

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

APPLYING BANDURA'S SOCIAL LEARNING THEORY IN TEACHING PIANO: A CASE STUDY OF DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC, FEDERAL COLLEGE OF EDUCATION, EHA-AMUFU, ENUGU STATE Paschal Chibuike Ozoaghuta & Ebele Veronica Ojukwu (PhD)

Abstract

This study is hinged on the principles of social learning theory in teaching piano pieces among the students of the Department of Music, Federal College of Education, Eha-Amufu. The aim was to minimize the challenges they face while learning their piano pieces since it seemed to be the most difficult aspect of their music studies. The researcher adopted a survey research design. The population for the study comprised fifteen (15) students. The sample stood at ten (10) students. Data were significantly gathered through the use of the observation method. The subjects were observed in three phases namely, live modelling, verbal instruction modelling and finally, symbolic modelling. The results of the study conform with the findings of Albert Bandura which indicates that human beings are naturally inclined to learn from one another through observation, imitation and modelling. Based on these findings, the researcher recommends that music educators should as a matter of necessity during the teaching-learning process model the desired behaviour to the students since it has been established that effective learning takes place through modelling and imitation.

Introduction

Learning is a complex process that involves multiple factors. This has made it very difficult to give a universal definition of learning. Various theories have been developed by psychologists in an attempt to define the term learning. Marx as cited in Chauhan (1978) defines learning as "relatively enduring change in behaviour which is a function of prior behaviour usually called the practice" (p. 117). Ekeruo in Chukwu (2006) observed that "learning is a natural phenomenon developed by man in the process of seeking a solution to his numerous problems" (p. 21). In other words, it is a relatively permanent change in behaviour as evidenced by a change in performance through practice. The implication of this is that before we can reliably say that learning has occurred, it must be relatively permanent, and also, must be a change in behaviour due to training or practice.

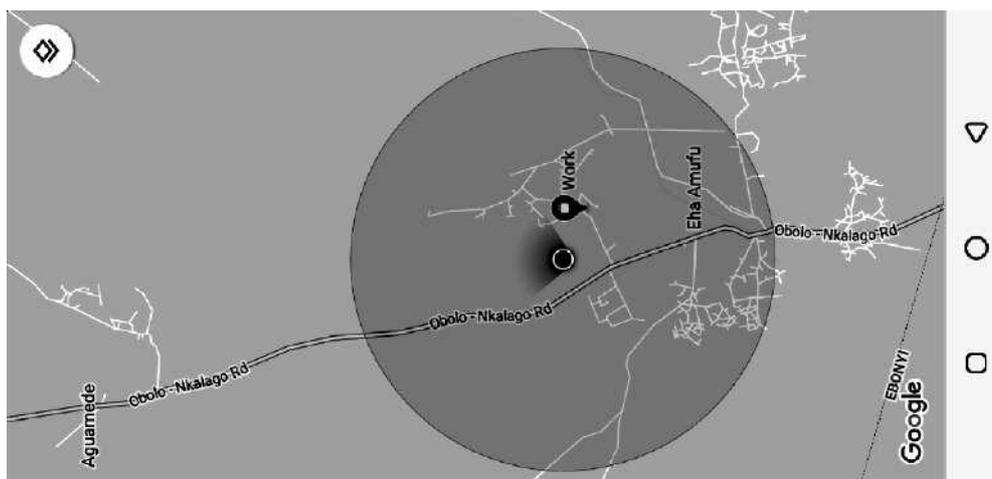
Having established above the meaning of learning, learning piano pieces for the first time can be difficult at any age, but young children especially students typically face more significant challenges than people of any other age- group while attempting to tackle this incredible musical instrument. The challenge according to Okeke (2014) is analogous to the teaching of a foreign language (p. 53). Learning piano pieces to some extent is the most difficult aspect of music education that upset the students of music in a great way. These challenges sometimes could be frustrations arising from their inability to practice frequently or due to a lack of interest in music education. It could also be a result of unsupportive teachings by the lecturers. These difficulties in learning piano pieces are also affecting the music students of the Federal College of Education, Eha-Amufu. In other words, they are not exempted as they also experience such difficulties when learning their piano pieces.

Therefore, in this study, Bandura's social learning theory which is centred on learning through observation will be thoroughly examined and applied in the teaching of piano pieces among the music students of Federal College of Education, Eha-Amufu to minimize the challenges they face while learning their piano pieces. Learning piano is a long time commitment if someone wants to be a good pianist. It is a skill that can be learned like any other skill. Where the students are not guided properly or provided with enabling environment, some sorts of phobia always emerge during the actual presentation.

Federal College of Education Eha-Amufu (FCEE)

Eha-Amufu is a town in Isi-Uzo Local Government Area, of Enugu State. It is about forty-five kilometres (45km) North-East of Enugu State and about sixty kilometres (60km) South-East of Nsukka. Geographically, Eha-Amufu lies between the latitude of 70 and 60 East of Greenwich. It covers the landmark of about 1600 square kilometres with an annual rainfall of about 122.5mm and a projected population of about 75,208 people as recorded in the 2005 census. According to the Music student handbook, Federal College of Education, Eha-Amufu (2015), the defunct Anambra State House of Assembly passed a law establishing the College of Education, Eha-Amufu on 21st, February 1981 (p. 3). The College functioned under that law until the Federal Government of Nigeria under decree no. 34 of 4th May 1993 established the Federal College of Education, Eha-Amufu upon the demise of the State College of Education.

Google Map of Federal College of Education, Eha-Amufu, Enugu State.



Source: Google app locator: Retrieved on 10-9-2020.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to minimize the challenges the students of the Music Department of Federal College of Education, Eha-Amufu face while learning their piano pieces by applying the three types of modelling stimuli emanating from Albert Bandura's social learning theory.

The population of the study

DeVos (2000) defines population as the entire collection of persons, objects or events which are potentially available for observation (p. 34). Dale (2006) described a research population as a large collection of individuals or objects that are the main focus of a scientific investigation (p. 3). Therefore, the population for this study consists of fifteen (15) final year students of the above-named institution.

Sample of the study

According to Mays and Pope (2000), simple random sampling entails defining the population to

be studied, determining the sample size, assigning each member of the population a number and using arbitrarily selected numbers from a table of numbers, giving each individual an equal chance of being selected for inclusion in the sample. In this manner, a sufficiently random sample of the population becomes representative of the larger whole (p. 23). Therefore, ten (10) students make up the study sample. The reason behind the reduction in the population was to ensure that the number of functional “piano” (musical instrument) in the Department of Music, Federal College of Education, Eha-Amufu is equivalent in number with the participants ready to be observed.

Theoretical Framework

Bandura's views on social learning theory

Albert Bandura, (1989) was the researcher perhaps most often identified with social learning theory. This learning theory could also be called learning through observation. He and other researchers have demonstrated that we are naturally inclined to engage in observational learning. Observational learning describes the process of learning through watching others, retaining the information, and then later replicating the behaviours that were observed. In other words, social learning theory is based on the behaviourmodelling theory where people learn new things by observing others. Bandura demonstrated that young children would imitate the actions of an adult model. According to Bandura's research, several factors increase the likelihood that behaviour will be imitated. These include;

1. People who are similar to us in age.
2. People who are of the same sex.
3. People who have the same interest as us.
4. People who we admire or who are of a higher social status.

In one of his experiments, he made children watch the video clips of an adult interacting with a large inflatable Bobo-doll. In some instances, the adult simply ignored the doll, while sometimes, the adult would hit, kick, and yell at the doll. When the kids were later given the chance to play with the same Bobo doll in a room, those who had observed the adults abusing the doll engaged in similar actions. He, therefore, noted that learning occurs when someone observes the actions and consequences of other people's behaviour. Observational learning is sometimes referred to as shaping, modelling, and vicarious reinforcement. While it can take place at any point in life, it tends to be the most common during childhood as children learn from the authority figures and peers during their developmental stages. It also plays an important role in the socialization process, as children learn how to behave and respond to others by observing how their parents and other relations interact with each other. Idamoyibo (2004) observed that music is a human behaviour that is acquired directly through observation, imitation and practice. Also, Warren as cited in Agu (2011) opined that children absorb much of their basic knowledge by imitating. (p. 9). This goes to prove that every individual mind is influenced and developed from what he or she sees or feels from outside and then learn more from the experience. This is in line with Agbakoba (2011) when he said that:

A philosopher like Plato in his comprehensive idealist theory of the mind explains that the body does not operate of its accord; as body, it is lifeless, therefore, its animation comes from something outside, which controls and directs it. He went further to say that, “that something is in the mind, which Plato calls the “soul psyche (p. 21).

Regarding Bandura's theory, his finding raises an important point that is very critical to this study. This is because "if children were likely to imitate actions viewed on video clips in a lab setting as he observed, it then means that, if music students of Federal College of Education Eha-Amufu are

presented with a video clip of a professional pianist playing well known classical pieces, they are likely to imitate them as well when allowed to do so. Idamoyibo and Agu's research also emphasised that learning occurs through observation. If learning occurs through observation, it then means that when a dull student is paired with brilliant ones during the teaching and learning process, it is likely that the dull ones would be influenced by the brilliant ones. All these and more this paper tends to bring to our notice.

Summary of Bandura's social learning theory.

Albert Bandura's social learning theory posits that people learn from one another through observation, imitation and modelling. This means that learning involves observation and extraction of information from those observations and making a decision about the performance of the behaviour. Social learning theory draws heavily on the concept of modelling. This is why Bandura outlined three types of modelling stimuli:

1. Live modelling- a situation where a researcher is demonstrating the desired behaviour to the subjects.
2. Verbal instruction modelling- a situation where a researcher describes the desired behaviour in detail and instructs the participant on how to engage in the behaviour.
3. Symbolic modelling- a situation whereby modelling occurs utilizing the media, including movies, television, computers, internet and radio.

Bandura's four principles of social learning.

From his research, Bandura formulated four principles of social learning theory namely;

1. Attention -We cannot learn if we are not focused on the task.
2. Retention - We learn by internalizing information in our memories.
3. Reproduction - We reproduce previously learned information, skills etc when required.
4. Motivation – We need to be motivated to do anything.

Examples of observational learning in action

1. The student watches the researcher demonstrate the desired behaviour. In this case, playing the piano piece.
2. The student watches the techniques of the researcher demonstrating the desired behaviour.
3. The student watches the movements of the hands of the researcher demonstrating the desired behaviour.
4. The student watches the projected video clip of a professional pianist playing a piece titled "spring" by Antonio Vivaldi.

Methodology

The researcher adopted a survey research design. Nworgu in Esimone (2015) defined a "survey" as a research design by which group of people or item is studied by collecting and analyzing data from only a few people or items considered to represent the entire population" (p. 173). Specifically, data were gathered through the use of the observation method.

Procedures

Using Albert Bandura's three modelling stimuli stated above, the observation took place in three phases. In the first observation, the researcher adopted the "livemodelling" approach. The researcher demonstrated the desired behaviour to the participants by playing a short piano piece titled "spring" by Antonio Vivaldi. As the researcher does that, he also observed their reactions. In the end, the researcher records the result.

In the second observation, "verbal instruction modelling" was used. The researcher describes the desired behaviour/task in detail and instructs the participants on how to engage in the behaviour. In this case, a short piano piece titled "spring" by Antonio Vivaldi was presented to the participants having carefully explained to them how to engage the task.

Spring Antonio Vivaldi

The image shows a musical score for the piece 'Spring' by Antonio Vivaldi. It consists of five systems of music, each with a treble and bass clef. The first system starts with a forte (f) dynamic. The second system has a mezzo-piano (mp) dynamic. The third system returns to forte (f). The fourth system is mezzo-piano (mp). The fifth system starts with forte (f) and includes a 'rit.' (ritardando) marking. The score is in 4/4 time and features a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes with some rests.

In the third observation, "symbolic modelling" was utilized. Here, modelling occurs using the media. The participants were asked to write down their names on a sheet of paper. Thereafter, the researcher divided them into two groups namely A & B based on how their names appeared on the paper. (Note: The researcher did not consider the intellectual capabilities of the participants concerning piano playing). Below is a table showing how their names appeared on the paper.

S/N	NAME OF STUDENT IN GROUP A	REG NO.	SEX	NAME OF STUDENT IN GROUP A	REG NO.	SEX
1.	Noah, Jimba	17109203	M	Okafor, Sandra I.	17109206	F
2.	Ani, Comfort O.	17109201	F	Enejere, Paul C.	17109163	M
3.	Arua, Chinemeogo J.	17109202	M	Ilo, Augustine O.	17109208	M
4.	Odo, Chioma P.	17109204	F	Nwokporo, Juliana C.	17109210	F
5.	Ugwuagbo, Pius E.	17109207	M	Nnaji, Onyedikachi S.	17109209	M

Shortly after this, the researcher wrote (Yes and No) on two sheets of paper and folded them. One person from each of the two groups was made to pick one from the two folded sheets of paper. Group A picked No while Group B picked Yes. The participants in each of the groups were given

a keyboard (piano). And they were asked to move to their various practising locations. Those participants in Group A were presented with the above piano piece titled "spring" by Antonio Vivaldi but without the musical video. They were asked to play the piece simultaneously. The researcher carefully watched them closely as they attempt to play the piece. The participants were observed by the researcher for about (1hr 30 minutes) and the results were recorded. Similarly, those participants in group B were made to watch a video clip of a professional pianist that is playing the same piece of music repeatedly. Thereafter, the participants were given the piece and were instructed to play the piece of music using the various musical keyboards assigned to them. The researcher keenly observed them for about (1hr 30 minutes) and records the result.

Results

Having carefully observed the subjects in three phases, the results conform with the findings of Albert Bandura. It indicates that human beings are naturally inclined to learn from one another through observation, imitation and modelling. This was seen in the third observation specifically in Group A, where brilliant students have tremendous positive influences on the dull ones. Although they were not provided with a video clip, the dull ones were able to imitate the brilliant ones. The result also reveals that participants in group A (that is, those who did not watch the video clip) took a long time to learn the piece than those participants in group B (that is, those who watched the video clip).

Discussion of the results

From the study, we can see that students do not only imitate each other but also, the teacher. This study indicates that learning could not be explained only through reinforcement but that the presence of others was also an influence. This study reveals that when a student is visually stimulated about a musical content about to be taught, it enables them to respond well and comprehend the learning materials within a short period. This is because students of today expect to be visually stimulated. It is only very few proportions that would respond well to the use of text on its own during music teaching and learning.

Educational implications of social learning theory

Social learning theory has lots of educational implications that could serve as a guide for practising music educators. Some of these implications are as follows;

1. Music educators should be aware that learners can learn in multiple ways. Therefore, they should not glue to one teaching approach.
2. Music educators should also know that learning takes place when the learners are stimulated to learn through any of the sense organs such as sight, taste, touch, smell and hearing.
3. Observational learning helps in increasing knowledge of learners, retention and life skills.
4. Since learning occurs as a result of imitation, it then follows that when a good student is paired with the dull ones during the music teaching and learning, the brilliant ones would always have positive influences on the dull ones.
5. Social learning theory is very suitable for ensemble music studies. The choirmaster just needs to explain to the students or demonstrate to them what to do and grouped them into SATB and allow them to learn from their peers.
6. Music educators should expose students to a variety of other models to enable them to retain the learning materials.
7. Modelling could be applied by music educators to increase and focus learners' attention on a learning experience about to be taught.

Conclusion

Playing the piano is a long time commitment if someone wants to be a good pianist. No matter

what your goals may be, there is a need to spend a good deal of time developing your skills. Piano performance is a skill that can be learned like any other skill. But just like any other skill, it needs to be practised. Where the students fail to practice what has been given to them and where they are not properly guided, some sorts of phobia always emerge during the actual presentation. Therefore, to maximize music instructions, it is assumed that students need to be allowed to develop their capabilities and effective thinking skill as part of their well-rounded education. To develop students that will be able to acquire academic and mental skills, there is a need to go beyond mere teaching in schools hence the need for music educators to incorporate the principles of social learning theory in their teachings. Having carefully observed the subjects in the course of this study, the results conform with the findings of Albert Bandura which indicates that human beings are naturally inclined to learn from one another through observation, imitation and modelling.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher recommends the followings;

1. Music educators should as a matter of necessity during the teaching-learning process, model the desired behaviour to the students since it has been established that effective learning takes place through imitation of others.
2. Music educators should also adopt symbolic modelling in their teachings where necessary. This makes the learning materials easier and helps the students to retain the learned materials.
3. Government, on the other hand, should also make funds available for the procurement of visually assisted gadgets that could be incorporated during the teaching-learning process to facilitate the learning experiences.

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