

Full Length Research

Do Learners Prefer Playing to Learning?

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We have all been learners before and still learning. Learners have two forms or divided attitudes. Attitude towards learning and that of playing. They have specific time to exhibit each of them. You realize that, they have specialized fond for playing when it is break or closing. In the classroom too, they exhibit withdrawing fond for learning when lessons are busily going on. Learners are found with this withdrawing's fond when assignments and exercises are given in classroom. They seem to wish always break is near, so they show some sort of play syndrome in their learning environment. The distinction in their style of learning and that of play is very clear. It can be said that, learners would pick play to learning. That is an assumed fact, and exists in reality too.

Keywords: Learners, withdrawal, Playing, and Learning.

INTRODUCTION

A new learning centre has been built, and the expectation is that learners would come and complete their assignments, home works, and project works in there. This facility was built by Adjaye family, a professorial family. Professor Joseph Adjaye the eldest, Professor Sophiah Adjaye, and Dr. Robert Adjaye.

It is a written proposal I made through the then Dean of the Denary in the Elmina Roman Catholic Church, and the Local Roman Catholic Education Unit.

Very Reverend Father Gabriel Awuaful and Professor Anthony Annan Prah made a consortium plea to the Adjaye family, to unveil the already thought Educational Centre for Elmina Roman Church and the Community.

The question is! How do learners understand the purpose of this Educational Centre, make a meaningful use out of it? Hence the title for this Paper; Do Learners Prefer Play To Learning!

Facilities.

Adjaye Educational Centre, Elmina Roman Catholic Boy's Junior High School, Elmina Roman Catholic Girl's Junior High School, Elmina Roman Catholic Boy's Primary School, Elmina Roman Catholic Girl's Primary School Our Ladies of Apostle Basic School and the St. Joseph Minor Basilica Church.

METHODS

Methods used are observations, interactions, and monitoring.

Observations

This was basically in three [3] categories. These were, Compound, Classroom, and After School Observations.

Compound Observations

On the compound, it starts with the time the learner reports to school. They are expected to report at school at 7:00 am morning. There you would see learners coming scattered and wanting to do what they want, neglecting the purpose for that particular time. That time is for them to move to their respective sectional plots and perform cleaning exercises for the learning compound to be clean for classroom work to begin. It is the time to train them as well, because some of them do not perform morning household chores at all before they come to school.

Those who know it is an aspect of the learning, would be seen sweeping the plots and arranging classroom desks, and those who have little knowledge about this would be seen standing in groups and conversing. Others too would be eating, meanwhile when at home would not eat at that particular time of the day. Learners are often seen discussing the previous drama watched on television at home. They do these with vigorous like of them.

Another area to observe the likes, and freedom of learners, is the breaks they have on their time table at school. Here everyone has the capability to feel happy and remove stress. So even the dulls among them, would now be seen as active as he or she should have been in the contact classroom activities. It is a time to see the reality of an academic bowl of the learner. This is termed as the tabula rasa. The learner plays as if there is nothing to be done after the break. Here too it can be observed on the learner that, he or she had wished lessons are cut off to make way for playing, and relaxing with friends.

Others also have favorites in their choices of meals in the school, so the mindset they bring from home, is to come and eat their favorite meals, because their parents will not provide them to eat at home. It is a serious issue when learners are given money to buy their favorites without guarding them. Most of them become confused and do not know the right food to be eaten for learning in the school. They come and buy the junky meals with lots of fats and oils. They again top it up with cookerries, toffies, and gums that are sweeter for their liking. It is mostly seen with the females. It is their dream foods, and that they make sure they eat them whenever school is in session. All these activities are done with simple likeness, and to them learning should be removed from their daily lives.

In the case where they are prompted and brought in line with learning, they find problems and difficulties to accept. We normally say, they like playing more than learning. In another observation, it is the other way round too. So we must weigh these items with keen observations. I realized that, there were some levels of stress with these learners, and that they turn to play to release these them.

Education does not compromise such idea, and would always prefer and advise learners stick to their books and checkup mal-experiences in their learning lives while staying to learn. Their aim is to have people realize the need to give priority to education.

The learner has developed two weights for given tasks and their own personal assignments. He or she does not care to leave the classroom on simple account of even forgetting an eraser, and go out in search for one. Here in searching then turns playing with friends, forgetting the reason for leaving the classroom. The urgency in checking learner's responsibilities in school, is very important. The little absence minded of the learner can create a deep loss of memory, which eventually affect the intelligent quotient.

There is also a particular attitude in learners that show their willingness to prefer play to learning. Their loitering of the compound and the classrooms where learning activities take place. To most of them, pieces of leftovers of items that need to be put at a proper place, seems additional syllabi content. Bins would be placed at vantage points, but that shows not enough for learners to drop waist into them. It a clear indication of learners prioritizing play in preference to learning. The relieving aspect of this attitude is that, it is not peculiar to section of learners in school environments. It is a global phenomenon. Students, Parents, Teachers, and other educational practitioners are often taken through these problems during workshops, seminars, and meetings to inhibit proper organization of attitudes towards learning and leisure's.

So the question! Do learners really choose between these two activities in their learning environment? It is an issue that deserve attentions and resolutions, so that the behavioral growth would not derail on it course in learners.

Classrooms observations

Issues in classroom are scientifically engaged. Here cultures are less allowed to be exhibited. So most at times, the learner is introduced to a different environment all together. It is because, aside the inbuilt future activities of the learner, there are other options of future careers available for the learner to choose. Apart from this too, the classroom is scientifically made to allow the learner to polish his or her given talent to be accepted, and explained in the diversity of cultures around.

The engagement of the learner with these activities in the classroom, is always new and in different stages to be accepted. It always not easy for the learner to go through these processes. This develops some doubting challenges that make him or her reluctant to adhere to the explanations of culture in scientific mode.

When lessons are going on, learners are often observed to be fidgeting and wondering how their culture could be interpreted scientifically. There are at times scratching, silent conversations that have no bearing to the topic in time.

Learners do quarrel, because a friend was looking over one inattentiveness. At a particular time you would note, that the entire classroom is full of silent activities that easily disrupt attentions and concentrations. If a teacher is not keen observant, would not see the disruption of classroom concentration. We have some explanation to these attitudes of learners in an ongoing classroom lesson treatment. Majority of them would want to free themselves from the lesson. They want to go out and resume the activities of their culture. Some even want to go out and resolve conflict that cropped up the previous day, both at school and home. They most at times too, give excuses in pretense to visiting the place of convenience, and waste a lot of time there. By the time they return to classroom, the lesson may be in its halfway. All these pretenses, informed me of their reluctances to get involved with learning in the school.

Others too have various styles in developing hatred for learning. A learner will not take good care of the learning materials. The books may be handled wrongly which cause them to tear and dirty. Instead of putting them in order, they rather throw them away, and report them missing. Teachers actually have been cautioning them on that, and believably, some do realize the importance of learning harder in classroom.

There are also the problems of incompleteness of exercises, assignments, homework's, and project works. Teachers have punish learners for incompleteness of learning tasks. As a learner, you always make sure you complete your exercises. Homework must be ready before lessons starts so that teachers can make discussions and decisions on them. Learners find it difficult to replace lost books when they need them urgently. They rather spend on food, and that it is not their duty to do so, but their parents and guardians. All bulge to the fact that, they prefer playing which does not need any terms and conditions. If even there are, not too rigid.

Learners are sometimes seen with different issues with regard to that particular time. Some of them take to smiling whereas the terms in context are not related to comedy or any kind of laughter. One realizes that, by the time a period elapses, only a few gained the opportunity to notice what the teacher was about. But in teaching we do not normally consider that much, because we are aware by the time the learner sees the responsibilities in the classroom, some efforts would be made as to recollect what transpired on that time. Some learners too show their reluctances by giving excuses that, they are having stomach upset, and that they should be allowed to go to canteen for food. I am aware that even in the boarding house, dining must be

ready before students' bell is told for breakfast or lunch.

Teachers should be very vigilant when teaching in classroom. It is not necessary to allow learners to go out all the time when complained of thirst, urinations, places of convenience, and others. Teachers should allow only critical circumstances where the learner is not habitual in the act.

After School Observation

Learners close from school become exhausted as if they were made to carry loads at school. Looking at the activities in the school, it is only the stress of the mind that invigorates the entire body of the learner, thus seeming they went through vigorous activities in the school. We are with hope that, learners go home revived in a minute. They have to serve their parents and guardians after having their dinner. It is disheartening to see learners troop back to school again to play. At times I ask myself, were they told by their parents to come out after closing from school? Certainly not! They must be interested in playing more.

Learning is actually a task that needs patience, tolerance, carefulness, the love of it, and frequent practice. The learner should obey instructions and on that will he or she be opened to its rudiments. After school, they play throughout till darkness appears. This is a bad habit anyway, they are supposed to be friends of books, but few are seen to be serious with their studies. Learners actually do not find anything wrong to do play all day, when school closes.

A whole learning Centre was built with the notion that, they would come and have their homework and assignments done there when school closes. Learners play and prefer it to learning. The serious ones do come to the centre with their books and study on their own after school. The rest are found playing without thinking about the built learning centre. All the same, the centre has been of tremendous help to the catholic and the community.

Interactions

I interacted with many of the learners to find out their preferences and problems. To most of them, nothing strikes them to be serious than, when it is time to play. Most of them too have their level of understanding to be very low. They believe spending too much time on learning, will not get them to their career choices. They also have the notion that, they are worried a lot to study their books and that, they think learning should be from their free will. Others too believe not the future, and when parents and teachers try to compare their presences with their future as an advice, they see that as untrue.

The expressions of tiredness of the mind are most at times the worrying factors for them not to be seen as liking learning more than playing. They sometimes have to go through painful treatment of the mind in understanding a concept from a lesson in the classroom. Whereas it is easier to use the mind in playing field. So choosing learning for playing is a case for them to think of. But said on this, they really admire learning more and wish they are brilliants than ever.

There are always questions they had wished to ask. Is it compulsory at all to be asked to study, as they have been pushing to go to school each school day! Why is the government so much interested in their education! After all, their growths and well beings are not much related to the activities of the government. Little are they aware of the reasons of the family, society, school, Ghana Education Service, Ministry of Education, and the Government have hands in their positive developmental growth?

Monitoring

Monitoring has been my major activity. When I identify the problems and realize learner's vulnerabilities, I manage to take closer and keen look at them. What I normally do is to engage them in various ways. I let them dress properly when they are walking around on the cluster compound. I make sure they are in their classrooms by 8:00 am. I visit the schools and affirm learners on their responsibilities in the school with the head teachers, and teachers. This is technical so I normally undertake them virtual basis, and on Mondays. On Friday, as the learning days come to a close, I visit ones again for a weekly closure.

The Local Manager is closer to the cluster school, so he is made aware whenever the learners are on the school compound, and whenever they are ending on Fridays.

ANALYSES

One of the appropriate ways to learn and understand is through a play method. Learners are able to learn well and understand concept better. So play has been a method applied in teaching. Here the lesson becomes practical and a learner involvement. Playing is also a way to entertain the learner when lesson is on break. They forget all the problems they encountered in the course of the lesson. We have so many applications of play in the learning environment.

Do we as education practitioners always have to allow play to dominate in our style of teaching?The answer is a big NO!It is known that, because children like playing a lot, was that included in the teaching method in order to draw learner's attention to the concept being introduced to them.

I managed to undertake a practical research exercise for cluster development with the Roman Catholic Schools in Elmina, to support my Philosophy study with IACIU-OOPL-CHS, a UNESCOs category II in higher learning. What I realized within a ten year period was that, they have been observed for longer time, their playing attitudes. The only activity they do after school, is to go to the field and play. Parents have lodged so many complains,that teachers do not close their wards from school early, and that they allow them to stay in school for long. This issue is not true at all, because the children are closed on time and are expected to get home for other activities too.

This became an issue to call for proposals which I solemnly documented a cluster development proposition to the Local Manager of the Catholic Education Unit Very Reverend Father Gabriel Awuafoh, the Municipal Director of Education, and the four head teachers of the Schools. The proposal was forwarded to the Adjaye family, who have the learning interest of the community at heart. A learning Centre has now been built and developed for the Roman Catholic and the Community, known as the Adjaye Education Centre. This was started in June 2016 and commissioned on May 2018.

I am yet to read well on these learners, their learning habit, and their perception about this built learning centre, by Professor Joseph Adjaye and the Adjaye family.

CONCLUSION

Play method of teaching is used carefully to direct the meaning of a concept in the classroom by teachers. Play does not define the allowance of learners to play all the time at the detriment of their studies. Though children must play both at home and the school, there is no need to forget the book.

Learners when not monitored properly, could exchange their learning strengths for play. So using the play method should properly go with strict monitoring, else they would catch the concept alright in the lesson, but will play a lot to forget all learnt concepts.

Learners do prefer playing to learning, and there must be constant prompts for them to develop a habitual preference to learning.

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