assignments.

The table below captured the students’ lecture attendance and performance records. The performance was based on the nature and quality of the students’ course works.

Table 1. Year Three Findings

Students Code	Number of times absent from lectures	Number of times late for lectures	Course work assessment
3A	5	6	(62%) C
3B	3	7	(66.5%) C+
3C	2	4	(73%) B

Table 2. Year Two Findings

Students Code	Number of times absent from lectures	Number of times late for lectures	Course work assessment
2A	3	4	(63%) C
2B	2	6	(57%) D+
2C	3	2	(68.5%) C+
2D	1	3	(72%) B
2E	4	7	(52%) D

5.2 Interventions

Based on the findings above, the under listed interventions were developed by the research team to enhance students' interest in the subject.

5.3 Extended Time for Submitting Assignments

Generally, to inculcate the concept of good time management and timely delivery into the future practice of the students, the course lecturer usually adhered strictly to agreed timelines given for the submission of assignments. Based on the constraints expressed by the students, it was agreed that practical assignments would be accepted three days after the agreed deadline, if the students could convincingly explain why they were unable to present the assignments on time. They were however encouraged to work under pressure to ensure that they present all their assignments on time, since the idea was to train them to deliver future commissions on time in order not to disappoint their clients.

5.4 Extended Time for Teaching and Practical Demonstrations

Time spent on practical demonstrations was increased by the course lecturer to enable him incorporate more demonstrational videos and visuals into the programme. With consent from the Head of Department, the lecture sessions were apportioned double periods on the timetable, spanning four hours.

5.5 Field Studies

Field studies were organized for the students to enable them learn from nature and identify prospective sources of junk materials and how they could be sourced for their projects. Visits were also paid to local artists and artisans to draw inspiration from their creative works and efforts.

5.6 Presenting Students with Junk Items

The course lecturer has made it a habit to collect junk objects from his neighbourhood and other locations, and presenting some of them to the students whiles using the remaining ones for practical demonstrations. This is to demonstrate that there is no shame in collecting junk materials for artistic projects.

5.7 Group Assignments

Fifty percent of all assignments given were group assignments. This was to encourage communal learning and collegiality. The researchers also believed this would enable the students pull their materials and ideas together to aid in the quick execution and delivery of course assignments.

5.8 Increased Interactive Relationship

As found out by Morrison, Ross and Kemp (2001), interactive instruction is much more efficacious for disseminating knowledge and encouraging in-depth thinking and comprehension. Based on the above, the lecturer increased his interaction with the students. They were encouraged to ventilate their challenges freely. The course lecturer paid unannounced visits to the sculpture studio to assist students. They were also encouraged to call the lecturer any time they needed his assistance.

5.9 The Job Prospects of Assemblage Sculpture

The job prospects and the general importance of assemblage sculpture were extensively made known to the

students, backed by evidence. Series of assignments were given to the students to enable them explore for themselves, how detritus was used by various artists around the world to create art works that drew attention to varied societal problems, beautify spatial environments, and in the process, put money into the pockets of the respective Sculptors.

5.10 Exhibitions

Special exhibitions were organized to give opportunity to the students to observe how the public react to their artistic creations.

5.11 Findings (Post-intervention)

5.12 Class Attendance

Class attendance improved appreciably in both classes as could be seen in the table below. Even though some of the students were still coming to lectures sometimes late, the researchers noticed that there was great improvement as compared to the previous semester.

Table 3. Year Three Findings

Students Code	Number of times absent from lectures	Number of times late for lectures	Course work assessment
3A	3	3	(66%) C+
3B	1	3	(70.5%) B
3C	1	1	(83%) A

Table 4. Year Two Findings

Students Code	Number of times absent from lectures	Number of times late for lectures	Course work assessment
2A	2	1	(73.5%) B+
2B	0	2	(62%) C
2C	0	2	(86.5%) A+
2D	2	0	(78%) B+
2E	1	3	(67%) C+

5.13 Presentation of Assignments

All year three group assignments were submitted on time. However, some individuals still delayed in presenting their works for assessment, citing various reasons. One particular group in the second year class defaulted in presenting their work on time for assessment on three occasions during the period under review. The second group, however, delivered their works on time throughout the semester. Some of the second year students also defaulted in presenting their individual assignments on time for assessment on varied occasions. Most of the students in both classes who presented their assignments after the agreed deadline claimed they were ill or had to attend to urgent family issues. But again, as could be deduced from tables 3 and 4, there was considerable improvement on their pattern of behavior as compared to the previous semester.

5.14 Increased Enthusiasm

Generally, it was observed that the enthusiasm of students in both classes increased drastically throughout the semester. They were more lively and participated much more in class activities during the period under study. In both classes, the students asked more questions, and shared their problems readily. Criticism and appreciation sessions were livelier than before.

5.15 Quality of Work

The qualities of the works produced by all the students were generally higher than the ones produced the previous semester as observed by the researchers. The students paid more attention to details. The projects were securely assembled and finished properly. The students were quick in pointing out shoddy projects during the weekly appreciation and criticism sessions.

5.16 Public Response to Exhibits

Public response during exhibitions was very much encouraging. Many spectators expressed interest in their works and wanted to purchase some of them. This motivated and encouraged the students. The platform presents the opportunity for students to gauge the public's view about their sculptures. Some spectators even volunteered

to give out junk materials to the students to be used for their projects, as and when they are available, instead of burning or throwing them away.

5.17 Selected Students' Works

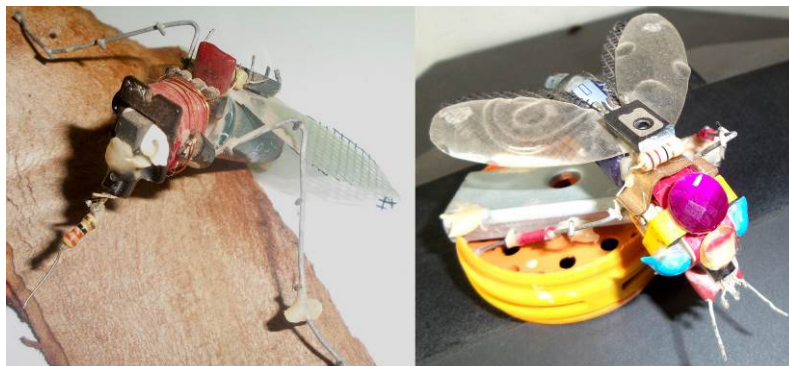


Figure 1. Junk electronic assemblages



Figure 2. Found metals assemblage (left) & Found woods, seeds, corn cobs & broomsticks assemblage (right)



Figure 3. Plastics, rubbers and polythene assemblage



Figure 4. Assemblage produced from discarded foot wears



Figure 5. Mixed-media assemblages

6. Conclusions and Direction for Future Research

Evidence from the study clearly showed that varying teaching approaches could really yield some dividend. As pointed out by Biggs (2003) and Harlen (1993), there cannot be a single solution to the complicated problems of education. To achieve the needed results therefore, there is the need to constantly employ various accepted methodologies until the desired results are achieved.

Results from the study empirically indicated that there was a marked improvement in the academic output and enthusiasm of the students towards the Assemblage course. Indeed, two of the final year students chose to do their end of programme projects in Assemblage Sculpture instead of modeling, carving or casting. This showed the heightened interest the students have developed in the course.

The post-intervention findings revealed appreciable improvement in the class attendance and timely submission of practical projects. This really motivated the course lecturer and encouraged him to put in much more towards the teaching and learning of the course.

Indeed, even though there were some disagreements between some of the students concerning the execution of group assignments, it was also observed that the students were able to work around the problem, subsequently producing improved assemblage sculptures, which exhibited diligence, planning and good finishing. The students' ability to resolve their differences and develop cooperative learning is an evidence of their ability to take responsibility and manage their own learning.

Clearly, the study presented an opportunity for the course lecturer to avail himself to be appraised by

his students. This opportunity opened the door for students to make valid inputs which to a large extent helped in the effective delivery of the lecturer. The outcomes of the appraisal also made it possible for the lecturer to work on himself, thereby improving his academic relations with his students and his general output.

Action research, is characteristically a cyclical approach, which calls for subsequent studies to direct the “energies of teachers toward a better understanding of why, when, and how students become better learners” (Miller, 2007). The Departmental Head is currently working with Management of the Polytechnic to address the logistical issues raised by the students in the study. The researchers intend carrying out further studies to examine the impact of this potential stimulus as well as the long term effect of the interventions already introduced by the researchers on the students’ general output.

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