

ABSTRACT

The Use of Indigenous Arts to Enhance Classroom Learning

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Statistical data and qualitative assessment indicate a need for improved quality education in Trinidad and Tobago. Findings from needs analyses, observations and interviews provide insights to educational practices identifying teaching methodologies as one of the factors affecting student academic performance. This study seeks to address the problem of instructional strategies positing that classroom learning be enhanced through an Arts-in-Education (AiE) approach.

Empirical investigation involving action research using the Experimental Design was undertaken with Standard One classes of eleven primary schools in mainly rural areas of the North Eastern Education District, Trinidad. This resulted in implementing participational classroom workshops and lessons. Visits by performing artistes and community practitioners were also part of an Artistes-in-Schools (AIS) programme aimed at motivating students in active participation in classes.

The study adheres to the theory of Multiple Intelligences reflecting the belief that there are many kinds of intelligences and a number of ways of learning. It also reflects the principles of Constructivism by enabling active education and more authentic, meaningful methods of instruction, via the use of indigenous arts as a medium through which academic content is presented. Qualitative and quantitative analysis, including the Analysis Statistical Package for Social Scientists, support the research hypothesis that there is a significant positive correlation between test scores and educational methodologies involving indigenous arts.

Keywords: Josephine Torrel-Taylor; action research; indigenous arts.