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A Journal of Department of Primary Educational Studies
Faculty of Education
Ignatius Ajuru University Education
Port Harcourt, Rivers State

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EDITORIAL

Education the world over is known as the vehicle that conveys essential ingredients for overall development to all facets of the society. The target of any educational enterprise in any country is to equip the people with a worthwhile education. Educational services remains incomplete without a functional or qualitative basic education. Children of basic education level are therefore the prime focus of any educational system. A good education system must therefore explore ways and means of overcoming impeding variables that can warrant the education system to render epileptic services to the citizenry. African Journal of Elementary Education Paradigm (AJEEP) in this edition timely treats myriads of issues that affect the overall education of the school age child.

This edition attempts to fill the gaps that have led to the age long statement of falling standard in education. It therefore succinctly presents the kernels in educational issues that borders on teaching activities, strategies and methods. It did not over look the family and parental levels of education of the primary school child. In terms of pupils' and teachers' performances, it examines the nature of questions and answers the children are confronted with. On the part of the teacher, it explains the positive impact workshops and other means of teacher capacity building, processes play in enhancing teacher performance.

I this edition, seasoned educational scholars have painstakingly dug deep to unveil, explore and explain the grounds that can wrought quality basic education in Nigeria and elsewhere. I therefore have no moral justification to hesitate in recommending this edition to individuals, parents, teachers, students, curriculum planers, school administrators, governments, local and international agencies among others.

Dr. Anero, Nnamdi
Editor-in-chief

NOTES TO CONTRIBUTORS

The African Journal of Elementary Education Paradigm (AJEEP) receives papers for consideration on any aspect of education and training of the child. The major consideration to accept any paper is the extent the article contributes to knowledge. Contributions are accepted from individuals, institutions, local and international communities, parents, teachers, school administrators, the government and agencies. Contributions can be in the form of case studies, critiques, surveys, opinions, theoretical or other forms of empirical studies.

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USE AND APPLICATION OF TEACHING AND LEARNING METHODS/INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS AMONG EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION TEACHERS IN ILORIN METROPOLIS

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the application of various teaching methods used by Early Childhood Education teachers within Ilorin metropolis in kwara state. A descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The purposive sampling technique was used to select 45 public primary schools with pre-primary section, using the class teachers as respondents. A well structured questionnaire titled, 'Teaching and Learning Practices among ECE Teachers Questionnaire' (TLPAECETQ) was used for gathering data for the study. Three research questions were answered and simple percentages, mean and median were used for data analysis. The findings revealed that the teaching and learning practices in pre-primary classes with respect to methods used are not child centered. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended that qualified Early Childhood Teachers should be employed to manage pre-primary classes. There is need for continuous in-house training program for the pre-primary class teachers on child centered methods of teaching and improvisation of instructional materials.

INTRODUCTION

Early Childhood Education according to FRN (2013) is the education given to children in an educational institution prior to their entering primary school. Early Childhood Education started in Nigeria about two decades ago as a special field of focus for

development intervention. It is as a result of Government's determination to create an enabling environment for the Nigerian child to develop to the fullest potential in line with the national goal and aspiration of building a' land full of bright opportunities for all citizens'. Research evidence abounds from many field of study that, the care and support received by a child at the early years is crucial in the formation and development of intelligence, personality and social behavior. It is therefore important that a well-planned teaching program be introduced as early as possible with well-trained teachers to stimulate learning in children. This will serve as pathways and connections to the brain in early years which affects the brain's capacity in the future (Dorfman,2009). Early Childhood Education involves the total development of a child (physical, motor, cognitive, language, emotional, social and moral). For these to be achieved, it requires the involvement of competent and professionally qualified pre-primary school teachers armed with child centered methods in the teaching and learning activities.

Abimbola (2009) noted that teaching is a process of facilitating student learning through a proper classroom management used by the teacher and the interrelationships that cut across students' interest, the content for learning, and the methods and materials teacher intends to use in the teaching and learning of the subject content . It should be realized that the strategies used by the teacher determines whether learning has taken place or not.

Effective instructional strategies meet all learning styles and developmental needs of the learners (Diego, 2012). Instructional strategy relies on teacher's ability to understand the complexity of deferent types of problems and her ability to present them to her students at the proper time in their learning timeline (Marzano, 2003). Marzano posits that, the more strategies teachers used the better executed and the greater their students' achievement in terms of both status and growth.

The conditions under which the pre-primary school children are being trained in the various Educational Institutions have become one of the concerns of the Educational stakeholders. To them, the competency of the teachers in public schools to impact knowledge effectively is seriously questionable because it is the most significant factor in the effectiveness of schools and in the status of pupils' Education. This implies that no matter the situation, the academic status of the pupils is determined by the teacher (FGN 2006). This also supports the assertion that no education system can rise above the quality of teachers in the system. In order to ensure all round development of the child and ensure the best start, the Federal Government of Nigeria recommends the teaching of rudiments of numbers, letters, colours, shapes and forms, etc, through play for pre primary classes.

All children play at one time or the other. Therefore, play is one of the principal means by which children experiment with social environment. (FGN, 2013) informed that play contribute immensely to the intellectual, social, emotional, and physical development of the Nigerian child. The policy also stated that play method of instruction should be used for teaching in the pre-primary classes. Akinbote, Oduolowu and Lawal (2001) categorized play into the various categories, each serving a particular purpose. These include;

A. Sensory play; This involves both the gross and fine skill activities that pre-primary school children are engaged in. The gross motor skills involved physical activities such as climbing, running, throwing, crawling, skipping, chasing etc. The fine motor activities involved manipulation of objects like bead-threading, cutting with scissors, drawing, painting, building of blocks etc.

B. Imaginative/symbolic play; The main purpose for this is for social and emotional learning. This involves playing 'home', market' School roles etc.

C. Social Play; This involves interaction between two or more pupils usually with defined rules.

Statement of the problem

Research from various fields of study has shown that the care and support received by children in terms of good health, psychosocial care and protection are crucial in the formation and development of intelligence, personality and social behavior. This therefore means that the experience and education gained by a child in his early years forms the background for later developments, hence the need to set enabling environment for the child to survive, grow and thrive physically, socially, emotionally, intellectually and spiritually to its optimal capacity. This objective can only be attained by a skilled teacher equipped with the relevant methods and practices for effective teaching and learning in early childhood education.

Objectives of the study

This study assesses the teaching methods used by pre-primary class teachers and the challenges facing effective teaching and learning in pre-primary classes in Ilorin metropolis, Kwara State. This study also investigates teaching and learning practices among Early Childhood Education Teachers in Ilorin metropolis and the challenges for producing a whole child.

Research Questions

1. What are the methods of teaching employed by early childhood education teachers in Ilorin metropolis?
2. To what extent are relevant instructional materials available for teaching and learning activities in early childhood classroom?
3 To what extent are relevant instructional materials used to support teaching and learning activities in your class?

Methodology

Descriptive survey research design was used for this study. The target population comprises of all the pre-primary teachers in all public primary schools in Ilorin Metropolis. The purposive

sampling technique was used to select 45 public primary schools with pre-primary classes from about one hundred and fifty (150) public primary schools in Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara State as sample for the study. A well-structured questionnaire titled, 'Teaching and Learning Practices among ECE Teachers Questionnaire' (TLPAECETQ) was used to collect data. Simple descriptive statistics such as frequency count, percentage, means and standard deviation were used in order to provide answers to the research questions.

Results and interpretation

The results of the study and research question by research question interpretations are stated below.

Research Question One: What are the methods of teaching employed by Early childhood Education Teachers in Ilorin Metropolis?

Table 1: Table showing the methods of teaching employed by Early childhood Education Teachers in Ilorin Metropolis

S/N	METHODS	Almos Always	Sometimes	Every Once in a while	Rarely	Never	Mean
1	Whole Class Instruction	45 (50.6)	44 (49.4)				4.51
2	Group Method		75 (84.3)	12 (13.5)		2 (2.2)	3.80
3	Demonstration method			47 (52.8)	42 (47.2)		2.53
4	Story method				46 (51.7)	43 (48.3)	1.52
5	Play method				20 (22.5)	69 (77.5)	1.22
6	Questioning method		48 (53.9)	41 (46.1)			3.54
7	Discussion method			47 (52.8)	42 (47.2)		2.53
8	Group work		41 (46.1)	48 (53.9)			3.46
9	Experimental method			46 (51.7)	43 (48.3)		2.52

NOTE: The figures in parentheses represent percentages

Table 1 showed the method of teaching employed by early childhood education teachers in Ilorin metropolis. The teachers almost always used whole class instruction (Mean = 4.51). They sometimes use group method (Mean = 3.80) and questioning method (Mean = 3.54); Once in a while used demonstration method (Mean = 2.53), discussion method (Mean = 2.53) and experimental method (Mean = 2.52). The teachers rarely used story method (Mean = 1.52) and they never used play method (Mean = 1.22). From the analysis, play method had the least mean of all the methods. Hence, it is only play method which a child centered method that is never used by the early childhood education teachers in Ilorin metropolis.

Research Question Two: To what extent are relevant instructional materials available for teaching and learning activities in early childhood classroom?

Table 2: Table showing the extent to which relevant instructional materials are available for the teaching and learning activities in early childhood classroom.

S/N	ITEMS	Great Extent	Some Extent	Not at all	Mean
1	Chats and Colourful posters	4 (4.5)	12 (13.5)	73 (82.0)	1.22
2	Pictures	6 (6.7)	12 (13.5)	71 (79.8)	1.27
3	Building blocks	4 (4.5)	16 (18.0)	69 (77.5)	1.27
4	Flash cards		3 (3.4)	86 (96.6)	1.03
5	Counters/Abacus	6 (6.7)	59 (66.3)	24 (27.0)	1.80
6	Musical Instrument	7 (7.9)	21 (23.6)	61 (68.5)	1.39
7	Paints	3 (3.4)	10 (11.2)	76 (85.4)	1.18
8	Brush	2 (2.2)	12 (13.5)	75 (84.3)	1.18
	Weighted Average				**1.29**

NOTE: The figures in parentheses represent percentages

Table 2 showed the extent to which relevant instructional materials available for the teaching and learning activities. Counters/ Abacus (Mean = 1.80) were available to some extent while the following were not available at all: Chats and Colourful posters (Mean = 1.22), Pictures (Mean = 1.27), Building blocks (Mean = 1.27), Flash cards (Mean = 1.03), Musical Instrument (Mean = 1.39), Paints (Mean = 1.18) and Brush (Mean = 1.18). The weighted average is 1.29 which a numeric indicator that the

relevant instructional materials for the teaching and learning activities were not available at all.

Research Question Three: To what extent are relevant instructional materials used to support teaching and learning activities in your class?

Table 3: Table showing the extent to which the relevant instructional materials are used to support the teaching and learning activities

S/N	ITEMS	Great Extent	Some Extent	Not at all	Mean
1	Chats and Colourful posters		4 (4.5)	85 (95.5)	1.05
2	Pictures	1 (1.1)	2 (2.2)	86 (96.6)	1.05
3	Building blocks		2 (2.2)	87 (97.8)	1.02
4	Flash cards			89 (100)	1.00
5	Counters/Abacus		8 (9.0)	81 (91.0)	1.09
6	Musical Instrument		13 (14.6)	76 (85.4)	1.15
7	Paints		3 (3.4)	86 (96.6)	1.03
8	Brush		3 (3.4)	86 (96.6)	1.03
	Weighted Average				**1.05**

NOTE: The figures in parentheses represent percentages

Table 3 showed the extent to which relevant instructional materials are used to support the teaching and learning activities. The following instructional materials were not used all to support teaching and learning activities: Chats and Colourful posters (Mean = 1.05); Pictures (Mean = 1.05); Building blocks (Mean = 1.02); Flash cards (Mean = 1.00); Counters/Abacus (Mean = 1.09); Musical Instrument (Mean = 1.15); Paints (Mean = 1.03); Brush (Mean = 1.03). The weighted average is 1.05 which is a numeric

indicator that the instructional materials were not used at all. It is also obvious from tables 1 and 2 that even those instructional materials that were available were also not used at all.

Findings

Table 1 revealed that teachers mostly used whole class method of teaching and sometimes group method, questioning method, demonstration method, discussion and experimental methods of teaching but rarely used story and play methods of teaching. This finding contradicts the recommendation of Federal Republic of Nigeria that pre-primary children should be taught by play method. It was also revealed in table 2 that most of the recommended instructional materials for early childhood classes such as colourful charts and posters, building blocks, flash cards, musical instruments etc are not available at all while the few that are available such as counters, abacus are inadequate therefore rarely used.

Table 3 showed that relevant instructional materials were not used to support teaching/learning activities possibly because of their non availability and inadequacy. This finding reveals that rote learning is taking place in early childhood education classes within Ilorin metropolis.

Conclusion

In conclusion, early childhood education program in Ilorin metropolis is not child centered., If the situation therefore is not urgently addressed, the aim of providing best care and support to young children in their most vulnerable period of life which is from 0-6 years and laying good foundation for early learning and subsequent achievement may not be realistic. Finally, millennium development goals also may not be achieved.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the researchers recommended the following:

That professional early childhood education teachers should be employed to teach in pre-primary classes. This will afford them

the opportunity of bringing their knowledge of child psychology into practice.

It is also very important that the available pre-primary class teachers be given adequate training on child centered methods of teaching and improvisation of instructional materials instead of waiting for government to provide them. The stakeholders need to be sensitized on the importance of early childhood education.

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