



**Towards Effective Strategies for Teaching Pupils with Learning .... (Muhammad, et.al. 2022)**

## **Towards Effective Strategies for Teaching Pupils with Learning Disabilities in Primary Schools in Nigeria**

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### **Abstract**

This paper examined towards effective strategies for teaching pupils with learning disabilities in primary schools in Nigeria. Learning disability is a hidden handicap to understand what they see around them. The paper investigated on the prevalence and incidence of pupils with learning disabilities in Nigeria, the forms of pupils with learning disabilities, Effective strategies for Learning Disabilities, it also discussed on the concept of learning disabilities. The prevalence of Pupils with SLD within the ages of 6-21 in the world was 4.67million in the 20s to over 9.1 million. It revealed that the ratio of people with learning disabilities is highly increase in Nigeria especially on female side. The prevalence of gender in Nigeria is 3 girls to 1 boy, that's 40% of male and 60% of female. The estimated prevalence in Nigeria to be 15-30% among the pupils within the school age 45%. Dyslexia 25%, attention deficit 15%, while others have 5%. In a report surveyed on pupils with learning disabilities in Nigeria 58% reading disabilities, 31% learning, 11 % others. But, in dyslexia 35%, dyscalculia 25%, 15% are dysgraphia, 10% dyspraxia, attention deficit and others 8% and 7%. The writers recommended that that government should urgently create a programme of campaign awareness to educate pupils with learning disabilities, establishing counselling centres, and also government should encourage NGOs to participate in the programme. Capacity building, teaching aid and remunerations of teachers that handling with pupils with learning disabilities in Nigeria.

**Keywords:** Delivering Effective Instructions, Learning Difficulties and Strategies.

### **Introduction**

Learning Disability is prevalence and wide spread in Nigeria. It can affect people physically, socially, psychologically, economically and even politically in Nigeria. This paper



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intended to investigate on learning strategies, and instructions used in teaching the pupils with learning disabilities in Nigerian primary schools. Likewise, the paper was investigated on the ratio of pupils with learning disabilities in Nigeria so as to find a way out of tackling the issues among the primary schools in Nigeria.

Pupils with learning disabilities are not opportune to learn as required to developed their academic potentialities due to lack of special approaches by the regular teachers to understand them and adopt approach that might meet their educational needs in the regular schools where special need education supposed to take place as inclusion. Onukwufor (2016). Disabilities are physical, mental, cognitive, or developmental condition that impairs, interferes with, or limit a person's ability to engage in certain task or actions or participation in daily activities and interactions (Bryan, 2000). Disability is any medical condition that make it more difficult for a person to do certain activities or effectively interact with the world around (socially or materially). This condition may be cognitive, developmental, intellectual, mental, physical, sensory or a combination of multiple factors.

**Concept of learning Disabilities**

The term “Learning Disabilities” is used to described people with developmental problem in academic and socio-emotional skills (Haruna, 2008). Means disorder characterized by difficulties with certain skills such as writing or reading in individuals with normal intelligences. British Dyslexia Association (2013) learning Disabilities refers to a number of conditions that might affects the acquisitions, organizing, retention, understanding or use of verbal information. These disorders affect learning in individual who otherwise demonstrate at least average abilities essentials for thinking or reasoning. Obani (2006) stated that, Learning Disabilities could be regarded as in abilities to perform at a level of commensurable with evident potentials even though there is no apparent and visible handicapping condition.

British Dyslexia Association (2013) defined Learning Disabilities as a general term that refers to a heterogeneous group of disorder manifested by a significant difficulty in the acquisition and use of listening, speaking, reading, writing reasoning or mathematical abilities. Bichi (1999) says that Learning Disabilities is a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological process involved in understanding or in using language spoken or written which may have manifested itself in imperfect ability to listen, speak, read, write, spell or to do mathematical calculation as perceptual handicaps, brain injuries, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia and developmental aphasia. Haruna (2008) views that Learning Disabilities is used to described people with developmental problems in academic and socio-emotional skills, such as problems affect people ability to either interpret what they see and hear. This means that Learning Disabilities are disorder that affect the abilities of to understand or use spoken or written language to do mathematical calculations, coordinate movements or direct attention.

Watson (2005) views that Learning Disabilities as “a Learning resulting from vision, hearing impaired, and physical handicapped”. This indicate that learning disabilities is mainly for the physical challenges learners. While Malik, Shad, Cheema & Rauf (2014) defined Learning Disabilities as “Existing difficulty in performing one or more activities, which are generally accepted as essential components of daily living”.



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#### **Forms of Learning Disabilities for the Pupils of Primary Schools in Nigeria**

Learning Disabilities were identified by different scholars. Bryan & Bryan (2010) have identified the most frequently cited are:

1. **Hyperactivity:** this impaired ability to sit or concentrate for long period of time, students with hyperactivity disorder displayed excessive movement in the classroom. This deviation can implicate parents, teachers and stakeholders in the provision of essential services (Orim & Ezekiel, 2017). All these pupils can be difficult in control except through the use of some devices which can draw their attentions.
2. **Dyslexia:** is a person with severe impaired inability to read, which is presumed to be caused by central nervous system dysfunction intact is not mental problem but, in ability of the brain to organized information it received. Haruna (2008) Dyslexia in learning disabilities can affect self-esteem, education, vocational, socialization and daily living activities.
3. **Dysgraphia:** is a severe impaired in ability to write which is presumed to be due to central nervous system function. Pupils with this problem cannot express their taught in written form.
4. **Dyscalculia:** is a severe in ability to calculate or perform mathematical function presume to be due to central nervous system dysfunction. It is a disability that affect individual ability to acquire school level arithmetic skills such as subtraction, multiplication, addition and division.
5. **Impulsive:** this is a free dispositional conditions where an individual react to external and internal stimuli in a planned or quick manner without consideration to other people or self. Learning Disabilities can cause emotional stress and can affect self-esteem in daily living activities (Haruna, 2012).
6. **Traumatic Brain Injuries:** these pupils upon exhibit memory deficit, attention problem, language impairment and reduced academic performance, they also have reduced stamina, seizure, headache, hearing loose and vision problem.
7. **Attention Deficit Disorder:** these pupils are hyperactive impulse and in attentive in the classroom.

#### **Prevalence and Incidence of Learning Disabilities Pupils in Nigerian Primary Schools**

It is statistically the number of persons with learning disabilities in a given population area in our primary schools in Nigeria. The incidence of cases leads to other lower high prevalence of learning disabilities in Nigeria. The prevalence of incidence indicated that pupils with learning disabilities have the higher number of cases that is why it is called high incidence. US 26<sup>th</sup> annual report congress (2005) notes that the categories of pupils with learning disabilities far out numbers the other categories in almost 50% in the world and all children are called exceptional children.

The prevalence of gender in Nigeria is 3 girls to 1 boy, that's 40% of male and 60% of female. Obani (2006) estimated the prevalence to be 15-30% among the pupils within the school age 45%. Dyslexia 25%, attention deficit 15%, while others have 5%. Federal Ministry of Women and Social Development in Nigeria (2011) in a report surveyed on pupils with learning disabilities 58% reading disabilities, 31% learning, 11 % others. But, in dyslexia 35%, dyscalculia 25%, 15% are dysgraphia, 10% dyspraxia, attention deficit and others 8% and 7%. Orim & Ezekiel (2017) shows that the number of Pupils with SLD within the ages of 6-21 was 2.67million in the 90s to over 8.1 million. They estimate the prevalence of SLD among school children in USA at 2.9 million. They approximated that 5% of these children are in every public school. The authors



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conclude that PLD is by far the largest category of children with special needs in America. Other studies by the same authors indicate that the prevalence of SLD varies by with sex and age. It specifically shows that the number of boys with PLD outnumber the girls. The authors noted that the high prevalence among male is due to their biological vulnerability. By age the authors' findings show steady increase between age 6-9, decreases between age 10-13 and sharply decreases for individuals between 16-21 years of age. Mogasale and Patil (2012) found out that in Indian the prevalence of dyslexia is 12.5% for dysgraphia, 11.2% for dyscalculia and 10.5% and 15.17 %for other sub-types among the sampled children. They conclude that PLD in Indian is higher than other exceptionality and it is steadily increasing. For instant, 2012-2016 it rose from 8.10% to 15.1%. British Dylexia Asociation (2013) reports that, the prevalence of SLD after her participation in their PALS survey that 59.8% of children in the country have this disability, more than 3.2% of Canadian children in every school bus have PLD, 25% of children who transit form home to school need instructional accommodation to be able to cope with the disability and translate their potentials to achievement in school and more than half a million of adults have SLD and find university education coping with different jobs challenging among their counterpart in Nigeria. The study equally indicates that these disabilities among children have increased considerably between 2001 and 2016 particularly those within the age of 15-21 thus, making it the fastest growing disability in Nigeria. The accurate data on prevalence of Pupils with Learning disabilities are bold steps and efforts have been made to solve the problem and this is yielding positive results.

Bendova and Petrikova (2015) study indicates that 20% of children between the ages of 5-7 years in each school either are at risk or have PLD. The study also reveals that prevalence by gender is 1 girl to 3 boys, 60% of male and 40% of female have the disability. Bartonova (2014) studied 30 students with PLD in Bron city and discovered that 80% (n=24) are girls, 20% (n=6) are boys. The prevalence by sub type in the sample shows that 40% (n=12) have dyslexia, 7%(n=2) have dysgraphia, 7% (n=2) are dysgraphia, 7% (n=2) students have dyscalculia and 13%(n=4) of the students have dyslexia and dysgraphia while those with dysgraphia and dystrophic is 26% (n=8). The author observed that girls have this disability than the boys and attributes it to the choice of secondary schools preferred by girl.

**What is 'an effective instruction'?**

An effective instruction is a systematically designed program that aimed at offering services that would enhance learning for pupils with learning disabilities. (Joyce & Walls, 2000). They further identified five questions that are components of an effective instructions strategies. An effective teacher should bear the following in mind:

- a. In what areas are students on track?
- b. In what reading areas do students need additional instructions?
- c. What specific skills have been mastered by student?
- d. What instruction can I provide? (more practice, more modelling, more scaffolding, smaller group?)
- e. Which students have similar instructional needs and will form an appropriate group for instruction?



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**Effective instructions for Pupils with Learning Disabilities in Primary Schools in Nigeria**

1. Explicit instruction: This include overtly teaching each step through teacher modelling and many examples I.e. teaching all steps needed to complete a task, use of teacher modelling followed by guided practice, pace instruction to match students learning needs scaffold instruction to support and move toward independent practice (Bee, 2015). To taught in systematic, manageable steps: this comprises breaking lesson and activities into sequential, manageable steps that progress from simple to more complex concepts and skills.
2. Ample practice opportunities: this will help in providing many opportunities for students to respond and demonstrate what they are learning. Opportunities for immediate feedback: incorporating feedback (from teachers and peers) during initial instruction and practice in primary schools. Hock (2012) Effective Instructions as an act of teaching that produce intended and meaningful result. M meadow (2010) is an activity that allow students to receive immediate feedback on their responses during initial instruction and practice and feedback may come from the teacher, assistance or peers.

**Strategies for Effective Instructions to Pupils with Learning Disabilities in Nigeria**

This will often emphasize all the following components: (Joyce & Walls, 2000) further identified three strategies for effective instruction to pupils with Learning Disabilities:

1. Academic instruction
2. Behavioral intervention
3. Classroom accommodation with instruction

**Academic Instruction for Pupils with Learning Disabilities in Primary Schools in Nigeria**

- i. Prepare student for upcoming lesson: Bartonova (2014) suggested that Pupils with learning disabilities learn best with a carefully structured academic lesson, where the teacher explains what he/she wants students to learn in the current lesson and places these skills and knowledge in the context of previous lesson. A number of teaching practices have been found especially useful in facilitating this practice.
- ii. Discuss and establish learning expectation: state what students are expected to learn during the lesson for example, Teacher Explain to students that a language arts lesson will involve reading a story about Paul Bunyan and identifying new vocabulary words in the story.
- iii. Discuss and establish behaviour expectations: teacher describes how students are expected to behaves during the lesson for example teacher tell the students that they may talk quietly to their neighbours as they do their seat work or they may raise their hands to get your attention.
- iv. Offer an-advance organizer: prepare students for the days' lesson by quickly summarizing the order of various activities planned (Meadow, 2010). Explain for example that a review of previous lesson will be followed by new information and that both group and independent work will be expected.
- v. Take time to go over and review previous lesson: teacher should review information about previous lessons on the topic for example, remind students that yesterday's lesson focused on learning to regroup in subtractions, reviews several problems before describing the current lesson.





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- vi. Be very clear on materials needed: teacher should identify all material that the students will need during the lesson rather than leaving them to figure out on their own the materials required for example specify that students need their journals and pencils for journals writing.
- vii. make instructions choice and scheduling as easy as possible: the simpler the expectations communicated to a learning disabled students, the more likely it is that he/she will comprehend and complete them in a timely and productive manner. (NASSET, 2016).

**Behaviour Intervention for the Pupils learning disabilities in Primary Schools in Nigeria**

The second major components of effective instruction for student with learning disabilities involves the use of behavioural interventions, exhibiting behavior that resemble that of younger students. Students with learning disabilities often act immaturity and have difficulty in learning how to control their impulsiveness and hyperactivity. They may have problems forming friendship with other students in the class and may have difficulty thinking through the social consequences of their action. The purpose of behavioural interventions is to assist students in displaying the behavior that are most conducive to their own learning and that of classmates. Hock (2012) stated that well managed classroom prevents many disciplinary problems and provide an environment that is most favourable for learning. This can be done through effective intervention from the instructor.

**Effective Behavioural Techniques for teaching pupils with learning disabilities in Nigeria**

Effective teachers use a number of behavioral intervention techniques to help students learn how to control their behaviour. Perhaps the most important and effective of these is verbal reinforcement of appropriate behavior. The most common forms of verbal reinforcement is praise given to a student when he/she begins and complete an activity or exhibits a particular desired behavior. Simple phrases such as GOOD JOB encourages a student to act appropriately. Scott (1998) "Pupils are given all equal access to learning in the classroom, when planning teacher need to consider some questions; what is the purpose of the course, what pupils required". Burgstahler & Cory (2010) "Pupils are allowing to engage with the materials in the multiple ways as needed". Thus effective teacher praise students with learning disabilities frequently and look for a behavior to praise before and not after a student gets of task ((NASSET, 2016).

**Classroom Accommodation for pupils with learning disabilities**

The third components of a strategy for effectively educating students with learning disabilities involve physical classroom accommodations, students with learning disabilities often have difficulty adjusting to the structured environment of a classroom, determining what is important and focusing on their assigned work. When teaching a pupil with any disability, it is important to remember that many of the principles for inclusive design could be considered beneficial to any pupil. Focusing on the design principles when crafting a syllabus, may find that must of your course easily accommodates all pupils with learning disabilities (Hodge & Pristine-Sabin, 1997).

Disable pupils can easily distract by other students or by near activities in the classroom. As a result, many students with learning disabilities benefited from accommodation that reduce distractions in the classroom environment and help them to stay on task and learn. Certainly



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accommodation within the physical and learning environment of the classroom can benefit student with learning disabilities (British Dyslexia Association, 2013).

**Special Classroom Seating Arrangement for Learning Disabilities Students**

Greenspace and Weider (1998) identified common accommodations that can be made to the physical environment of the classroom involves:

- a. Determining where a student with learning disabilities will sit, three special seating assignments may be especially useful A-sit the students near the teacher, Assign the student a seat near your desk or the front of the room. This seating assignments provides opportunities for you to monitor and reinforce the students on task behavior,
- b. Sit the student near a student role model: assign the student a seat near a student role model. This seat arrangement provides opportunities for student to works cooperatively and to learn from their peers in the class.
- c. Provide low-distraction work Area: as space teachers should make available a quiet, distractions free room or area for quite study time and test taking. Pupils should be directed to this room or area privately and discreetly in order to avoid the appearance of punishment (Greenspace & Weider, 1998).

**Conducting an Effective Instructions**

Bendova & Petrikova (2015) identified the following strategies that can assist teachers in conducting effective lesson:

- a. Remember that reliability and predictability is essential structure and consistency are very important for students with learning disabilities: many do not deal well with change, minimal rules and minimal choice are best for these students. They need to understand clearly what is expected of them as well as consequences for not adhering to expectations.
- b. Try to get the students to participate in the classroom: provide students with learning disabilities with private discrete cues to stay on task and advance warning that they will be called upon shortly, avoid bringing attention to differences between learning disabled students and their classmates, at all-time avoid the use of criticism
- c. Utilize audio visual materials: use of variety of audio visual materials to present academic lesson for example use an overhead projector to demonstrate how to solve an addition problem requiring regrouping. The students can work on the problem at their desk's while you manipulate counters on the projector screen.
- d. Check students' performance: question individual student to access their mastery of the lesson, for example, you can ask student doing seat work (i.e. lesson completed by students at their desk in their classroom) to demonstrate how they arrived at the answer to a problem or you can ask individual student to State in their own Words the main chapter felt at the end of the story.
- e. Try to ask probing question: Probe for the correct answer after allowing a student sufficient time to work out the answer to a question, count at least 15 second before given the answer or calling on another student. Ask follow up questions that give student an opportunity to demonstrate he know.



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- f. Access students on an ongoing basis identify students who needs additional assistance, watch for signs of lack of comprehension such as day dreaming or visual or verbal indications of frustration. Provide these students with extra explanations or task another student to serve as peer tutor for the lesson.
- g. Help students correct their own mistakes: describes how students can identify and correct their own mistakes for example, reminds students that they should check their calculations in math problem and reiterate how they can check their calculations, reminds students of particularly difficult spelling rules and how students can watch out for easy-to-make errors
- h. Help students focus: remind students to keep working and to focus on their assigned task. For example, you can provide follow up direction or assign learning partners. These practice can be directed at an individual student or at the entire class.
- i. Oral directions: after giving direction to the class as whole, provide additional oral directions for a student with learning disabilities for example, ask the student if he/she understood the directions and repeat the directions together.
- j. Written directions: provide follow up directions in written for example, write the page number for an assignment on chalk board and remind the students to look at the chalkboard if he/she forget the assignment.
- k. Reduce the noise level: Monitor the noise level in the classroom and provide corrective feedback as needed if the noise level exceeds the level appropriate for the type of lesson. Remind all students or individual students about the behavioral rules States at the beginning of the lesson.
- l. Simplify work into smaller units: break down assignment into smaller, less complex task, for example allow students to complete 5 mathematics problem before presenting them with the remaining 5 problems
- m. Emphasize key points: highlights words in the instructions on work sheet's to help the students with learning disabilities focus on the directions, prepare the work sheet's to help the students with learning disabilities focus on the directions, prepare the work sheet's before the lesson begins or underline the key words as you and the students read the directions together. example if marry has 2 apple and John had 3 apples, underline 2 and 3.
- n. Avoid high pressure and or time tests: test that are timed may not allowed students with learning disabilities to demonstrate what they truly know due to their potential pre occupation with elapsed time. Students with learning disabilities should be given more time to complete quizzes and test in order to eliminate test anxiety and provide them with other opportunities method or test formats to demonstrate their knowledge (Centre for Learning Disabilities, 2014).
- o. Provide group work: have students works together in a small group to maximize their own and each other learning, use strategies such as think-pair-share, where teachers ask student to think about a topic, pair with a partner to discuss it, share idea with a group. P- learn about and use assistive technology: all students and those with learning disabilities in particular can benefit from the use of technology (such as computers and projector screen) which makes instructions more visual and allow students to participate actively.
- p. Concluding lesson: effective teachers conclude their lesson by providing advance warning that the lesson is about to end, checking the completed assignments of at least some of the students





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with learning disabilities. And instructing students how to begging for the next activities (Fabunmi, 2000).

**Conclusion**

The pupils with learning disabilities in primary schools in Nigeria is raising high especially in the girls' child in rural area, due low level of awareness, and neglecting from the government and other stake holders. Which is need to take a serious action on it. The ratio of the pupils with learning disability in Nigeria is multiplying due to some certain factors such as: insurgencies, poverty, hunger and higher level of illiteracy. Secondly the instructional strategies and techniques used in teaching pupils with learning disabilities need to be modernize. There is need for providing instructional material that can aid the teachers in tackling the issues of pupils with learning disabilities in primary schools in Nigeria.

**Recommendations**

1. Government and other stakeholders should urgently create a programme of campaign awareness to educate the pupils with learning disabilities in Nigeria and establish Counselling centers within the community and primary schools in Nigeria.
2. Pupils should be educated on their areas of disabilities on how they live a successful and productive life in the society.
3. Government, NGOs, and educational philanthropists should assist in providing teaching and learning aids to the teachers and pupils with learning disabilities in primary schools in Nigeria.
4. There should be training and retraining of primary school headmasters and headmistress, guidance and counsellors and teachers on various techniques and strategies on handling pupils with learning disabilities in primary schools in Nigeria.
5. Government should give remuneration to the teachers that handling pupils with learning disabilities in Nigeria.

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