ECE 204:
INTRODUCTION TO EARLY CHILDHOOD CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA

COURSE GUIDE

ECE 204
INTRODUCTION TO EARLY CHILDHOOD CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

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INTRODUCTION

Curriculum is an indispensable instrument in any educational programme. It has often been contended that its fundamental nature derives from the fact that it is the very foundation for any education system. A longstanding curriculum debate in early childhood education centres on whether early childhood education should follow the traditional academic model of education used with older students (that is, large group, teacher-directed, formal instruction) or whether learning experiences for preschool children should be informal and consist largely of child-initiated activities. Both approaches have advantages and disadvantages. For example, when discussing children living in poverty, an approach that is primarily teacher-directed is likely to discourage children's social and emotional development, intellectual dispositions, and creativity, while an approach based exclusively on child-initiated activities may not sufficiently support children's academic development.
The risk of early instruction in beginning reading skills is that the amount of drill and practice required for success at an early age seems to undermine children's disposition to be readers. It is clearly not useful for a child to learn skills if, in the process of acquiring them, the disposition to use them is lost. Especially in the case of reading, comprehension is most likely to be dependent on actual reading and not just on skill-based reading instruction. On the other hand, acquiring the disposition to be a reader without the requisite skills is also not desirable. Research suggests that early childhood curricula and teaching should be designed to optimise the simultaneous acquisition of knowledge and skills and desirable dispositions and feelings.

THE COURSE

In view of the fact that the curriculum is an indispensable instrument in the educational programme, it is therefore important to introduce you to the dynamics of curriculum development. Knowledge of the various notions and the approaches to curriculum development is essential. The role of the teacher, the content and context of early childhood curriculum and the evaluation models are also discussed.

COURSE AIMS

This course aims at introducing you to the dynamics of curriculum development in Early Childhood Education (ECE).

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this course shall be to:

i) Examine the basic notions regarding concept of curriculum concepts and the theoretical foundations of pre-school curriculum.

ii) Discuss in detail early childhood development and the implications of meeting children needs.

iii) Explain pre-school curriculum development models and show the similarities and differences among pre-school curriculum development models.

iv) The role of the teacher in curriculum development.

v) Examine in detail the content and context of early childhood curriculum.

vi) Discuss in-depth pre-school curriculum evaluation and models of pre-school curriculum evaluation.

vii) Outline some quality indicators necessary for early childhood education.

WORKING THROUGH THE COURSE

This is a course that requires you to match study with practical observations. The content has been painstakingly selected to offer you a sequential and easy to comprehend study package. Nevertheless you would be expected to alignment your study with practical observation of children playing in your environment. You are also advised to avail yourself the opportunity of attending tutorial sessions.

Finally, you would be expected to sanitise yourself with other texts and material that will further enhance your knowledge in all the aspects related to this course.

THE COURSE MATERIAL

Basically, your course material shall consist of a course guide and the study units, which you will be provided with.

In addition, the course offers you a list of recommended text-books, journals, papers etc which are necessary supplements to the course material.

STUDY UNITS

The following are the study units contained in this course:

UNIT 1: Curriculum concepts
UNIT 2: Theoretical foundations of pre-school curriculum
UNIT 3: Early childhood development (part one)
UNIT 4: Early childhood development (part two)
UNIT 5: Meeting the needs of the children

UNIT 6: Pre-school curriculum development models
UNIT 7: Similarities and differences among pre-school curriculum development models
UNIT 8: The role of the teacher in curriculum development
UNIT 9: Early childhood curriculum content and context (part one)
UNIT 10: Early childhood curriculum content and context (part two)
UNIT 11: Evaluation
UNIT 12: Pre-school curriculum evaluation
UNIT 13: Models of pre-school curriculum evaluation
UNIT 14: Quality indicators

The first unit in the material examines definition of the term 'Curriculum'. It also discusses the various types of curriculum and explains the relationship between curriculum and education.

The second unit focuses the contributions of some eminent philosophers and psychologists of early childhood education. It identifies the curriculum type advocated by each of the philosophers and educators.

The third unit identifies some principles of child development and learning and highlights the relevance of developmentally appropriate practice based on each of the principles.

The fourth unit describes children's basic psychological needs and outlines several fundamental psychological needs of the infant and young child.

Unit five further probes into the psychological needs of children and discusses its multi-dimensional implication of early childhood development programme design.

Unit six defines the term curriculum development model and examines three different types of curriculum development models.
Unit seven examines the similarities and differences of some early childhood education curriculum programmes.

In unit eight, the role of the teacher in the school and in the classroom is discussed and also the tasks of the teachers in curriculum development.

In unit nine we outline the features of early childhood curriculum content and context and highlight the characteristics of the socio-cultural context of the child.

Unit ten which is a continuation of the previous unit identifies various sources of curriculum content and discusses appropriate preschool curriculum content

In unit eleven we highlight the rationale for evaluation, suggest when to evaluate and outline an evaluation framework

Unit twelve further broadens the study of evaluation. It explains the term pre-school curriculum evaluation and lists the pre-school curriculum evaluation guide

The next unit defines the term pre-school evaluation models and lists the components of pre-school evaluation models. It also identifies three types of preschool evaluation models and itemises the contributions of three authors on pre-school evaluation models.

The last unit of this course offers an in-depth review of some quality indicators in early childhood education.

TEXTBOOKS

The following texts are recommended for further reading:

1) Bruce, T. (1967) Early Childhood Education, Hodder & Stoughton, London.
2) Bredekamp, S., Knuth, R. A., Kunesh, I. G. & Shulman, D. D. (1992). What Does Research Say About Early Childhood Education? North Central Regional Education Laboratory, Oak Book.
3) Nwosu, C. (1995). Essentials of Curriculum And Instruction: A Handbook For Students, Teachers And Researchers In Education. Joralf Books, Lagos.
4) Osanyin, F. A. (2002) Early Childhood Education in Nigeria. Concept Publications Ltd. Lagos.

ASSESSMENT

There are two components of assessment for this course: The Tutor Marked Assignment (TMA) and the end of course examination.

TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT

The TMA is the continuous assessment component of your course. It accounts for 30% of the total course. You will be given 4 TMA's to answer. Three of these must be answered before you are allowed to sit for the end of course examination. The TMA's would be given to you by your facilitator and returned after you have done the assignment.

END OF COURSE EXAMINATION

This examination concludes the assessment for the course. It constitutes 70% of the whole course. You will be informed of the time for the examination. It may or not coincide with the University Semester Examination.

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MODULE 1

FUNDAMENTALS IN EARLY CHILDHOOD CURRICULUM

INTRODUCTION

This module introduces you to the basics including the general words and concepts used in Curriculum Development. It will also educate you on their relevance. This shall be treated as follows:
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Unit 1 Curriculum Concepts
Unit 2 Theoretical Foundations of the Pre-School Curriculum
Unit 3 Early Childhood Development (Part One)
Unit 4 Early Childhood Development (Part Two)
Unit 5 Meeting the Needs of Children

UNIT 1 CURRICULUM CONCEPTS

CONTENT

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Curriculum is an indispensable instrument in any educational programme. It has often been contended that its fundamental nature derives from the fact that it is the very foundation for any education system.

This course aims at introducing you to the dynamics of curriculum development in Early Childhood Education. As a starting point, you will require the basic knowledge of some notions about curriculum. Hence, this introductory unit will examine the concept of curriculum and highlight its various aspects.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

(a) define the term 'Curriculum'
(b) discuss the various types of curriculum
(c) explain the relationship between curriculum and education

3.0 MAIN BODY

3.1 Definition of Curriculum

Many people in different places and at different times have attempted to define curriculum from different perspectives. This situation has led to the existence of so many definitions of curriculum that it becomes practically difficult to have one generally accepted definition.

The following definitions are just a few of selected from among so many to buttress the point that there exists today a plethora of views on the word curriculum.

(a) Curriculum is a course through which people have to run in order to get to a set goal.

(b) Curriculum is the total situation through which the school makes behavioural changes in those who pass through it.

(C) Curriculum is what examiners require the teachers to emphasise in their teaching.

(d) Curriculum is what should be taught in a particular subject.

(e) Curriculum is the totality of the syllabuses of a school.

(f) Curriculum is the totality of activities carried out under the auspices of a school, in response to societal demands.

(g) Curriculum embraces all experiences which children have under the administration of the school.

(h) Curriculum is a combination of classroom and out-of-classroom activities.

(i) Curriculum consists of the continuous chain of activities necessary for translating educational goals into concrete activities, materials, and observable behavioural change.

(j) Curriculum describes a planned sequence of learning experiences designed to create a set of specific behavioural changes for students within a given learning environment.

The list could go on and on. However, it suffices for you to know at this level that curriculum is an organized framework that delineates (i.e. outlines) the content children are to learn, the processes through which children achieve the curricular goals, what teachers do to help children achieve these goals, and the context in which teaching and learning occur.

3.2 Definition of Some Curriculum Terms

3.2.1 Formal Curriculum

The term 'Formal Curriculum' (sometimes referred to as the Intended or Official Curriculum) describes a deliberately planned programme of activities which educational institutions provide for learners for a specified period of time to attain specified objectives. The programme of learning activities may be prescribed by certain, recognised and approved educational agencies such as the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC), West African Examination Council (WAEC) and Joint Admissions and Matriculations Board (JAMB) among others.

3.2.2 Hidden Curriculum

Children have been observed to be capable of learning more about values, skills, morality etc through their information interaction with peers, teachers, etc than by the content of the formal or official curriculum

Hidden curriculum refers to all the various implicit values, norms and practices in the educational system. They are usually not talked about but they constitute a vital aspect of the school experience. For example, pressures arising from association with other learners and informal influences of teachers are not part of the planned curriculum, but they influence learners experience significantly.

Hidden in Action

A primary school teacher Mrs X gives special attention and care during instruction to the learners she receives pleasantries and gifts from their parents or guardians, while she is very impatient with those learners she never or seldom received gifts or pleasantries from their parents. One of the learners named 'K' noticed this; K belongs to the second group mentioned above. On a certain day after the close of the school K gets home and demand that his parents must give him a gift for his teacher in school, failing which he would not go to school.

What does this implies? It means the learner K has noticed that he can only receive such attention only when gift(s) are given. You may ask, how did he know this? You may know that parents give such gifts to the teachers in present of the learners when they come to pick, drop or check the progress of their wards; sometimes, from discussions e.g. when a teacher is sending his/her appreciation in words through the learner or directly to the parents unknown to the parties discussing, that other learners are listening. It may even be a discussion among the learners.

What is the implication? On the long run it gets into the sub conscious mind of the learners that they can only receive favour when something is exchange for it. What has the teacher just succeeded in teaching the learners? BRIBERY. Was it planned as among what the learner should learn? NO. But it has been learnt.

Therefore, a teacher needs to be conscious of what he/she does during instruction to avoid teaching of morals, values and norms which are negative in the society.

3.2.3 Core Curriculum

Core curriculum refers to those aspects of curriculum required of all the students as opposed to those which are electives. For example, in Nigeria, English Language and Mathematics are aspects of the Core Curriculum.

3.2.4 School Curriculum

The school curriculum which perhaps is the most popular form of formal curriculum refers to all the subjects offered by an educational institution.

ACTIVITY A

1. What do you understand by the term "Curriculum"?
2. Briefly explain the following terms:
   (a) Hidden Curriculum
   (b) Core Curriculum

3.3 Education and Curriculum

What is the relationship between Education and Curriculum? By now, you may have the conviction that the link between education and curriculum is so firm that one could almost pas for the synonym of the other.

From a causal perspective, education may be viewed as a way of life which goes on at all times in our societies. Whether planned or unplanned, directed or not, guided or otherwise.

As its formal level however, education may be regarded as a rational activity which involves an orderly, deliberate and sustained efforts to develop knowledge, concepts, skills, attitudes or habits. For this reason, it becomes imperative to have some plan if only to guide this effort. The term curriculum broadly refers to this plan.

Thus, curriculum is viewed as an instrument on a plan that guides instruction and provides criteria for evaluation in education. This also explains why in curriculum is sometimes describes as an instrument par excellence in the educational process.

3.4 Early Childhood Education and Curriculum

As we gradually move into the specific area of our assignment in this course, which is curriculum development in Early Childhood Education, we need to keep within view the link between curriculum and early childhood education.

Early Childhood Education is a term that describes the education of young children from birth through age eight. As early childhood educators we believe that from the time of birth, all children are ready to learn.

However, what we do or don't do as individuals, educators, and collectively as society can impede a child's success in learning. For example, if we fail or neglect to provide adequate health care and nutrition for our young ones in their early childhood years, they are most likely to be behind their healthier, properly fed peers when entering the public (primary) schools.

Early Childhood Education like any other educational programmes requires to be run on a well-defined framework, to be built upon a curriculum structure that will be appropriate in every respect. Thus, a developmentally appropriate early childhood curriculum should guide

decisions about what to teach and when, and how to best assess that learning has taken place.

ACTIVITY B

Briefly explain the relationship between curriculum and education.

Answers

Activity A

1. Curriculum is defined in several ways. Comprehensively, it could be defined as a planned sequence of learning experiences designed to create a set of specific behavioural changes for studies within a given learning environment.

2. a. Hidden Curriculum is the unintended curriculum that is learnt by the students.

   b. Core Curriculum refers to that aspect of curriculum that is compulsory or required of all students as opposed to those which are elective

4.0 Conclusion

Curriculum is therefore a vital instrument that guides educational practices at the preschool and other levels of the education system.

5.0 Summary

In this unit we have learnt that:

1. Curriculum is a framework that guides educational practices.
2. There are different aspects of curriculum.
3. There is a strong inter-relationship between curriculum and education.
4. Early childhood education requires curriculum that is appropriate in all aspects.

6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment

Explain the term ‘curriculum’ and the relationship between curriculum and early childhood education.

7.0 References

Bredekamp, S., Knuth, R. A., Kunesh, I. G. & Shulman, D. D. (1992). What Does Research Say About Early Childhood Education? North Central Regional Education Laboratory, Oak Book.

Igwe, R. O. (2000). Fundamentals of Curriculum and Instruction. Sunshine International Publications (Nig.) Ltd., Lagos, Nigeria.

Nwosu, C. (1995). Essentials of Curriculum And Instruction: A Handbook For Students, Teachers And Researchers In Education. Joralf Books, Lagos.

UNIT 2 THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS OF PRE-SCHOOL CURRICULUM

CONTENT

1.0 Introduction

In our first unit we examined the meaning of curriculum which has aptly been described as an indispensable instrument in any educational programme. In highlighting the relevance of curriculum to the education of the child, it is vital that we look through the pages of educational history to establish the necessary theoretical framework for early childhood education and, by implication, its curriculum development. Of relevance is the fact that the importance of educating young child was recognized as early as the 15th century. Of equal significance is a knowledge of the different trends followed over the years, as well as familiarizing oneself with the names and contributions of eminent educators, philosophers and others who influenced the various schools of thought on the subject of child development as well as curriculum development.

2.0 Objectives

At the end of this unit you should be able to:

(a) discuss the contributions of some eminent philosophers and psychologists of early childhood education.

(b) identify the curriculum type advocated by each of the philosophers and educators.

3.0 MAIN BODY

3.1 Major Contributors

3.1.1 Martin Luther

Martin Luther (German: 1483 – 1546) was the first to recommend compulsory education for all children, independent of the society to which they belonged. He proposed changes in the school curriculum by insisting that music and physical training be taught.

3.1.2 John Amos Comenius (Czech: 1592 – 1670)

Comenius held the conviction that education is the indispensable process by which the young are made human and this process must begin at birth. According to him, schools should be the "forging place" of humanity. Schools should provide opportunity for movement, spontaneously, social relations, rivalry, good order and finally, pleasurable exercise in learning. Comenius emphasized the importance of play to the child's well-being and insisted play activities should be included in the curriculum. He also stressed the importance of learning by doing during the early years. He believed that the acquisition of knowledge could not be forced, but a skillful teacher could make a child eager to learn.

3.1.3 Jean Jacques Rosseau (French: 1712 – 1778)

Rosseau's philosophy was that "everything is good as it comes from the hands of nature but degenerates in the hands of man". He cautioned against imposing adult-oriented habits on the young child and emphasized the role of play in learning and development. However, one belief of Rosseau which was considered to extreme, was that no formal instruction should be given until the child has reached his twelfth birthday.

3.1.4 John Heinrich Pestalozzi (Swiss: 1746 – 1827)

Pestalozzi believed that education was a living process and rejected the practice of learning by memorization. He recognized that the child should be motivated by a natural interaction his surroundings, Pestallozi felt that education must be child-centered and that information should be presented to children in very practical ways. Children are intrinsically motivated to learn once they receive the appropriate stimulus. He felt that

efforts to force the child to develop before his own powers are ready are injurious. Pestallozi established schools to promote his theory and to train teachers.

Activity A

1. Examine the contributions of Comenius to the development of early childhood curriculum.

2. State the major philosophical ideas of the following:
   a) Martin Luther
   b) Jean Jacques Rosseau

3.1.5 Friedrich Wilhelm Froebel (German: 1782 – 1852)

Froebel was a disciple of Pestallozi and established the first kindergarten in 1837 in Germany. He developed a curriculum for the kindergarten based on normal development patterns of child growth and conceived the idea that education should be directed to the total development of the child. He viewed play as an appropriate means of learning and designed an activity programme including drawing, block construction, gardening, singing, story-telling etc.

He also established a teacher-training programme and revolutionized the idea of training young woman as kindergarten teachers. Based on his philosophy, the first English-speaking kindergarten was established in Boston, United States of America, in 1860.

3.1.6 Maria Montessori (Italian: 1870 – 1952)

Montessori's interest in education sprang up from observations of retarded children. She felt that education should be based not only on the responsiveness of children's senses but also on their own desire to master skills. She emphasized that the child is deeply interested in "work" which adult consider play, and she developed a set of materials which were self-correcting, to be used in a sequence from simple to complex and required the minimum guidance of teachers.
These auto-education aids consisted of puzzles, insert boards, counting devices, sand paper letters, buttoning and lacing frames, etc. By 1907, schools using her methods started operating all over the world.

3.1.7 Sigmund Freud (Austrian: 1856 – 1939)

Freud's theories have greatly influenced our understanding of personality development. Concepts such as unconscious, conscious, infantile

sexuality, psychoanalysis, etc have been explained and we have been made aware of the significance of an individual's earliest experiences in later influencing attitudes and patterns of behaviour.

In the early childhood education programme, Freud's theories help us to understand for example, the psychology of a toilet routine and its effect on the children. We can observe and appreciate the healthy interest which children have in each other's body, especially the sex/gender differences, their interest in the subject of childbirth (where babies came from) and the desire for simple, factual explanations. We understand the psychoanalytic role of play by realizing that in play children often reveal the conflicts and inadequacies that they are experiencing.

3.1.8 Erik Erikson (American

Eriskson has also put forward a theory of personality development but he has emphasized the role of society and culture in influence on a child's destiny. He postulated eight stages of development from birth to maturity with each stage having a major "task" of resolving favourably, the conflict arising from internal biological pressures and external socio-cultural expectations.

In the preschool programme, the teacher keeps in mind the different developmental "tasks" for different age groups and works towards helping children to revolve concern in positive and healthy ways. We encourage the feeing of trust by providing warmth, love and care and meeting the hunger needs of the infant.

We build up a sense of autonomy, in the two and three years old, by encouraging the child to become independent, letting him do things, for himself and by keeping the discipline mild. The three year old must be given freedom to explore, create and experiment with the objects in his environment and his ever-flowing questions should be answered with patience so as to help him develop a sense of initiative. The teacher should not make him feel guilty of wrong-doing. This stage of initiative is very important to intellectual development, thus, it is the responsibility of teachers of young children to provide a variety of experiences, understanding and guidance.

3.1.9 Jean Piaget (Swiss: 1896 – 1980)

Piaget was interested in observing the development of children, especially evidence of reasoning and judgment. His outstanding contribution has been the development of a theory of cognitive development focusing on how children think, reason and perceive the world.

He has postulated four stages of development and the sequence of these is considered universal for all children.

In early childhood education, we are concerned with the first two stages: the **sensorimotor** stage and the **pre-occupational** stage. Because of Piaget's theory, we now understand the importance of providing sensory stimulation for infants and toddlers: the actions of the baby who fingers, bangs, drops the rattle over and over again or that of a one-and-a-half year old who pokes his finger into every and any object he encounters. We can understand that three, four and five year olds in our programme are unable to perceive things from another's perspective. They extend their thought processes by organizing their impressions into categories. They begin to use language as a means of learning and thus the asking questions in search of answers.

Piaget's theory has helped to explain the crucial connection between action and learning.

Activity B

a) Discuss the contributions of Maria Montessori to the development of preschool curriculum

b) In what way has Piaget's theory helped to explain the connection between action and learning?

Answers

Activity A

1. Contributions of Comenius to the development of early childhood curriculum:

    a. The young should be made human, and this process should begin at birth.

    b. The school should serve as a forging place of humanity.
    c. School should provide opportunity for movement, spontaneously, social relations, rivalry, good order and pleasurable exercise in learning.

    d. He encouraged play activity in the school curriculum

    e. He believes that knowledge should not be forced on a child rather make the child to be eager to learn.

2. a. Martin Luther philosophically believes in compulsory education and stresses the teaching of music and physical training

   b. Jean Jacques Rosseau believes that everything is good as it comes from the hands of nature but dangerous in the hands of man.

Activity B

a. Emphasis on:

   - children desired skills
   - children interest on work which the adult considers as play
   - development of self-correcting materials

b. Piaget theory focused on how children think, reason and perceive the world.

4.0 Conclusion

The contributions of the philosophers, educators and others, therefore, are indispensable in the task of curriculum development in Early Childhood Education, so it could be said that Early Childhood Educational Principles and practices have been significantly influenced by the contributions of philosophers, psychologists and educators alike.

5.0 Summary

In this unit we have learnt that:

i. that there are fundamental theories which are considered when developing Early Childhood curriculum.

ii. each theory has its specific contribution to the training of infants and toddlers.

6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment

1. Discuss the specific contributions of Froebel to the development of preschool education.

2. Examine the importance of Piaget's theory in preschool teaching.

7.0 References

Early Childhood Association of Nigeria (2004). Journal of Early Childhood Association of Nigeria. Deocraft Communications, Lagos, Nigeria. Vol. 2., No. 2.

Regional Pre-school Child Development Centre (1985). Philosophy of Early Childhood Education: Some Major Contributions. Pp. 6 – 8.

UNIT 3 EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT (PART ONE)

CONTENT

1.0 Introduction

The task of developing a curriculum requires that serious considerations be given to many factors and conditions. In early childhood education for example, the values and priorities of parents and the community are significant factors to be considered in determining what should be learned; however, parents and community will not necessarily agree on all goals. The pre expertise of early childhood professionals should also influence decisions about appropriate goals for children. In this unit, we shall examine some theoretical principles of child development and learning that are critical in developmentally appropriate practice (DAP). These principles are based on the work of Piaget, Erikson, and others.

2.0 Objectives

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

i. identify some principles of child development and learning

ii. highlight the relevance of developmentally appropriate practice based on each of the principles.

3.1 Physical and Psychological Safety Needs

One of the fundamental principles of child development is that children learn best when their physical needs are met and they feel psychologically safe and secure.

Practice

Developmentally appropriate practice pays attention to children's biological needs. For example, children should not be made to sit and attend to paperwork or listen to adult lectures for long periods of time. Thus, provision should be made for active play and periods of quiet, restful activity. The environment should not only be safe and secure but should also make each child feel accepted.

3.2 Knowledge Construction

Developmentally appropriate practice is also based on the principle that children construct knowledge.

Practice

Knowledge is constructed as a result of active interactions between the child and the physical and social environments. In other words, the child learns and makes meaning out of a lot of things through his informal contact with his environment. This implies that the child discovers knowledge through active experimentation.

3.3 Learning Through Social Interactions

Children learn through dynamic social interaction with other adults and other children in their environment.

Practice

A good example of this principle is the parent-child relationship. The preschool teacher is expected to build upon it by fostering not only this relationship but also relationships with peers and other adults. The teacher supports the child in his efforts and gradually allows him to function independently. The teacher's role is thus, one of supporting, guiding, encouraging and facilitating development and learning.

ACTIVITY A

How would you assist a child to construct knowledge as a preschool educator?

3.4 Learning Through Play

Children learn informally by engaging in play.

Practice

Play provides opportunities for exploration, experimentation, and manipulation that are essential for constructing knowledge. During play, children examine and refine their learning as they receive feedback from the environment and other people. Children develop their imaginations and creativity through play.

3.5 Interests Motivate Learning

Children's interests and "need to know" motivate learning.

Practice

Children acquire variety of experiences as they interact with their environment. They have a need to interpret or make sense of their experiences. In a developmentally appropriate classroom, teachers are expected to identify what problems rouse the interest of children and allow them to solve problems together.

As preschool educators we need to appreciate the fact that activities that are based on children's interests provide motivation for learning. provision of such activities will therefore foster a love of learning, curiosity, attention and self-direction.

3.6 Individual Variation Characterizes Development

Another essential principle of developmentally appropriate practice is based on the knowledge that human development and learning are characterized by individual variation.

Practice

Although there are general patterns of human growth and development, a wide range of individual variation is normal and to be expected. Each human being has an individual pattern and timing of growth and development as well as individual styles of learning. Personal family experiences of children as well as their cultural backgrounds also vary. The implication of this is that teachers should recognize the individual uniqueness of each child and reflect this recognition in designing programmes for children under their supervision.

ACTIVITY B

1. What activities would you organize to foster learning through play?

2. How can children learn through social interactions with other adults and children?

Answers

Activity A

A child could be assisted to construct knowledge by allowing the child to be involved in active interactions with his/her physical and social environment. By this the child is able to make meaning out of a lot of things he/she sees in the environment.

Activity B

1. To foster learning through play, children should be encouraged to be involved in environmental activities i.e. play that would depict the actual environmental happenings.

2. Children can learn through social interactions with other adults and children by allowing them to mingle freely

4.0 Conclusion

In the light of the principles of developmentally appropriate practice discussed in this unit, it becomes necessary for early childhood education professionals to support and enhance their work with the illumination provided by research.

5.0 Summary

In this unit, we have learnt that:

1. Theoretical principles of child development and learning are the foundations for developmentally appropriate practice in early childhood education.

2. Developmentally appropriate practice pays attention to children's biological needs.

3. Children construct knowledge through dynamic interactions with their environments.

4. Children learn informally through social interactions with other children and adults in their environment.

5. Learning is motivated by children's interests.

6. Each child has an individual pattern and timing of growth, development and learning.

6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment

Identify the principles guiding developmentally appropriate practice in preschool learning.

7.0 References

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UNIT 4 EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT (PART 2)

CONTENT

1.0 Introduction

The preceding chapter introduces you to the basic psychological needs in child's development. It describes several fundamental psychological needs of the infant and young child. These are: (1) attachment and affection, (2) interaction and stimulation, (3) security and stability, and (4) exploration any play. These are in addition to a child's basic needs for health care, clothing, shelter, and protection from accidents. This chapter further expatiates on these needs.

2.0 Objectives

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

1. Describe children's basic psychological needs.
2. Outline several fundamental psychological needs of the infant and young child.

3.0 MAIN BODY

3.1 Dimensions Of Child Development

Early development is an orderly, sequential process of change in which a child learns to handle more complex levels of moving, thinking,

speaking, feeling and relating to others. Early development has several dimensions:

a. physical and motor dimension – the ability to move;

b. mental or cognitive dimension – the ability to think and speak;

c. emotional dimension – the ability to feel, and

d. social dimension – the ability to relate to others.

All dimensions must be considered together, because developments along one dimension both influences and can be influenced by development along the others.

3.2 Differentiation And Integration

As children develop, their skills become increasingly complex and specific. Initially, infants struggle to reach an object with the whole body. Gradually, they learn to differentiate or focus on, reach for and grasp what they want. The ability to integrate allows the infant to co-ordinate eye and hand skills. Complex responses require the child to be able to integrate many distinct skills. Differentiation and integration are aided by practice.

The rate of development varies from culture to culture and from child to child, although the sequences remain the same. For example, children learn to sit before they can walk, but the age at which children sit and walk varies greatly. Moreover, children may move rapidly through the stages of development in one dimension but slowly in another. The rate and quality of development is affected as the growing child responds to and learns from his or her biophysical and social environment. For instance, many children in developing countries have much opportunity to improve their physical development but lack the opportunity to improve their language skills, which then develop more slowly.

Norms have been developed indicating when most children will develop particular skills. A “developmental norms” is based on a simple mathematical calculation that describes the average growth tendencies for a larger number of children in a given culture or geographic area. They can show not only how children develop generally but also how a particular variable influences development. For example, the effect of a dietary deficiency on physical growth could be ascertained by examining norms. Although norms can show where a child is in relation to children of similar chronological age, each child has a unique pattern of growth.

A child’s development is evident only in the type of task that is accomplished at a particular age; also the way it is accomplished is also

considered. For example, the motor development in a six-month-old child is gauged not only by whether the child can sit but also by whether the head is held upright. The level of cognitive development shown by a toddler building a tower is ascertained not only by whether the child succeeds but also by how much attention, persistence and enthusiasm the child brings to the task.

The main goal of children's development is adaptation to and some mastery of their surroundings. This process is more complicated than simply becoming physically larger or obtaining higher scores on IQ tests. A child's cultural and ecological surroundings will determine the nature of the learning and of the abilities and skills acquired as development occurs. For example, children of farmers in West Java, fishing families in Zanzibar or shepherds in the high mountains of Bolivia will need to develop different types of ability useful in their own environments. Their development and growth patterns will be conditioned, in part, by geographic, environmental and economic conditions.

The effect of physical development on psychological development seems obvious. Psychological development has little or no meaning without some amount of physical growth. Scientific research shows this in biological maturation of language, reasoning, attention, memory and emotion. A child who is physically well-developed has greater potential for intellectual, emotional and social development than a sick and undernourished child. However, healthy physical growth does not, by itself, ensure healthy psychological development.

The effect of psychosocial development on physical growth is also important but it is not so obvious. A stimulated child is more alert and active than one who is not spoken to, played with or allowed to explore. An alert, active child is more likely to be fed and cared for than a passive, unresponsive child. Active children are better able to communicate their needs and to demand the food and attention they require. These abilities influence their chances for survival and for physical growth.

The early psychological attachment between mother, or primary caregiver, and child is important to successful adaptation and functioning throughout life. Attachment implies affection and a close, loving relationship. Through that relationship the infant develops trust, a sense of security and feelings of self-worth. Both clinical and research evidence suggests that the child's relationship with the primary caregiver serves as the prototype for other relationships. The absence of a strong, affectionate and caring relationship may also retard intellectual curiosity and lead to later social and emotional problems.

A two-way exchange of affection is the most supportive attachment in the child's early years. From the moment of birth the infant has the

potential to participate actively in relating to a caregiver. The infant cannot only respond to the caregiver's social overtures (talking, looking, holding, rocking) but initiate cordial interaction, for example, by cooing and smiling. A caregiver must be sensitive and responsive to the infant's signals.

The quality of stimulation provided – by people and by things – influences intellectual, social-emotional, motor, and sensory and language development. Interaction, vital parts of the activity through which infants develops and learns, is needed for the following reasons:

a. to grow and develop, each of the various biological systems (muscle, sensory, etc) must be exercised,

b. infants and young children must have opportunities to practice skills,

c. infants and young children have an innate need to develop competence – that is, to achieve mastery over the environment, these feelings of competence result from successful interaction with people and objects in the environment, and

d. emotional bonds and physical contact are critical to healthy development.

Learning in the first few years depends upon sensory-motor experiences. The work of the Swiss Psychologist Jean Piaget and his followers has underlined the importance of interaction for intellectual development. According to Piaget, knowledge must be discovered and constructed by the activity of the child. Most developmental psychologists and early childhood educators accept Piaget's theory that intellectual development (or cognitive ability) is the result of the child's active engagement with the environment. Young children use their senses and body movements to learn about the world.

Infants and young children need both human and non-human sources of interaction. They need to have things to play with, talk to, look at, reach for and kick. They need exposure to colours, sounds, odours, textures and flavours. They also need to be played with, talked to, responded to and touched. Through the experiences that early interactions provide, infants learn how to express their needs and have them met and how to communicate and understand the communications of others.

Interaction is critical in the development of language. The early experiences provided by the child's primary caregivers affect both the quality and quantity of language. Infants need to be talked to. Not only does talking stimulate their inherent desire to communicate but it also provides a model for them to imitate. They can mimic the facial movements and the words and sounds of language. Research studies

have documented the detrimental effects of unresponsive or inadequate verbal interaction.

The caregiver should be sensitive to the amount, kind, timing and regularity of the interaction provided because each infant has his or her own need for interaction. To produce a response in a lethargic or passive infant, the caregiver may have to provide much stimulation. However, for the infant who requires little interaction, the same amount of stimulation could be excessive, causing the infant to withdraw, cry or fuss.

Interaction should provide a challenge within the range of a child's competency. It should allow the child to derive feelings of success and mastery, forming the foundation of health emotional development. Interaction that appeals to several senses at the same time is more effective than that appealing to only one. Finally, optimal interaction can be characterized by regularity, repetition and limited but constant variability. Figure A and Appendix B suggest psychological interaction activities for the young child, appropriate for different times in the developmental process.

Stability markedly affects children's intellectual and socio-emotional development. An environment that is relatively stable, dependable and unambiguous enhances concentration and motivation. Consistent, predictable and familiar care helps young children establish and maintain feelings of trust. Consistent maternal responses to infants lead to emotionally attached children who feel free to explore the environment using their mother as a secure home base. When parental expectations are generally consistent, children can anticipate the consequences of their behaviours. They learn clear concepts of right and wrong, good and bad.

A child explores in many ways. Most exploration is called "play". Beginning in the earliest weeks of life, play has no goal or motive other than the immediate satisfaction and joy of mastery derived from the activity itself. Play is not intended to solve a problem posed by a parent. The nature of play can easily be distorted or even destroyed if goals and expected accomplishments are over-emphasized.

In the developing world and among low-income families, helping children play is sometimes regarded as wasteful or inappropriate. Many parents feel that life must be directed towards solving immediate problems, not towards solving satisfying the demands of tasks without a specific goal. Nonetheless, play is an essential component of development, affecting the capacity for learning. Play gives children a foundation for learning more complex, social and intellectual skills and strategies. With understanding of the developmental nature and changing levels of play, caregivers can help to provide the space, materials,

situations and patterns of interaction that encourage children's exploration, invention and enjoyment.

Both child and adult-directed forms of play are important for the child's development into a vital, motivated and creative individual. The spontaneous play of the child is limited only by the child's level of competence. As competence develops, so does the content and scope of play. The value of adult-directed play lies in the ability of the adult to provide opportunities, equipment and encouragement to the child.

3.3 Activities promoting psychological interaction in the young child

Social Interaction

For children 0 – 2 years Ensure child has frequent contact with mother (breast feeding, carrying) and with other family members.
Play with child when feeding and bathing.
Teach child simple words, repeat syllables the child utters, give child simple explanations.

For children 3 – 6 years Tell stories, encourage child to respond.
Listen to child, child's stories, reply to child's questions.
Encourage play in group activities.

Physical mastery and manipulation

For children 0 – 2 years Place within reach objects child can grasp and bring to mouth without danger.
Help child sit up, get up, move around and walk.

For children 3 – 6 years Show child how to jump with feet together, to hop from one foot to the other.

Have child carry a receptacle filled with water or sand.

Sensory stimulation and perception

For children 0 – 2 years Place bright moving objects in front of child to be followed with eye movement.

Play with water or sand.

Provide child with household or simple play objects to manipulate.

For children 3 – 6 years Have child recognize objects, colours, fruits and foodstuffs.

Teach child to sort objects by size shape and colour.
Allow child to create toys out of household objects.

Emotional well-being and personality

For children 0 – 6 years Provide encouragement and approval for child's efforts.

Let child initiate activities.
Tell stories.

Language development

For children 0 – 2 years Encourage child to laugh, coo and make sounds.

Help child name objects, people and picture.

Teach child words for parts of the body.

For children 3 – 6 years Encourage child to describe things, situations.

Use a varied vocabulary when speaking to child.

Introduce child to reading materials.

Activity

(a) Why is exploration and play important to the development of children?
(b) Outline the major activities that promote the psychological interaction in young children.

Answers

a. Exploration and play are important because it helps the child to develop himself and the society.

b. Telling of stories and exploration

4.0 Conclusion

Early development is an orderly, sequential process of change in which a child learns to handle more complex levels of moving, thinking,

speaking, feeling and relating to others. Early development has several dimensions: All dimensions must be considered together, because development along one dimension both influences and can be influenced by development along the others.

5.0 Summary

In this unit we have learnt that:

1. What is meant by early childhood development and describes children's basic psychological needs.

2. We examined several fundamental psychological needs of the infant and young child.

6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment

1. Discuss the four main dimensions of child development.
2. What are the psychological needs of the Nigerian child?

7.0 References

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UNIT 5 MEETING THE NEEDS OF CHILDREN

CONTENT

1.0 Introduction

This section describes conditions that a programme intended to enhance early childhood development should reinforce in order to facilitate optimal development. It discusses several fairly obvious but nonetheless important programmatic implications.

2.0 Objectives

At the end of this unit you should be able to:

1. Identify the psychological needs of children.

3. Discuss the multi-dimensional implication of early childhood development programmed design.

3.0 MAIN BODY

MEETING CHILDREN'S PSYCHOLOGICAL NEEDS

Programmes designed to enhance early childhood development must begin from an analysis and understanding of the conditions in which children live. The following chapter will identify and discuss conditions that place a child "at risk" of delayed or debilitated development. Here, the focus is on conditions that are optimal for responding to the psychological needs of children.

Regardless of the characteristics of the children and regardless of the location of childcare – in the home or outside in a centre – early childhood development needs will best be met if:

a. The child's health and nutritional as well as psychological needs are recognized and met. This implies a simple means of assessing needs.

b. The caregiving environment is safe, sanitary and stimulating with adequate space, light, fresh air, sanitary facilities and a protected place to play.

c. There is continuity and stability in caregiving, i.e., the caregivers and the general location of the caregiving are constant. This condition is easily met when care is at home and caregivers are members of the immediate or extended family. Sometimes, however, circumstances requires a series of makeshift arrangements for child care, introducing discontinuity and instability. In such circumstances a centre-based programme may help to provide more desirable conditions.

d. There is plentiful adult-child contact. Development is fostered when caregivers interact with children physically, orally, and emotionally, stimulating children and providing them with clear and consistent cues to desired behaviours. Sometimes this occurs naturally in the home, sometimes other demands on a mother's or caregiver's time make such interaction difficult and infrequent.

   Or, interaction may be limited because it is not recognized as important. In childcare centres that are purely custodial in nature, little interaction may occur. Also, a high ratio of children to caregivers may make frequent adult-child contact difficult.

e. The caregiver is warm, empathetic, and has a genuine fondness for children. Most mothers love their young children. However, many conditions can interfere with the expression of warmth, empathy and love, sometimes without being recognized. Moreover, a sibling or relative or neighbour or teacher charged with childcare may or may not have these characteristics which, in the last analysis, can be more important than certification as a caregiver or a particular level of education.

f. The caregiver, naturally, or as a result of training, sets activities that, for instance, encourage exploration and solving of problems, provides children with different ways of reaching a goal, and reacts to children so they know how well they are doing. In the home, it may be difficult to construct a "programme" built on a coherent child-development theory. But mothers and other family members can be helped to recognize the strengths and weaknesses or their own caregiving styles and they can help to recognize and

use play materials and toys, games, and other activities in their own environment and daily life that will help respond to children's psychosocial needs. Similarly, caregivers in centre-based programmes can be helped through regular in-service training and supervision, and provision of incentives, to improve their caregiving programme and actions.

These conditions are difficult to meet, but should not deter efforts to improve development. Rather, they should be taken as goals toward which programmers, parents and communities can work, beginning always with the positive elements that exist, even in the most "deprived" environment, because:

early childhood development is multi-dimensional and the several dimensions interact, programme must also be multi-dimensional in their approach to development.

development is sequential and cumulative, deficits also cumulate. Therefore, programmes that stress prevention and that concentrate on earlier ages (0 – 2) are extremely important.

psychological development needs change, as a child grows older, different programmes and activities will be needed for different age levels.

To produce lasting changes in children's development, changes must occur in the environment with which the child interacts. A basic services strategy which seeks environmental changes, provides, therefore, an appropriate framework which to view child development programming.

Different physical and cultural surroundings create different needs and place different constraints on early development. Therefore, no one-programme model will be adequate for all situations. The community-based approach stresses consistency in flexibility and adaptation.

psychological development affects and is affected by physical growth, the two should be considered together, rather than sequentially as is often done. Programming for development should be developed to accompany and not follow.

Programmes, whether directed toward caregiving in the home or in centres, should reinforce continuity and stability in caregiving, plentiful adult-child contact, warm and empathetic interaction, and a "programme" of activities meaningful within the specific environment but grounded in sound principles of early childhood development.

Activity

Identify the fundamental needs of the child that could enhance early childhood development.
Answer

Cross check your answers with paragraph two of 3.3 above.

4.0 Conclusion

From the study in this unit, we can see how important the knowledge and understanding of the needs of the child is, and also the relevance of the child's needs assessment for programme design.

5.0 Summary

In this unit we have:

1. Examined the conditions that a programme that is intended to enhance early childhood development should reinforce in order to facilitate optimal development.

2. We also discussed the implication of psychological needs of children for programme design.

6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment

What are the functions of a caregiver in meeting the needs of a child?

7.0 References

Osanyin, F. A. (2002). Early Childhood Education in Nigeria. Concept Publication Ltd., Lagos.

Pramling Samuelson, Ingrid (1998). Why is play gaining an increased interest in our society? Paper presented at the 2nd International Toy Research Conference, Halmstad, Sweden.

Sandberg, Anethe (2001). Play memories from childhood to adulthood. Early Child Development and Care, 167, 13-26.

MODULE 2

MODELS IN PRE-SCHOOL CURRICULUM

You would be introduced to the world of models in pre-school curriculum. The meaning, types and their implication in the development of pre-school curriculum. To achieve this, the following would be looked at:

Unit 1 Pre-School Curriculum Development Models
Unit 2 Similarities and Differences Among Pre-School Curriculum Development Models
Unit 3 Pre-School Evaluation Models
Unit 4 The Role of The Teacher in Curriculum Development

UNIT 1 PRE-SCHOOL CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT MODELS

CONTENT

1.0 Introduction

This unit sets out to attempt a definition of the term model as used in curriculum development. It seeks also to examine some of the popular curriculum development models in current literature. Three models of curriculum development are presented in this unit.

2.0 Objectives

At the end of this unit you should be able to:

1. Define the term curriculum development model
2. List and discuss at least three different types of curriculum development models.

3.0 Main Body

3.1 Definition of Curriculum Development Model

The term curriculum model refers to a conceptual framework and organizational structure for decision making about educational priorities, administrative policies, instructional methods, and evaluation criteria. Although they vary in their underlying premises, curriculum models provide well-defined frameworks to guide program implementation and evaluation.

A wide range of early childhood curriculum models exists, but little is known about the number of early childhood curriculum models presently in use or the number of early childhood programs that use them. Early childhood curriculum models most often are used in center-based settings providing half-day and full-day programs. They are used in public schools, Head Start, and community-based programs. Consistent with their origin, curriculum models are most often used in programs serving low-income children.

Among the best known and most widely used early childhood curriculum models are the Creative Curriculum, the Developmental Interaction Approach (sometimes called the Bank Street approach), the High/Scope Curriculum, and the Montessori method. Descriptions of these and other early childhood curriculum models, many of which extend into the kindergarten and primary grades, can be found in Epstein, Schweinhart, and McAdoo, (1996), Goffin and Wilson (2001), and Roopnarine and Johnson (2000).

Theories of child development have served as the principal foundation for curriculum model development. Variations among curriculum models reflect differences in values concerning what is more or less important for young children to learn, as well as in the process by which children are believed to learn and develop. These variations inform the role of teachers, the curriculum's focus, the classroom structure, and the ways in which children participate in learning.

Early childhood curriculum models also vary in terms of the freedom granted to teachers to interpret implementation of the model's framework. Some curriculum models are highly structured and provide detailed scripts for teacher behaviours. Others emphasize guiding principles and expect teachers to determine how best to implement these principles. Curriculum models, regardless of their goals and the degree of flexibility in their implementation, however, are designed to promote uniformity across early childhood programs through the use of a prepared curriculum, consistent instructional techniques, and predictable child outcomes.

Using a model in such an activity as curriculum development can result in greater efficiency and productivity. By examining models for curriculum development, we can analyse the phases their originators conceived as essential to the process. The purpose in presenting four models is to acquaint the reader with some of the thinking that has gone on or is going on in the field. The three four chosen models were conceived by persons well known in the curriculum field: Ralph W. Tyler, Hilda Taba, and J. Galen Saylor, William M. Alexander, and Arthur J. Lewis.

Two of the models (Tyler's, Saylor, Alexander, and Lewis's) are deductive. They proceed from the general (examining the needs of society, for example) to the specific (specifying instructional objectives, for example). On the other hand, Taba's model is inductive, starting with the actual development of curriculum materials and leading to generalization.

The three models described in this unit are linear, that is, they propose a certain order or sequence of progression through the various steps. A nonlinear approach would permit planners to enter at various points of the model, skip components, reverse the order, and work on two or more components simultaneously. You might say that the ultimate in nonlinear approach is the absence of a model when curriculum planners operate intuitively. Actually, linear models should not be perceived as immutable sequences of steps. Curriculum workers would exercise judgment as to entry points and interrelationships of components of the models.

3.2 Models of Curriculum Development

Curriculum development is seen here as the process for making programmatic decisions and for revising the products of those decisions on the basis of continuous and subsequent evaluation.

A model can give order to the process. As Taba stated, "If one conceives of curriculum development as a task requiring orderly thinking, one

needs to examine both the order in which decisions are made and the way in which they are made to make sure that all relevant considerations are brought to bear on these decisions".

3.2.1 The Tyler Model

Perhaps the best or one of the best known models for curriculum development with special attention to the planning phases can be found in Ralph W. Tyler's classic little book, Basic Principles of Curriculum and Instruction. "The Tyler rationale", a process for selecting educational objectives, is widely known and practiced in curriculum circles. Although Tyler proposed a rather comprehensive model for curriculum development, the first part of his model (selection of objectives) received the greatest education from other educators.

Tyler recommended that curriculum planners identify general objectives by gathering data from three sources: the learners, contemporary life outside the school, and the subject matter. After identifying numerous general objectives, the planners refine them filtering them through screens: the educational and social philosophy of the school the two screens become what are now popularly known as instructional objectives. In describing educational objectives Tyler referred to them as "goals", "educational end", "educational purposes" and "behavioural objectives".

Student as Source: The curriculum worker begins his or her search for educational objectives by gathering and analyzing data relevant to student needs and interests. The total range of needs – educational, social, occupational, physical, psychological, and recreational is studied. Tyler recommended observations by teachers, interviews with students, interviews with parents, questionnaires, and tests as techniques for collecting data about students. By examining the needs and interests of students, the curriculum developer identifies a set of potential objectives.

Society as Source: Analysis of contemporary life in both the local community and in society at large is the next step in the process of formulating general objectives. Tyler suggested that curriculum planners develop a classification scheme that divides life into various aspects such as health, family, recreation, vocation, religion, consumption, and civic roles. From the needs of society flow many potential educational objectives could be derived. The curriculum worker must be something of a sociologist to make an intelligent analysis of needs of social institutions. After considering this second source, the curriculum worker has lengthened his or her set of objectives.

Subject Matter as Source: For a third source of the curriculum planner turns to the subject matter, the disciplines themselves. Many of the curricular innovations of the 1950s – the "new math", audio-lingual foreign language programs, and the plethora of science programs came from the subject matter specialists. From the three aforementioned sources curriculum planners derive general or broad objectives that lack precision and that I would prefer to call instructional goals. These goals may be pertinent to specific disciplines or may cut across disciplines.

Johnson held a different perspective about these sources. He commented that the "only possible source (of the curriculum) is the total available culture" and that only organized subjects matter – that is, the disciplines, not the needs and interests of learners or the values and problems of society – can be considered a source of curriculum items.

Once this array of possibly applicable objectives is determined, a screening process is necessary, according to Tyler's model, to eliminate unimportant and contradictory objectives. He advised the use of the school's educational and social philosophy as the first screen for these goals.

Philosophical Screen: Tyler advised teachers of a particular school to formulate an educational and social philosophy. He urged them to outline their values and illustrated this task by emphasizing our democratic goals.

- the recognition of the importance of every individual human being, regardless of race, national, social, or economic status;

- opportunity for wide participation in all phases of activities in the social groups in the society;

- encouragement of variability rather than demanding a single type of personality;

- faith in intelligence as a method of dealing with important problems rather than depending upon the authority of an autocratic or aristocratic group.

In his discussion about the formulation of an educational social philosophy, Tyler personified the school. He talked about "the educational and social philosophy to which the school is committed", "when a school accepts these values", "many schools are likely to state", and "if the school believes". Thus Tyler made the school a dynamic, living entity. The curriculum worker will review the list of general

objectives and omit those that are not in keeping with the faculty's agreed-upon philosophy.

For some reason, discussions of the Tyler model often stop after examining the first part of the model – the rationale for selecting educational objectives. Actually, Tyler's model goes beyond this process to describe three more steps in curriculum planning: selection, organization, and evaluation of learning experiences. He defined learning experiences as "the interaction between the learner and the external conditions in the environment to which he can react". He suggested teachers give attention to learning experiences that:

- will "develop skill in thinking"
- will be "helpful in acquiring information"
- will be "helpful in developing social attitudes"
- will be "helpful in developing interests"

He explained how to organize the experiences into units and described various evaluation procedures. Although Tyler did not devote a chapter to a phase called direction of learning experiences (or implementation of instruction), we can infer that instruction must take place between the selection and organization of learning experiences and the evaluation of student achievement of these experiences.

3.2.3 The Taba Model

Taba took what is known as a grassroots approach to curriculum development. She believed that the curriculum should be designed by the teachers rather than handed down by higher authority. Further, she felt that teachers should begin the process by creating specific teaching-learning units for their students in their schools rather than by engaging initially in creating a general curriculum design. Taba, therefore, advocated an inductive approach to curriculum development, starting with the specifics and building up to a general design as opposed to the more traditional deductive approach of starting with the general design and working down to the specifics.

Five-Step Sequence: Eschewing graphic exposition of her model, Taba listed a five-step sequence for accomplishing curriculum change, as follows:

1. Producing pilot units representative of the grade level or subject area. Taba saw this step as linking theory and practice. She proposed the following eight-step sequence for curriculum developers who are producing pilot units.

a) Diagnosis of needs. The curriculum developer begins by determining the needs of the students for whom the curriculum is being planned. Taba directed the curriculum worker to diagnose the "gaps, deficiencies, and variations in (students') backgrounds".

b) Formulation of objectives. After student needs have been diagnosed, the curriculum planner specifics objectives to be accomplished. Taba used the terms "goals" and 'objectives" interchangeably, a point to which we will return later.

c) Selection of content. The subject matter or topics to be studied stem directly from the objectives. Taba pointed out that not only must the objectives be considered in selecting content but also the "validity and significance" of the content chosen.

d) Organization of content. With the selection of content goes the task of deciding at what levels and in what sequences the subject matter will be placed. Maturity of learners, their readiness to confront the subject matter, and their levels of academic achievement are factors to be considered in the appropriate placement of content.

e) Selection of learning experiences. The curriculum planers must choose the methodologies or strategies by which the learners become involved with the content. Pupils internalise the content through the learning activities selected by the planner-teacher.

f) Organization of learning activities. The teacher decides how to package the learning activities and in what combinations and sequences they will be utilized. At this stage the teacher adapts the strategies to the particular students for whom he or she has responsibility.

g) Determination of what to evaluate and of the ways and means of doing it. The planer must decide whether objectives have been accomplished. The instructor selects from a variety of techniques appropriate means for assessing achievement of students and for determining whether the objectives of the curriculum have been met.

h) Checking for balance and sequence. Taba counselled curriculum workers to look for consistency among the various parts of the teaching-learning units, for proper flow of the learning experiences, and for balance in the types of learning and forms of expression.

2. Testing experimental units. Since the goal of this process is to create a curriculum encompassing one or more grade levels or subjects areas and since teacher have written their pilot units with their own

classrooms in mind, the units must now be tested "to establish their validity and teachability and to set their upper and lower limits of required abilities.

3. Revising and consolidating. The units are modified to conform to variations in student needs and abilities, available resources, and difference styles of teaching so that the curriculum may suit all types of classrooms. Taba would charge supervisors, the coordinators of curricula and the curriculum specialists with the task of "stating the principles and theoretical considerations on which the structure of the units and the selection of content and learning activities are based and suggesting the limits within which modifications in the classroom can take place. Taba recommended that such "considerations and suggestions might be assembled in a handbook explaining the use of the units".

4. Developing a framework. After a number of units have been constructed, the curriculum planners must examine them as to adequacy of scope and appropriateness of sequence. The curriculum specialist would assume the responsibility of drafting a rationale for the curriculum that has been developed through this process.

5. Installing and disseminating new units. Taba called on administrators to arrange appropriate in-service training so that teachers may effectively put the teaching-learning units into operation in their classrooms.

Taba's inductive model may not appeal to curriculum developers who prefer to consider the more global aspects of the curriculum before proceeding to specifics. Some planners might wish to see a model that includes steps in both diagnosing the needs of society and culture and in deriving needs from subject matter, philosophy, and learning theory. Taba, however, elaborated on these points in her text.
Other planners may prefer to follow a deductive approach, starting with the general – specification of philosophy, aims and goals – and moving to the specifics – objectives, instructional techniques and evaluation. The remaining two models described in this chapter are deductive as is Tyler's.

3.2.3 The Saylor, Alexander and Lewis Model

Saylor, Alexander, and Lewis conceptualised the curriculum planning process in the model shown in figure 5.3. To understand this model we must first analyse their concepts of curriculum and curriculum plan. Earlier in this text you encountered their definition of curriculum: "a plan for providing sets of learning opportunities for persons to be educated". However, the curriculum plan is not to be conceived as a single

document but rather as "many smaller plans for particular portions of the curriculum".

Goals, Objectives, and Domains. The model indicates that the curriculum planners begin by specifying the major educational goals and specific objectives they wish to be accomplished. Saylor, Alexander, and Lewis classified sets of broad goals into four domains under which many learning experiences take place: personal development, social competence, continued learning skills, and specialization. Once the goals, objectives and domains have been established, the planners move into the process of designing the curriculum. The curriculum workers decide on the appropriate learning opportunities for each domain and how and when these opportunities will be provided. For example, will the curriculum be designed along the lines of academic disciplines, according to a pattern of social institutions, or in relation to student needs and interests?

Instructional Models. After the designs have been created – and there may be more than one – all teachers affected by a given part of the curriculum plan must create the instructional plans. They select the methods through which the curriculum will be related to the learners. At this point in the mode it would be helpful to introduce the term instructional objectives. Teachers would then specify the instructional objectives before selecting the strategies or modes of presentation.

Evaluation. Finally, the curriculum planners and teachers engage in evaluation. They must choose from a wide variety of evaluation techniques. Saylor, Alexander, and Lewis proposed a design that would permit (1) evaluation of the total educational program, as well as (2) evaluation of the evaluation program itself. The evaluation processes allow curriculum planners to determine whether or not the goals of the school and the objectives of instruction have been met.

Saylor, Alexander, and Lewis supplemented their model of the curriculum planning process with companion models depicting the elements of the curriculum system, the process of defining the goals and objectives of educational institutions, and curriculum evaluation. Curriculum planers might find some synthesis of the model of the curriculum planning process with its companion models desirable.

Activity

1. Attempt a definition of the term curriculum development model
2. List four contributors that helped to shape early childhood curriculum development model.

Answers

1. The definition should include: process, organized, structure and decision making.
2. Tyler, Taba, Saylor, Alexander and Lewis

4.0 Conclusion

A good number of the theories have emphasized the importance of curriculum development models. Driven by public demands for positive child outcomes, the sense of urgency surrounding school reform, and the prevalence of poor-quality child care, early childhood curriculum models are being promoted as a way of ensuring that children enter school ready to learn. Consistent implementation of curriculum models has the potential to raise the standards of care and education experienced by young children.

5.0 Summary

In this unit we have learnt the:

i. Meaning of the term model as used in curriculum development.
ii. We examined some of the popular curriculum development models in current literature.

6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment

Outline the five-step sequence for accomplishing curriculum change as formulated by Taba.

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UNIT 2 SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES AMONG PRE-SCHOOL CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT MODELS

CONTENT

1.0 Introduction

Comparative evaluations now suggest that early childhood curriculum models do affect child outcomes. Differences in child outcomes among models tend to reflect the intent of the curriculum model being evaluated. Further, findings are accumulating that suggest potential negative consequences associated with highly structured, academic preschool programs.

The focus of contemporary evaluations has shifted, however, from comparisons of specific early childhood curriculum models to the differential impact of early intervention programs defined as either academically or developmentally oriented. Yet there also is recognition of the limitations of curricular reform.

2.0 Objectives

At the end of this unit you should be able to:

i. explain the difference in the programs experienced by children.
ii. Identify the usefulness of each programme.

3.0 Main Body

Similarities and differences among pre-school curriculum development models

Driven by public demands for positive child outcomes, the sense of urgency surrounding school reform, and the prevalence of poor-quality child care, early childhood curriculum models are being promoted as a way of ensuring that public dollars are wisely spent and that children

enter school ready to learn. Consistent implementation of curriculum models has the potential to raise the standards of care and education experienced by young children. In light of uneven expectations for teachers' professional preparation and variability across the states in child care licensing standards, early childhood curriculum models can improve programmatic quality through the consistent implementation of well-articulated curriculum frameworks, thereby lifting the floor of program quality in early childhood education.

Some experts, however, believe that by their design, curriculum models lower expectations for early childhood educators and diminish the professional responsibilities of early childhood teachers. To achieve consistency across sites, curriculum models operate by using predictable representations of teaching and learning, relying on fixed interpretations of the nature of children and teachers, and minimizing variation across sites. Teachers function less as reflective practitioners and more as technicians who implement others' educational ideas. The increasing use of curriculum models, therefore, challenges the early childhood profession to examine its image of teachers and deliberate how best to improve children's daily experiences in early childhood settings.

The models discussed in the last unit revealed both similarities and differences. Tyler and Taba outlined certain steps to be taken in curriculum development. Saylor, Alexander, and Lewis charted the components of the curriculum development process (design, implementation, and evaluation) as opposed to actions taken by the curriculum workers (diagnosis of need, formulation of objectives and the like). Tyler’s concept of sources and screens stands out in his model.

Models are inevitably incomplete; they do not and cannot show every detail and every nuance of a process as complicated as curriculum development. In one sense the originator of a model is saying, often in graphic form, “These are the features you should not forget”. To depict every detail of the curriculum development process would require an exceedingly complex drawing or several models. One task is building a model for curriculum development is to determine what the most salient components in the process are no easy task – and to limit the model to those components.

In looking at various models we cannot say that any one model is inherently superior to all other models. For example, some curriculum planers have followed the Tyler model for years with considerable success. Decker Walker spoke to the importance of Tyler’s work when he said, “Ralph Tyler has had as much influence on the thought and practice of twentieth-century American education as any other individual, with the possible exception of John Dewey”. On the older

hand, this success does not mean that the Tyler model, for example, represents the ultimate in models for curriculum development or that any model including Tyler's is universally accepted as a basis for curriculum development.

Before choosing a model or designing a new model – certainly a viable alternative – curriculum planners might attempt to outline the criteria or characteristics they would look for in a model for curriculum improvement. They might agree that the model should show the following:

1. major components of the process, including stages of planning, implementation, and evaluation.

2. customary, but not inflexible "beginning" and "ending" points

3. the relationship between curriculum and instruction

4. distinctions between curriculum and instructional goals and objectives

5. reciprocal relationships among components

6. a cyclical pattern

7. feedback lines

8. the possibility of entry at any point in the cycle

9. an internal consistency and logic

10. enough simplicity to be intelligible and feasible

11. components in the form of a diagram or chart

Instead of a diagram, below is a listing of the steps for preschool curriculum development model:

1. Specify the need of students in general.

2. specify the needs of society.

3. Write a statement of philosophy and aims of education.

4. Specify the needs of students in your school (s).

5. Specify the needs of the particular community.

6. Specify the needs of the subject matter.

7. Specify the curriculum goals of your school(s).

8. Specify the curriculum objectives of your school(s).

9. Organize and implement the curriculum.

10. Specify instructional goals.

11. Select instructional objectives.

12. Select instructional strategies.

13. Begin selection of evaluation techniques.

14. Implement instructional strategies.

15. Make final selection of evaluation techniques.

16. Evaluate instruction and modify instructional components.

17. Evaluate the curriculum and modify curricular components.
Steps 1 – 9 and 17 constitute a curriculum submodel; steps 10 – 16 an instructional submodel.

Activity

1) On what bases would you choose a model for curriculum development?

2) Who should decide which model for curriculum development to follow?

3) In your opinion, which is better: an inductive or a deductive model for curriculum development? Why?

4.0 Conclusion

Models can help us to conceptualize a process by showing certain principles and procedures. Whereas some models are in the form of diagrams, others are lists of steps that are recommended to curriculum workers. Some models are linear, step-by-step approaches; others allow for departure from a fixed sequence of steps. Some models offer an

inductive approach; others follow a deductive approach. Some are prescriptive while others are descriptive.

5.0 Summary

In this unit we have tried to answer the two questions that have dominated the empirical comparisons of early childhood curriculum models.

1) To what extent are the programs experienced by children really different from one another?

2) Are some programs better than others in producing desired outcomes?

6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment

Before choosing a model or designing a new model, which outline that satisfy the criteria or characteristics would you look for in a model for curriculum improvement?

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UNIT 3 PRE-SCHOOL EVALUATION MODELS

CONTENT

1.0 Introduction

The "Child is the father of the man" is an old but ever resounding attribute made about a child. The interpretation of the saying means that the perfections of an adult are thus dependent upon his efforts as a child. This then underscores the importance and need for early childcare and education. Research has confirmed that the first three years of life largely determine a human being's future competence and these years, as a matter of fact early childcare can no longer be left to chance. Thus we are now witnessing an end to society's traditional laissez-faire attitude about the earliest years of a human being's life. This is because most students of human development now hope to produce improvements in the way parents, especially mothers raise their children (child rearing practices). Even some are considering a possible strategy the evolution of kibutz-like day care centres in which trained teachers would give children the talent education from earliest infancy.

Early childhood education has some become an umbrella term, a concept used with various contents by people concerned with the care and instruction of children from birth to eight years of age. However, the National Policy on Education (1981.10) uses the term pre-primary education instead, to mean "the education given in an educational institution to children aged 3 to 5 plus prior to their entering the primary school". The early childhood years may be divided into these levels for purpose of education.

1.	Day Care Centres	0 – 2 years
2.	Nursery	2 – 4 years
3.	Kindergarten	4 – 6 years

These divisions are not absolute but can vary from one authority to the other.

The day care are expected to offer more than a custodial care. They would be devoted to the development of vigorous young mind and bodies. The Nursery is a pre-kindergarten school for young children whose aim is to develop both the mind and body of these youngsters. The kindergarten is a school or class of young children usually 4 – 6 years old that prepare them for the primary level of education whose cardinal focus is on the development of basic skills and social behaviour through games, exercises, music, simple handicraft etc.

2.0 Objectives

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

1. Define the term pre-school evaluation models

2. List the components of pre-school evaluation models

3. Itemise the contributions of at least three authors on pre-school evaluation models

3.0 Main Body

Preschool Evaluation Models

Evaluation: Since it is a change in behaviour that is sought in education, evaluation must imply appraisal of behaviour of learners. Evaluation involves getting evidence about behaviour changes in the learners. Evaluation can be cone by giving paper and pencil test. But this may not be always the case especially when considering the learning outcomes of preschoolers.

Keen observation, therefore, becomes an important evaluation method for pupils at this age. However, the overall evaluation of learning must include cognitive, the effective and the psychomotor domains.

Models

Generally, models could be classified in various ways. These models can be grouped carefully into three main categories, although they are not mutually exclusive of each other.

A. Goal Attainment Models
B. Judgmental Models
C. Decision-Oriented Models, Lewy (1976), Yoloye (1979), Setidisho and Pandaeli (1986)

A. Goal Attainment Models

Models under this group focus on the achievement of outcomes in relation to stated goals and objectives. Their limitations are that they do not account for unintended or unplanned outcomes, they also do not pay attention to antecedent conditions which may affect the learning outcomes that is: considering the implementation process of the educational programmes nor do they give enough allowance for evaluating the educational objectives (Okpala & Onocha 1994). A good example of this model is the Tyler's Engineering Model (1950).

B. Judgmental Models

Models under this category focus mainly on the assessment or merit of an entity. These models consider the goals and objectives of the programme, processes or operations and outcomes of the programme.

In this category, we have Scriven model (1967), for the concept of the formative and summative evaluations. Stake model (1967), for suggesting the elements (ATO) in determining formative or summative evaluations, where;

A – Antecedents, conditions which were before the introduction of the programme.

T - Transactions, interactions and activities that take place during the development and implementation of the programme.

O - Outcomes, effect of introducing the programme on groups of people, organizations or policies.

The Medical model just as it is named, considers whenever possible in evaluating educational programmes. The programme should go beyond the size of the effects to an investigation of the processes and all the factors (psychological, social and environmental) that produce the effects. This is related to both intended and unintended outcomes, monitoring side-effects as well.

C. The Decision-Oriented Models

Models here focus on decision making.

1. The Alkin's (1970) Model

Here the evaluator is regarded as a specialist who should provide a straight forward, reliable, and practicable report to decision makers, not a confusing one.

2. Stufflebeam's Model

This is the Context, Input, Process and Product (CIPP) model. This is also called the system model. These are elements or aspects of a programme, which have to be evaluated before a rational decision can be made on that programme. This study will adopt this particular model as part of its framework.

3. Dave's Model

The Environmental setting, Input, Process, Outcomes (short term) and Long-range outcome (EIPOL) model, is a slight modification of the CIPP model. Here, the effects of the material input provided by the environmental setting, the processes in terms of resource utilization and management and the output (students learning outcomes) are determined.

D. Other Unclassified Models

Apart from the classified models listed above, there are still a few other important models of evaluation which but cannot be classified strictly as a group. Among them are:

(i) Responsive evaluation: This focuses on the identification of issues, concern and values of stake-holding audiences (people who are involved in or are affected by the entity being evaluated. This relies on methods of subjective enquiry (naturalistic observation, interview and questionnaire) to gain insights into the concerns, issues and related matters. According to Adewale (2002) a 'concern' is any matter about which a stake-holder feels threatened, and an 'issue' is any point of contention among the stake-holders.

(ii) Panic model: A strategy adopted by a programme director once he gets a 'wind' that superior, officers or representatives are visiting. An evaluation is quickly commissioned to provide the supposedly needed evidence to influence the survival of the programme.

(iii) **Crisis model**: An approach adopted by evaluators to save a long established programme which policy makers may have seen as about to break down.

(iv) The Explication model: This term was used by the model proposed by Koppelman (1979). This model focuses on clarifying, explaining, interpreting and the additional meaning of developing a theory. It is an anthropological approach (Adewale 2002) to programme evaluation, it beings with an acceptance of the fact that a programme is an interaction of many elements and also that the programme participants (in this study are care-givers, proprietors/ress, OMEP Executives and members) constitute the major elements. The evaluator collects written and oral statements from each of the programme participants about the goals and activities of the programme as they see and understand them. He synthesizes the statements in a single report copy of which are distributed to all the participants and administrators involved with the programme. Questions raised in the report serve as a springboard for a discussion of the problems and in consistencies that exist. The evaluator's aim is to help the programme participants to reach a consensus or decision about the direction in which they want to go.

Different approaches, which are quite complementary, have been used to explain evaluation and its concepts. A model is a representation of a concept or system in a diagrammatic form. Various authors for instance, Borg and Gall (1983) have analysed evaluation in the form of models.
Gradually, educational programmes are planned to achieve certain goals, whether a programme is to continue, altered or terminated depends on the report of its evaluation. Lindsay (1982) has also recommended a model which takes input and output into consideration.

Activity

In a tabular format Itemise the contributions of three authors on pre-school evaluation models.

Answer
Any three of the follwoing

Authors	Contributions
Scriven	Developed the concept of formative and summative evaluation
Stake	Suggested the elements of ATO
Alkin	Provide straight forward reliable practicable report to decision
Stuffflebeam	Developed the Context, Input, Process and Product method
Dave	Developed the short and long term range

4.0 Conclusion

We can see that in preschool curriculum development models, evaluation is very important. This is derived from being able to measure whether or not the model is working. It cannot be overemphasised that the overall evaluation of learning must include cognitive, the effective and the psychomotor domains.

5.0 Summary

In this unit we have learnt the definition of the term pre-school evaluation models and listed the components of pre-school evaluation models. We also examined what is meant by the identified types of preschool evaluation models and itemised the contributions of three authors on pre-school evaluation models.

6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment

Attempt a definition of the term pre-school evaluation models

7.0 References

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UNIT 4 THE ROLE OF THE TEACHER IN CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

CONTENT

1.0 Introduction

For curriculum decision making to take place, appropriate organisational structures are essential. In the following pages of this unit we will examine the location, tasks and the role of the teacher in such structures in some detail.

2.0 Objectives

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

1. Examine the role of the teacher in the school and in the classroom.
2. Explain the tasks of the teachers in curriculum development.

3.0 MAIN BODY

3.1 The Classroom Level

At first glance it seems that all programmatic decisions have been made for the teacher at the time he or she is employed. A full-blown program is already in operation at the school where the teacher is to be assigned. The school board contracts with the applicant to fill an advertised position, be it early childhood education. The principal makes the teaching assignment and informs the teacher about school policies and regulations. If the school is large enough to require the services of supervisory personnel other than the principal, the teacher may be referred to one of the supervisors for further orientation. The supervisor designated by the principal (for example, the assistant principal, a grade coordinator, or a department head) acquaints the teacher with the adopted

textbooks and whatever other curriculum materials are use, such as statements of objectives, syllabi, and curriculum guides.

The new teacher begins to feel with some justification as if all the important decisions about the curriculum have already been made by others – the school, the district, the state, the nation, the public.

Perhaps the life of the teacher would be easier and less complicated if the curriculum were prescribed. On the other hand, it is safe to say that the teacher's life would be immensely duller were there no curriculum decisions to be made. If teachers subscribe to the notion that change is inevitable and never-ending, they will come to view their role first and foremost as decision maker. The teacher then not only makes decision or participates in shared decision making but also gathers data on which to base decisions, implements decisions, and evaluates programs. In what specific curriculum endeavours, we may ask, is the individual classroom teacher likely to participate? An examination of some of the curriculum responsibilities at the classroom level reveals that the individual teacher has a rather larger task cut out for him or her. A number of tasks in curriculum development at the classroom level may be identified.

3.2 Tasks of Teachers

Teachers carry out activities in curriculum design when they write curricular goals and objectives, select subject matter (content), choose materials, identify resources in the school and community, sequence or re-sequence the subject matter, decide on the scope of the topics or course, revise the content, decide on types of instructional plans to use, construct the plans, try out new programs, create developmental and remedial programs in reading or other subject matter, seek ways to provide for all kinds of individual differences in the classroom, incorporate content mandated by levels above the classroom, and develop their own curricular materials.

Some experts equate curriculum implementation with instruction. Some hold the view that curriculum implementation does not start until the teacher interacts with the students. Within this context teachers are occupied at the classroom level when they select appropriate emphases within the subjects, decide which students will pursue what subject matter, allot times for the various topics and units to be taught, determine if the facilities are appropriate and how they will be modified (if necessary), decide how materials and resources may best be made available to the learners, assign duties to volunteer aides, write instructional goals and objectives, and select and carry out strategies for classroom presentation and interaction.

Teachers have the responsibility of evaluating both the curriculum and instruction. In some ways it is difficult to separate the two dimensions of evaluation and to tell where instructional evaluation ceases and curriculum evaluation begins. In a very real sense evaluating instruction is evaluating curriculum implementation. We may clarify the distinctions between the two dimensions of evaluation in the following way: Curriculum evaluation is the assessment of programs, processes and curricular products (material, not human). Instructional evaluation is (1) the assessment of student achievement before, during and at the end of instruction and (2) the assessment of the effectiveness of the instructor. Thus, teachers work at the task of curriculum evaluation when they seek to find out if the programs are meeting the curriculum objectives; try to learn if the programs are valid, relevant, feasible, of interest to the learners, and in keeping with the learners' needs; review the choices of delivery systems, materials, and resources; and examine the finished curriculum products, such as guides, unit plan and lesson plans, that they have created. Teachers conduct instructional evaluation when they assess the learners' entry skills before the start of instruction; give progress tests; write, administer, score and interpret final achievement tests; and permit students to evaluate their performance as instructors.

These examples of activities transpiring at the classroom level demonstrate that curriculum planning and development are complex and demanding responsibilities of the teacher. As we discuss curriculum planning at the various levels in the following pages of this chapter, it may seem that individual teachers have little autonomy. Surely, many hold that view, and to some extent there is truth in that belief. The impingement of federal, state, and the local school system mandates affecting the teachers' prerogatives in the areas of curriculum and instruction is a serious concern. In spite of the infringement of the teachers' professional responsibilities, many curricula and instructional decisions remain to be made, especially in selecting delivery systems, adapting techniques to students' learning styles, diagnosing problems, and prescribing remediation.

Teachers may take comfort from the fact that they have at least as a group, if not individually, considerable opportunity to shape curricular decisions at the classroom, local school, district levels and some opportunity at the state level.

3.3 The Team, Grade and Department Level

Curriculum development is essentially a group undertaking. It calls for a cooperative effort on the part of each teacher. It is at the team, grade, or department level that curriculum leadership begins to emerge, with leaders coming to be distinguished from followers.

In theory and in practice, groups and subgroups are formed and reformed continuously depending on their learning needs, goals, and interest and on the teachers' individual competencies.

Teachers in school organised into self-contained units participate at the grade or department level. Teachers in open-space elementary or primary schools share curriculum-planning responsibilities at both the team and grade level. With the children for whom they are especially responsible in mind, the teachers in a team, given grade, or particular department are called on to make curricular decisions like the following:

- Determining content to be presented
- Sequencing subject matter
- Adapting instruction for exceptionalities
- Establishing or reviving team, grade or departmental objectives
- Selecting materials and resources suitable to the children under their supervision
- Creating groupings and sub-groupings of learners
- Establishing a means of coordinating progress of students in the various sections and classrooms
- Writing tests to be taken by all students of the team, grade, or department
- Writing curriculum materials for use by all teachers
- Agreeing on team-wide, grade-wide, and department-wide programs that all students and teachers will attend
- Agreeing on ways students can learn to demonstrate socially responsible behaviour and self-discipline

- Agreeing on or reviewing minimal standards that pupils must demonstrate in the basic skills

- Cooperating in the establishing and use of laboratories and learning centers

- Agreeing on implementation of the school's marking practices

- Agreeing on the instruction of new programs and abandonment of old programs within their jurisdiction

- Evaluating their programs, students, and instructors

These are but a sampling of the many kinds of cooperative decisions that members who constitute the team, grade, or department must make. Team leaders or lead teachers, grade coordinators, are generally free to make many, though not all, decisions that affect only their own classes. When a decision is likely to have an impact on teachers other than the individual classroom teacher, it becomes a matter for joint deliberation by the parties to be affected or, at higher levels, by their representatives.

To enable the decision making process to become more efficient, curriculum leaders will either emerge or need to be designated. Team leaders or lead teachers, grade coordinators, or chairpersons are appointed by the principal or elected by the teachers themselves. Those administrators who are inclined to a bureaucratic approach to administration prefer the former system, and those who are disposed to a collegial approach permit the latter system. In either case, if the most experienced and skilled teachers are chosen for leadership positions, they may establish themselves as curriculum specialists, key members of a cooperating group of curriculum workers.

Activity

Do you subscribe to the notion that the teacher is the custodian of all knowledge from which the student can always draw from?

4.0 Conclusion

We can notice that teachers carry out activities in curriculum design when they write curricular goals and objectives, select subject matter (content), choose materials, identify resources in the school and community, and sequence or re-sequence the subject matter. Teachers have the responsibility of evaluating both the curriculum and instruction. In some ways it is difficult to separate the two dimensions of evaluation

and to tell where instructional evaluation ceases and curriculum evaluation begins.

5.0 Summary

In this unit we learnt the:

1. Role of the teacher in the school, in the classroom, his relationship with the school authorities and fellow teachers.

2. Various tasks of the teacher.

6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment

1. Outline 10 curricular decisions that a teacher may be called upon to make.

2. What are the constituents of the essential roles of the teacher in the classroom?

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MODULE 3

CONTENT AND CONTEXT IN EARLY CHILDHOOD CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

INTRODUCTION

This would briefly introduce you to all that is required in early childhood curriculum. This would be discussed under the following units:

Unit 1 Early Childhood Curriculum Content and Context (Part One)
Unit 2 Early Childhood Curriculum Content and Content (Part Two)
Unit 3 Evaluation
Unit 4 Pre-School Curriculum Evaluation
Unit 5 Quality Indicators

UNIT 1 TOPIC: EARLY CHILDOOD CURRICULUM CONTENT AND CONTEXT (PART ONE)

CONTENT

1.0 Introduction

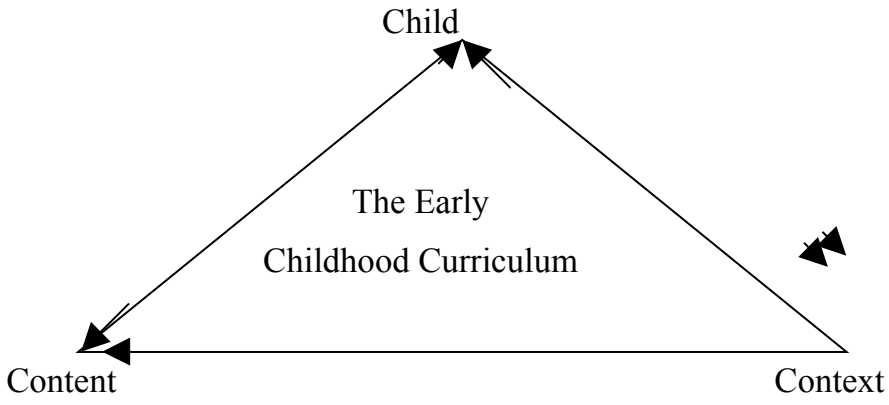
Imagine you are standing on a hill. You are more aware of the top than the rest of it. Now imagine you are standing at the foot of the hill. You become more aware of different part of the hill. The early childhood curriculum is a bit like this. At times the emphasis will be on the processes of the child. At other times the socio-cultural context will be prominent, whilst at a different time the content (what a child is learning and understanding) will be central. Only when all three aspects are

integrated and in synchrony can the early childhood curriculum be of quality. If any are over-emphasised, the whole curriculum becomes out of balance and quality is lost.

It can be argued that in the mid 1960s there was over-emphasis on the process in the child. In the mid 1970s there was over-emphasis on the context and from the mid 1980s there has been over-emphasis on the content. Achieving balance is crucial, but unless adequate care is given to the child-in-context there is little hope that children will acquire understanding and knowledge of any real or lasting depth in the content that they attempt to learn.

Understanding of the early childhood curriculum requires consideration of the processes of the child's development, the context (both the socio-cultural and physical) and the content (what is offered to children).
The early childhood curriculum has three aspects, each of which interact with the others.

THE THREE C'S OF THE EARLY CHILDHOOD CURRICULUM



What the child already knows	People, culture, race, gender special educational needs
What the child needs to know	access, materials, and physical Environment, outdoors, indoors
What the child wants to know	places, events

2.0 Objectives

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

1) Outline the features of early childhood curriculum content and context

2) Define the characteristics of the socio-cultural context of the child.

3) List the main factors necessary for the early childhood curriculum to be active.

3.0 MAIN BODY

3.1 Early childhood curriculum content and context

It is important to remember that children are part of the culture in which they grow up. They are also deeply connected with the people they live with and meet. It is probably best not to use the phrase 'child-centred' because of this. It is more helpful to refer to the child-in-context. Even two children the same family have different experiences depending on whether they are first born, boys, girls, or have a disability, are of a second marriage, are living in a reconstituted family, as well as the influences of ethnicity and cultural background.

There are important processes, which are part of a child's development, which need to be studied meticulously and in detail by adults while working with young children in every kind of early childhood setting. These include knowledge and understanding about the development of children's language(s), their play, and symbolic life, their spiritual and moral development, their physical development, their feelings, ideas and relationships.

3.2 The child in the socio-cultural context

Material provision. Material provision makes the bones of environment. It gives children first-hand experiences, needs to wide ranging, both indoor and outdoor with natural and manufactured objects. Frequent lack of attention to the external environment must come from some bizarre assumption that knowledge acquired indoors is superior to that gained outside. Pat Gura (1996) provides many examples of broad material provision, both outdoor and indoor. It is important not to let emphasis on material provision lead to under-emphasis on the child.

The important thing for early childhood educators to remember, is how will the provision be used to serve the child, and how will it help the

adult to help children develop further their ideas, feelings, or relationships. It depends where and when children grow up, and whether or not they attend group settings before the age of six or seven years. Many children are at home during these years in many parts of the world. Where children do join early years groups, it is important to bear in mind that material provision makes the bones of the early years environment.

The environment in which children develop and learn involve the people with who the child interacts, the objects or material provision they encounter, and the places and events experienced. The way that children are helped to develop skills in using the provision, the way they are helped to develop competence and mastery and dispositions and attitudes that aid learning, are of crucial importance. The environment is the mechanism by which the early childhood educator brings the child and different aspects of knowledge together. 'Observing, supporting and then extending' (Bruce, 1987, p. 65) is the key to good learning.

Interest tables and displays are an aspect of material provision which require care. The central aims to give children direct experiences, to allow their initiatives and extend them, to support intrinsic motivation broadly and in depth, and to facilitate the development of dispositions and attitudes which are helpful to learning (Katz, 1989). Therefore children must be allowed to interact with the interest table and help to make the displays. They cannot be static.

Some early years educators have a wall near the drawing/writing are where children can put up their work if they wish. Sometimes an activity becomes an interest table after it has finished (for example cooking apple pie). A recipe book, utensils and ingredients are put on an interest table near the home corner, and children are likely to try to cook or to touch. In this way the children can reflect on, and use, what they have learnt, and practice and consolidate their learning free from adult domination. In this way, interest tables and activities blend towards future worthwhile knowledge.

Themes, topics and projects are another way of approaching material provision. However, most early childhood educator who use a topic, theme or project approach do not take up the children's initiatives. They simply decide on a topic, perhaps linked with the National Curriculum or with the Desirable Learning Outcomes documents (1996). This is more in keeping with the transmission model of education. It does not support the principles of the early childhood tradition.

When adults use observation as the base of their record-keeping system (Bartholomew and Bruce, 1997; Drummond, 1993), a topic or theme can be added source of interest and learning for children. However, it is by

no means necessary and many early childhood educators prefer to work entirely from observation without introducing a theme which seems to them contrived.

Disposition towards learning. Developing mastery and skills is considered at some length here because it is not considered as an entity elsewhere in the book. The key message is that the early childhood educator should introduce skills which the child needs in order to become increasingly competent and be in a position to use.

This approach is very different from one in which the adult sits each child down in turn and 'teaches' him or her o cut, and then ticks the skill off on a check-list. Such an activity lacks function, purpose or meaning for the child. It does not build on what the child initiates, or is implicitly trying to do. It makes an error into something to be avoided, and there is a complete absence of any negotiations of shared contexts and meanings with the adult. In fact, this approach is totally at odds with the early childhood tradition.

Skills need to be taught and mastery encouraged, but in an embedded context which relates to what children strive to do. The same principles apply when children are learning to tie their shoelaces, cut their food at meals, swim, draw or write their name. Having sense of control of mastery is deeply linked with self-confidence and feelings of self-esteem (Roberts, 1995).

For instance, the moment to introduce correct letter formation is at the level Ferreiro (1983; 1987) describes when children try to write their names, or their first 'fixed string'. In chapter 6 on language, it is suggested that the first fixed string is the moment when children resolve the conflict between their own personal symbols and those which can be shared with others. At this point, the children can see the purpose of legibility, speed, formation and aesthetic quality. He or she begins to use clear semi-circles in drawing and to use emergent writing. This behaviour is an indication of readiness to tackle lower case letter formations, provided the understanding that written forms are made out of fixed strings is also emerging. At this point, tuition will give the child the skill needed to undertake legible, speedy and well-formed handwriting, which will usefully serve the writing process. It will also help children to present work well.

Tracing, using templates or stencils, completely cuts across this process and is contrary to the principles of early childhood education. It is more in keeping with the transmission model of education. Being able to represent someone else's idea of a cat by means of a stencil is low level work. It keeps children busy, but it has little to do with education.

Helping children to use what they can do – draw circles and lines – tells them that they can draw their own cat, which is unique and imaginative. This is a higher level skill in the child and needs careful encouragement from adults.

A class of six years-olds had fully established the repertoire of marks on paper which are needed to form letters in the English language. (Some languages use lines predominantly, some curves, in the written form. Written English uses mainly lines for capitals and a mixture of lines and curves in lower case). This class was involved in a project on the Middle Ages, stemming from an interest in castles by a group of children in the class. Each child wrote his or her name and decorated the first letter. Some moved on from this to write poems which they later presented beautifully. The aesthetic possibilities of handwriting were highlighted in this way. Mastery and skills in presenting work and sharing it with others became appreciated.

Three year-old Paul sat in the book corner. He picked up a book and ruffled in dropped it and opened it in the middle. The early childhood worker sat with him and opened it, explaining about beginning where the story starts. She helped him to look at it so that he could benefit from the experience. At storytime she used a book with an enlarged text with a group of children. She asked Paul to show her how to begin and he was pleased with his success. He liked becoming skilled in the use of books. Lack of skills brings lack of confidence.

Eight year-old Hannah and six-year old William went with their parents to a Barn Dance in the local park. Hannah joined in with gusto after initial hesitation. She had in fact learn to do-si-do at school during country dancing. The following week the family went again, and this time William joined in. he was meticulous in getting the do-si-do exactly right and would only take part in partner dances with family, so that he could get it correct.

A few days later Hannah made up a dance at home using a pop song. In it she used some of the steps she had learned when Barn Dancing. The newly acquired skills were being used in a new dance context, choreography.

It is important that equipment is readily available for children to practice their newly acquired skills. If the woodwork bench is only put out once a week, this is not possible. Children need opportunities in becoming proficient when they are ready, now when educators are ready. If children only use climbing frames once a week, the ‘ripening structures’ Vygosky talks about are not adequately catered for in the environment. In this situation, where skills and the dispositions towards learning are

not encouraged, accidents are more likely (Pascal, BBC Teaching Today, March 1996).

This is another reason why it is important that children have access to outdoor play every day. The clumsy child needs to become more proficient in using the shoulder, because the shoulder affects movement of the arms and hands (Sheridan, 1973). The woodwork bench, climbing frames and dancing are excellent provision for this need.

Places, events and culture. Places and events which are part of the cultural background are also important aspects of the context of the curriculum. For example, visiting the police station, the mosque, museums, the train guard's van, or the park and shops, being visited by a puppet group are all important. The context can be both indoors and outdoors beyond the school. Places, events and culture cannot be separated from people.

People. People are the most important part of a child's education. The contribution made by both adults and other children is stressed throughout this book. The child's family and socio-cultural background are deeply influential. Children do not leave the socio-cultural aspects of their lives behind when attending a group or school. Their culture and the people they live with are a part of them.

3.3 The content of the curriculum

The content of the curriculum, what is considered worthwhile for children to know about and understand, is culturally defined. There are stark contrasts between the content of the National Curriculum in, for example, Norway, New Zealand or in the Pacific Rim. Early childhood workers need to be informed about the culture in which they work and its curriculum emphasis, but thinking about the knowledge children acquire is also enhanced. By knowing how other cultures approach the growth of knowledge and understanding and how narrowly or holistically the concept of curriculum is viewed. Some cultures emphasise performance according to teacher-led tasks, whilst others place more emphasis on reflective, critical, imaginative and creative aspects.

3.4 The early childhood curriculum in action

This unit so far has given a broad framework for approaching the three 'C's' of the curriculum

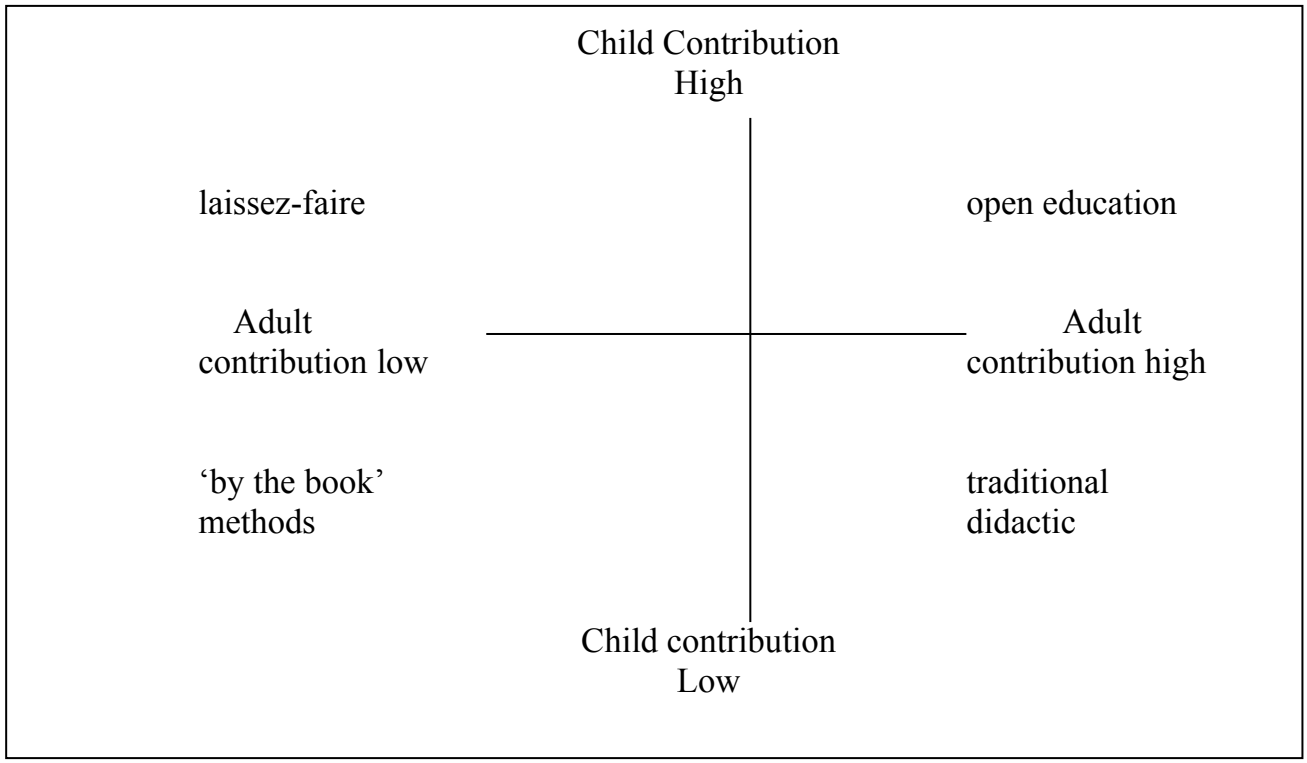
- the child;
- the context;
- the content

In addition, certain basic elements in the learning process need to be built in, namely breadth and depth of knowledge and the pursuit of excellence, with high expectation for each child. The curriculum needs to be relevant and to have meaning for the child as it is experienced.

The remainder of this chapter gives a series of examples of the early childhood curriculum in action which brings out the points made so far. Early childhood setting, where both adults and children are active learners together, are likely to create a curriculum of quality. Where the early childhood worker dominates, or has stopped learning, or the child is given the lead most of the time, then quality is likely to be diminished. When children are taught, mainly by worksheet, the learning of which children are capable is seriously constrained.

A good curriculum with quality:

- Sees adults and children as active learner;
- Engages children both broadly and deeply with the content of the curriculum;
- Has high expectations of what children do and high expectations of the learning opportunities adults provide for children;
- Is based on narrative observation of children;
- Emphasizes adults knowing and understanding how children develop and learn, as well as being informed about the subject to be studied (the content);
- Emphasizes the need for adults to be informed also about the context in which learning takes place so that children are given access in which their learning is both supported and extended: this is particularly important in relation to equality of opportunity;
- Uses observation (assessment and evaluation) to inform the planning of the curriculum so that adults begin with observation and move to support and consolidate what they learn, and also extend the learning into less familiar aspects of knowledge and understanding;
- Depth of knowledge is important to the teacher is he/she is to respond flexibly to the child's interest: every area of the curriculum has a particular pattern, order, set of relationships within it.



ACTIVITY

Identify the context of a good curriculum quality.

Answer

For the correctness of your answer, compare your points with the points given above.

4.0 Conclusion

The early childhood curriculum is constructed from three different elements. First it concerns the child and the processes and structures operating within the child. Secondly the curriculum deals with the context in which the child learns, whether or not the situation is conducive to learning, and whether it provides access to learning. Thirdly, the curriculum involves knowledge and understanding. A quality curriculum brings the child, knowledge and understanding together in an integrated form, appropriately and relatively using the environment which is made up of people, objects and material provision, places and events.

The key to the early childhood curriculum is that adults should observe the child, support the child in developing and learning and extend the child's development and learning.

5.0 Summary

In this unit we have learnt the:

1) Features of early childhood curriculum content and context

2) Characteristics of the socio-cultural context of the child.

3) Main factors necessary for the early childhood curriculum to be active.

6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment

Highlight 7 attributes of a good curriculum.

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UNIT 2 EARLY CHILDHOOD CURRICULUM CONTENT AND CONTEXT (PART TWO)

CONTENT

1.0 Introduction

The decade of the 1980s saw numerous calls for widespread school reform, with changes recommended in teacher education, graduation requirements, school structure, and accountability measures. With the advent of the 1990s, school reform finally took on the essential question: what to teach? There were criticisms on the prevailing curriculum content and methods, and hence trident calls for sweeping changes were made by such national organizations as the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics in America, the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and the International Reading Association to mention but a few. The early childhood profession, represented by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), entered the educational reform debate by issuing influential position statements defining developmentally appropriate practices for young children. Specifically, these national organizations call for schooling to place greater emphasis on:

- Active, hands-on learning
- Conceptual learning that leads to understanding along with acquisition of basic skills
- Meaningful, relevant learning experiences
- Interactive teaching and cooperative learning

- A broad range of relevant content, integrated across traditional subject matter divisions

2.0 Objectives

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

1. Identify various sources of curriculum content:
2. List and discuss appropriate preschool curriculum content

3.0 MAIN BODY

3.1 appropriate pre-school curriculum content

In implementing developmentally appropriate practice, teachers and administrators must make decisions about what to teach and when, and how to best assess that learning has taken place.

Curriculum development should take into account the many sources of curriculum:

- Child development knowledge
- Individual characteristics of children
- Knowledge base of various disciplines
- Values of our culture
- Parents' desires
- Knowledge children need to function competently in our society

The task of developing curriculum is made more difficult by the fact that these diverse sources of curriculum may be in conflict with one another. For example, the values and priorities of parents and the community are significant factors to be considered in determining what should be learned; however, parents and community will not necessarily agree on all goals. The expertise of early childhood professionals should also influence decisions about appropriate goals for children. To some extent, curriculum decisions should represent a negotiation process with parent and community expectations about what is taught influenced by professional expertise about how to teach and when content is appropriate.

3.2 Principles of Child Development and Learning that determine the content

The following are theoretical principles of child development and learning that are very important in determining the appropriate preschool content.

Principle	Practice
Children learn best when their physical needs are met and they feel psychologically safe and secure.	DAP respects children's biological needs. For example, children are not made to sit and attend to paperwork or listen to adult lectures for long periods of time. DAP calls for active play and periods of quiet, restful, activity. The environment is safe and secure where everyone is accepted.
Children construct knowledge.	Knowledge is constructed as a result of dynamic interactions between the individual and the physical and social environments. In a sense the child discovers knowledge through active experimentation. Central to experimentation is making "constructive errors" that are necessary to mental development. Children need to form their own hypotheses and keep trying them out through mental actions and physical manipulations - observing what happens, comparing their findings, asking questions, and discovering answers - and adjust the model or alter the mental structures to account for the new information.
Children learn through social interaction with other adults and other children.	A prime example is the parent-child relationship. The teacher encourages and fosters this relationship as well as relationships with peers and other adults by supporting the child in his or her efforts and later allowing the child to function independently. The teacher's role is one of supporting, guiding, and facilitating development and learning.
Children learn through play.	Play provides opportunities for exploration, experimentation, and manipulation that are essential for constructing knowledge and contributes to the development of representational thought. During play, children examine and refine their learning in light of the feedback they receive from the environment and other people. It is through play that children develop their imaginations and creativity. During the primary grades, children's play

	becomes more rule-oriented and promotes the development of autonomy and cooperation which contributes to social, emotional, and intellectual development.
Children's interests and "need to know" motivate learning.	Children have a need to make sense of their experiences. In a developmentally appropriate classroom, teachers identify what intrigues their children and then allow the students to solve problems together. Activities that are based on children's interests provide motivation for learning. This fosters a love of learning, curiosity, attention, and self-direction.
Human development and learning and are characterized by individual variation.	A wide range of individual variation is normal and to be expected. Each human being has an individual pattern and timing of growth development as well as individual styles of learning. Personal family experiences and cultural backgrounds also vary.

3.3 Determining Appropriate Content

Learning and development are so individualised, it is neither possible nor desirable to establish uniform age-appropriate expectations. However, it is possible to identify parameters to guide decisions about the appropriateness of curriculum expectations.

The framework that follows is useful for determining age-appropriate curriculum content. This framework reflects the cycle of human learning-movement from awareness, to exploration, to inquiry, to utilization.

- Awareness is broad recognition of the parameters of the learning--events, objects, people, or concepts.

- Exploration is the process of figuring out the components or attributes of events, objects, people, or concepts by whatever means available; it also is the process whereby children bring their own personal meaning to their experiences.

- Inquiry is the process of developing understanding of commonalities across events, objects, people, or concepts. At this point, children begin to generalize their personal concepts and adapt them to more adult ways of thinking and behaving.

- Utilization is the functional level of learning, at which children can apply or make use of their understanding of events, objects, people, or concepts.

To learn something new, children must become aware, explore, inquire, use, and apply. This process occurs over time and reflects movement from learning that is informal and incidental, spontaneous, concrete-referenced, and governed by the child's own rules to learning that is more formal, refined, extended, enriched, more removed in time and space from concrete references and more reflective of conventional rule systems.

What Children Do	***What Teachers Do***
<u>Awareness</u> Experience Acquire an interest Recognize broad parameters Attend Perceive	Create the environment Provide the opportunities by introducing new objects, events, people Invite interest by posing problem or question Respond to child's interest or shared experience Show interest, enthusiasm
<u>Exploration</u> Observe Explore materials Collect information Discover Represent Figure out components Construct own understanding Apply own rules Create personal meaning	Facilitate Support and enhance exploration Extend play Describe child's activity Ask open-ended questions, such as "What else could you do?" Respect child's thinking and rule systems Allow for constructive error
<u>Inquiry</u> Examine Investigate Propose explanations Focus Compare own thinking with that of others Generalize Relate to prior learning Adjust to conventional rule systems	Help children refine understanding Guide children, focus attention Ask more focused questions, such as "What else works like this? What happens if?" Provide information when requested Help children make connections Allow time for sustained inquiry
<u>Utilization</u> Use the learning in many ways; learning becomes functional	Create vehicles for application in real world Help children apply to new situations

Represent learning in various ways Apply to new situations Formulate new hypotheses and repeat cycle	Provide meaningful situations to use learning

Activity

Outline four principles of learning and child development that determine the appropriate content of preschool curriculum

Answer

Cross check your answer with the content in 3.2 above.

4.0 Conclusion

We have seen that learning and development are so individualised that it is neither possible nor desirable to establish uniform age-appropriate expectations. However, it is possible to identify parameters to guide decisions about the appropriateness of curriculum contents.

5.0 Summary

In this unit we have identified various sources of curriculum content, listed and discussed the appropriate preschool curriculum content

6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment

1. What four factors will you consider in determining appropriate preschool curriculum content?

2. List and explain five sources of pre-school curriculum content

7.0 References

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UNIT 3 EVALUATION

CONTENT

1.0 Introduction

It is generally recognized that education is an indispensable requisite for improving the social and economic conditions in a country and that early childhood education programmes play a crucial role in this improvement. We no longer need to convince the majority of governments that children's experiences during the early years concern only the family. It is accepted that the community has a shared responsibility with the family for the overall development of the child. Throughout the world, governments at both the local and national levels, as well as the voluntary agencies, are spending large amounts of money on programmes and projects of different types of support on early childhood education. Quite properly this expenditure must be justified and the programmes must be seen as cost effective.

In this presentation I shall be looking at some of the surrounding indicators of good practice in early childhood care and education from a global perspective. This is a challenging task as there are so many different factors to take into account. In any early childhood setting we hear children asking 'why', 'when', 'what' and 'how' questions. In this talk I would like to ask some of these fundamental why, when, what and how questions. Why do we need to evaluate our programmes? When do we evaluate and how are we going to carry out the evaluation? What are the quality indicators we should be considering when we evaluate early childhood programmes.

2.0 Objectives

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

1. Highlight the rationale for evaluation
2. Suggest when to evaluate
3. Outline an evaluation framework

3.0 MAIN BODY

3.1 Why do we need to evaluate?

Evaluation and assessment is an essential of any educational programme, as we need to know whether the goals of the programme have been

achieved. However the approach may vary according to the group requiring the information.

Investors and outside agencies want to know whether their money is being properly spent and whether programme is cost effective. For many of the stakeholders accountability is of prime importance. In these situations the evaluations are usually retrospective and are conducted by external evaluators using a variety of methods that have been decided upon independently and externally to the programme being evaluated.

The early years educator needs to assess children's progress for a different reason. She wants to know whether the teaching programme is effective in helping children to achieve the desired learning outcomes. Cost effectiveness in terms of finance is less of an issue. Educators are concerned with the benefits to children from attending the programme. If the benefits have not been as was hoped for, what must be done to amend the programme so that the learning goals can be achieved?

Another reason for assessing children's performance is to find out whether a particular teaching strategy has been more effective than others. The reflective practitioner may devise a variety of teaching approaches to support her children's learning and needs to know which is the most successful. For example she may decide to change from structured approach to one where the children are allowed the freedom to select their own activities and wishes to known whether change has been beneficial?

Parents are another group with a right to know whether the educational programme in which their children are involved is meeting its goals. Does the programme meet their expectations?

Few people have problem with the question why evaluate? The assessment may be for different purposes but it is generally accepted that children's progress need to be monitored.

3.2 When do we evaluate?

This is a question that may cause more challenge. There is one school of thought that argues that the process of evaluation should take place at the end of a programme, as only then can we see whether the learning outcomes have been achieved. Others argue that this is a retrospective approach and that only a pre-defined and limited range of data can be used, as it is impossible to collect additional data if the project has already ended. They promulgate an alternative, Action Research approach, in which there is continuous feedback between evaluators and the field workers. Small scale projects are especially good for this type of

monitoring, where each step of the project provides information for the next phase of decision making. UNICEF is currently working on an open systems approach in an attempt to rectify some of the shortcomings of the traditional retrospective design methods.

Teachers are encouraged to embark on action research in their work place settings. This may involve the educator acting as both evaluator and teacher. While working with children she will simultaneously be assessing their progress and amending her approach to meet their individual needs. In the context of the learning situation the educator is constantly making decisions as to the effectiveness of the delivery of the programme and deciding upon the most appropriate next step. Monitoring in this manner not only supports children's learning but also is an invaluable adjunct to the professional development of the educator.

So the question 'when do we evaluate' is not a simple one. It depends upon whether the evaluation is to be based on an experimental or quasi-experimental research design with an external evaluator, or whether an action research, systems approach is used or a mixture of both.

3.3 Quality evaluation framework

What are the key indicators we should be looking for in a quality early childhood education programme? A great deal have been spoken and written about quality programmes and the need for high quality care and education for young children to be provided for by well qualified trainers/educators. What is meant by quality in the context of early childhood education programmes. Researchers, practitioners, parents and stakeholders all need to define a 'quality early childhood programme'. Quality is a reflective value based concept that is wholly constructed and subjective. Different interest groups, for example parents, early childhood educators, stakeholders and even children themselves will have a different view on what they call good quality early childhood programmes. It is probably impossible to share a common definition of quality and therefore we must move towards a common understanding of what each person means by the term. It may be useful to consider a conceptual framework of the term 'quality' when we move on to consider possible indicators of good practice. It is argued that to be of practical use a framework should:

- Have face validity among the very diverse group of people who might be described as stakeholders.

- Recognise that quality is a multi-dimensional concept.

- Be able to incorporate the different perspectives on quality held by the different stakeholders.
- Be effective in raising practitioner awareness of quality issues.
- Be relevant to both quality assessment and quality improvement.
- Enable specific aspects of quality to be identified and targeted for improvement
- Have the capacity to expand and clarify people's thinking about quality.

Activity

Discuss in a group of other students the rationale for evaluating the preschool curriculum. Note their opinions. Did you all reach an agreement.

4.0 Conclusion

Evaluation and assessment is an essential of any educational programme, as we need to know whether the goals of the programme have been achieved

5.0 Summary

In this unit we have learnt:

1. The rationale for conducting evaluation
2. How to evaluate
3. When to evaluate

6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment

1. Suggest when and how you can evaluate a preschool curriculum programme.
2. Outline the framework for quality evaluation

7.0 References

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UNIT 4 PRE-SCHOOL CURRICULUM EVALUATION

CONTENT

1.0 Introduction

Once a curriculum is designed, it may be evaluated by internal evaluation, expert appraisal, and confidential review. The next step is small-scale pilot testing, followed by typical-use field-testing. Testing and implementation of a curriculum should be accompanied by program evaluation. Program evaluation may be pre-ordinate, aiming to compare effects with intentions; or non-preordinate, interested in all of the effects of the program. Program evaluations should draw on as wide an array of information sources and measures as possible. Completing the design of a curriculum ends one phase of the curriculum process and begins another. Some would argue that the most difficult stage now begins. We have so far only drawn the blueprints, now we must evaluate them and then submit them to the test of reality by constructing the building itself. It is important that, if possible, the team that planned the curriculum continue to oversee its evaluation and installation. The designers are the people with the most intimate knowledge of the curriculum and the greatest commitment to it. They are best placed to see that its integrity is maintained.

2.0 Objectives

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

1. Explain the term pre-school curriculum evaluation
2. List and discuss the pre-school curriculum evaluation guide

3.0 MAIN BODY

3.1 Pre school Curriculum Evaluation

Before the curriculum is ready even to be tested, it needs to be "debugged". This is the purpose of curriculum evaluation. Evaluation can be defined most simply as the determination of the worth of a thing.. Curriculum evaluation involves determining the worth of a document, as compared with program evaluation, which involves evaluating the activities that occur when a curriculum is implemented in classrooms.
The first step might be called internal evaluation. Allow an interval to elapse, perhaps two or three weeks, after the curriculum document is completed. Then return to it and reread it carefully. Almost inevitably, you will want to make corrections, deletions and additions. It is the same

principle as not mailing an important letter the same day you write it. Out of this process comes a revised draft.

The revised draft can now be submitted for expert appraisal. You need to get the opinion of one or more people who are experts in curriculum development, and one or more who are experts on the subject of the curriculum. In rare instances, these competences may be combined in one person. Each evaluator will bring different criteria to bear on the curriculum being judged. The authors of a curriculum are obviously committed to their document; so as far as possible the expert should be independent of them. As Scriven comments, "Crude measurements are not as good as refined measurement, but they beat the hell out of judgments of those with vested interests". Some of the most basic criteria that may be used to evaluate a curriculum are presented below in the form of a checklist.

3.1 Curriculum Evaluation Guide

The following questions are usually raised to provide a guide to curriculum evaluation. The assumption is that realistic and truthful answers to these questions will lead to acceptable curriculum evaluation.

1. **Needs Assessment**

- Was a needs assessment conducted?
- Are the methodology and results described?
- Are the results used appropriately in the design of the curriculum?

2. **Aim**

- Is the aim of the curriculum stated?
- Does it express the overall intent of the curriculum?
- Does it match the objectives and the curriculum content?
- Is it clear and concise?
- Is it worthwhile?

- Would it be meaningful and significant to the learners?

3. **Rationale**

- Is the justification for the program given?
- Are all the important arguments for the program included?
- Does the rationale document evidence on which the curriculum is based?
- Are the arguments valid and rigorous?
- Is the rationale eloquently written and convincing?
- Are the main objections anticipated and dealt with?
- Does the rationale deal appropriately with the social and personal significance of the curriculum?

4. **Objectives**

- Are all the main intentions of the curriculum identified?
- Do the objectives reflect student needs?
- Do the objectives go beyond the cognitive?
- Are social and personal objectives included?
- Are priorities particularly the critical objectives identified?
- Are the objectives written in a clear and consistent style?
- Are the objectives relevant to the aim?
- Do the objectives collectively exhaust the meaning of the aim?
- If all the objectives were achieved, would the aim be realized?

5. Assessment

- Are appropriate means suggested to assess attainment of each objective?
- Are measures valid, reliable, an efficient?
- Are measures low in anxiety for less able learners?
- Are assessment measures intrinsic to the curriculum, rather than formal or artificial?
- Is there adequate diagnostic formative assessment?
- Where appropriate, are standards of mastery clearly indicated?
- Do mastery standards set high expectations?
- Could students make valid judgments about their own proficiency?
- Is the grading system clearly described?
- Is the grading system aligned with the objectives?
- Does the grading system ensure that critical objectives are mastered?

6. Context

- Are the social, community, and institutional contexts described?
- Is it clear how this curriculum fits with other programs?
- Is linkage clear with preceding and following courses or units?

- Is the relationship of the curriculum to state or district guidelines shown?

7. **Entry characteristics**

- Are the learners adequately described?
- Is the cultural background of students acknowledged and respected?
- Is the selection process clear?
- Are the necessary prerequisites identified?
- Is provision made for students who lack prerequisites?
- Is provision made for students who have already mastered the objectives?
- Is there guidance for design and use of preassessment?

8. **Instruction**

- Does the instruction match student needs?
- Does the instruction match the curriculum objectives?
- In instructional content appropriate and interesting?
- Does the instruction ensure early significant success?
- Is the sequence and pacing of instruction appropriate?
- Are teaching strategies varied, interesting and challenging?
- Are there appropriate strategies for students with different learning styles?

- Do strategies involve active and cooperative learning?
- Is there provision for regular, interesting, and monitored homework?

9. **Individual differences**

- Is there provision for identifying individual difference in aptitude and motivation?
- Are there plans for effective remediation?
- Is there appropriate use of tutoring and peer tutoring?
- Is there adequate provision for faster and more motivated learners?
- Is there provision for cultural differences?
- Is there provision for students with special needs?

10. **Resources**

- Are consumables and communication materials described?
- Are High-Quality materials included in the curriculum or readily available to teachers?
- Is relevant instructional software listed?
- Is the required equipment described?
- Are there recommendations for classroom layout?
- Are uses of facilities outside the classroom suggested?
- Are instructor qualities and responsibilities defined?
- Are the roles of parents, guests, administrators, indicated?

- Is total time consumption calculated?
- Is the budget complete?

11. **Tryout**

- Is there provision for pilot and filed testing?
- Are the results of the pilot and field tests described?

12. **Program evaluation**

- Are criteria suggested for evaluation of all aspects of the program?
- Are multiple measures and data sources suggested?
- Is there provision for feedback on the curriculum from users?
- Is there provision for ongoing revision of the curriculum?

13. **Implementation**

- Were significant groups involved throughout development of the curriculum?
- Are the names of affiliations of the curriculum planners shown?
- Are they credible?
- Do they include people other than educators?
- Is there a realistic adoption and implementation plan?
- Is there sufficient for in-service training.

14. Production qualities

- Is the curriculum professional in appearance?
- Is it printed and illustrated?
- Are the binding and cover attractive?
- Is it well written and easy to follow and read?
- Is it free of jargon, vagueness, and pretentiousness?

Activity

Attempt to change the evaluation checklist from questions to straightforward statements. Try and put some flesh into the framework by thinking through sentence by sentence, and discuss your new statements with a group of students in your class.

4.0 Conclusion

Some of the most basic criteria that may used to evaluate a preschool curriculum have been presented in form of a checklist.

5.0 Summary

In this unit we attempted an explanation of the term pre-school curriculum evaluation and listed the pre-school curriculum evaluation guide. The rationale or assumption of the evaluation guide is also explained.

6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment

The pre-school curriculum evaluation guide has 14 headings, attempt listing them with at least two questions on each heading.

7.0 References

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UNIT 5 QUALITY INDICATORS

CONTENT

1.0 Introduction

One way of monitoring quality is to relate costs to measurement outcomes. We are not necessarily concerned with whether the costs are high, but rather whether the costs are high in relation to outcomes. Measuring the effects of progress in an early childhood development programme includes looking at a holistic view of child development. Attention has to be on the physical, social, intellectual and emotional development of the child. There is at present some degree of consensus of indicators for physical development, but there is little or no general agreement in the domain of emotional, social and cognitive development. Child development is at the heart of most early childhood programmes. Recent research demonstrates that providing children with varied perceptual and motor experiences at an early age affects positively the structure and organisation of the neural pathways in the brain during the formative period, favourably affecting learning of all kinds later in life. Whether they are focused entirely upon health issues or only education focused, or a mixture of both, experts talk about the need for these programmes to be developmentally appropriate.

In practical terms this means that the programmes take into account the child's level of development-social, cognitive, physical and emotional and the classroom practice is based on child initiated activities and the belief that social, physical, cognitive and emotional learning is as important as academic learning. It is argued that such programmes create a positive classroom climate that is conducive to healthy emotional development. Furthermore children seem more motivated to learn and therefore have a more positive approach to learning.

Although there is no doubt that programme that take into account the developmental level of the children and allow opportunities for decision making generally provide a better learning environment, they are not the only factors to be taken into account in designing an early childhood programme. Young children do not grow up in isolation, they are part of

a family and community. Therefore the nursery should not and does not exist in isolation. The staffs in early childhood settings ultimately judge themselves by locating their practice against what they perceive to be the current professional, parental and public perceptions of their work. The resources that are available, the curriculum or range of activities all determine daily practice but are not sufficient criteria for good practice in themselves. There is a danger that too great an emphasis upon developmentally appropriate practice may result in the child being seen in isolation and not as part of a community and family. Some of the most talked about nurseries in Europe are in Reggio Emilio in Italy. They have been praised for the high levels of creativity achieved by the children but in my view the real strength of these nurseries is that they encourage dialogue between staff, parents, children and politicians. Loris Malaguzzi, their founder, postulated a theory of early education that had an image of the child as rich in potential, strong, powerful, competent and most of all connected to adults and other children'. He stressed the idea of the child living in a community of adults and living and learning as part of that wider community. The total child development model posits a universal decontextualised child – the child who is the same everywhere and who progresses from one stage of development to another and whose development can be enhanced by the intellectual and cognitive activities provided in a suitable challenging environment. It is essential that we take account of the child's holistic development, but good practice does not exist in a vacuum, it is part of a complex situation in which cultural values and assumptions also play part as well as an understanding of child development.

2.0 Objective

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

1. List some quality indicators in early childhood education.

2. Explain some quality indicators in early childhood education.

3.0 MAIN BODY

3.1 Indicators of quality in early childhood settings

There is no single model of early childhood care and education that is effective in all settings, but there is general acceptance that programmes that benefit young children must be embedded within their families, their cultural values and their community. It is therefore essential that indicators take into consideration not only the child but also the professionals, family and community. Any discussion on quality must acknowledge a diversity of circumstances and a diversity of perspectives

and values that relate directly to the children and curriculum content; indicators that relate to the staff; those that relate to the family and community and those that relate to cost analysis and programme quality. These different stress upon some and may be even reject others. Any indication of quality should also include accessibility and usage. If a programme is to have any value it must be available for all children whose parents wish them to attend.

Not everyone will agree with my choice of indicators, but I believe that the ones I have selected can be met in all parts of the world. I am fully aware that many educational settings will meet more sophisticated levels of quality indicators.

3.2 Indicators of quality for children

This category of indicators includes learning activities, the physical environment and assessment and evaluation of children's progress.

3.2.1 Learning Activities

No doubt there will always be active debate on how learning is structured. Questions will continually be asked about how much or how little the adult intervene in the learning and the role that other children play in the learning situation. Professionals may disagree about methods, but there is general consensus that the curriculum should help children develop a sense of personal and identity and mastery; a positive self concept and skills in communication and literacy, collaboration and social responsibility.

The presence of the following in any setting would be indicators of quality:

- There is a comprehensive range of activities available for the children to develop basic mathematical, scientific and biological concepts.

- There are opportunities for the development of linguistic skills.

- Children are encouraged to use their mother tongue and opportunities are available to develop bilingual skills and where appropriate.

- Children have ample opportunity to develop artistic and creative skills through a variety of media.

- Children have opportunity to express themselves through play, puppetry and drama.
- Children are helped to understand basic concepts of health and hygiene.
- There are varied opportunities for children to develop their physical skills.
- Children have at least some control over the structure and pace of activities.
- Children are opportunities to make sound relationships with adult and children.

3.2.2 Environment

A basic physical environment should be one where:

- The surroundings inside and outside are safe.
- There is a protection against obvious hazards and dangers.
- There are good health practices, safe and nutritious food, basic sanitation and potable water
- Children can contribute to the environment
- There is an atmosphere of calm, well being and freedom from fear
- Materials are accessible to the child
- Surroundings are aesthetically pleasing

3.2.3 Assessment of Children and Learning Outcomes

Many will argue that the most important aspect of any evaluation programme is whether the learning outcomes have been achieved. However, it is also important to discover the extent to which specific problems or talents are recognized or accommodated. To this end indicators of good practice should include:

- Whether the children observed regularly

- Whether the assessments are carried out on an individual basis and monitored and recorded

- Whether assessments are discussed with parents

- Evidence that provision is made to support those children who have specific needs – both strengths and weaknesses

If the evaluation is carried out by an external assessor, then traditional assessment measures will probably be used, but in most cases children are monitored by the adults in the setting and staff need to decide how they intend to evaluate performance against outcomes. This may be by a variety of methods include checklists, written accounts, case studies or standardized test.

Should we not also looking at it from a child's point of view? The Declaration of the Rights of the Child states that every child has a right to an education. They also have a right to experience happiness. This is an elusive quality to try to measure. They also have a right to experience though they are subjective, that can be used to show whether the child is finding the whole experience pleasurable.

For example:

- Do they enjoy coming into school?
- What do they like doing?
- What do they not like doing?
- Do they feel respected?
- Are my friends able to feel good about everything?

3.2.4 Indicators of quality from staff

A great deal has been written about the importance of the quality and training of staff in any early childhood education project. However indicators of quality need to take account of not only their performance but also the feelings of the staff about their workplace and their colleagues.

It is important that staff:

- Have a knowledge of child development
- Know how to plan appropriate learning programmes
- Have positive attitudes towards children
- Respect children as individuals irrespective of their race, sex or religion

- Relate well to each other in the workplace setting
- Actively promote learning irrespective of the type of structure in the nursery
- Are advocates for children

It is also very important that staff:

- Are happy in their workplace
- Feel respected as individuals
- Have positive relationships with their colleagues
- Feel that the leadership is seen to be fair
- Feel that they are being well managed

Children are not likely to be happy in any educational setting if the adults have negative attitudes towards themselves, their colleagues or the children.

3.2.5 Indicators of Quality from a Family/Community Perspectives

From the viewpoint of parents, a quality programme is likely to be one where:

- The services are open to every child and are generally accessible in terms of transport
- There is an ethos which is friendly and supportive
- The staff are objective and non-judgmental
- There is no evidence of discrimination according to gender, race or religion
- Parents are given adequate information about the progress of their child and feel able to give information to the staff
- There are flexible start and finish times
- The views of all parents sought are key taken into account by the staff
- There are parents on the managing body of the project

Children are not only part of a family, but they are also members of a community and the success of any project will to some extent be dependent upon the attitudes of local people.
Quality indicators in this sphere may be whether:

- The programmes reflect the …….. local community.
- Local people, who are not …….. family of the children, are allowed to visit the nursery.

- The children are involved in any oral festivals etc that might take place
- The community has an active role in the management of the nursery

3.2.6 Indicators of quality from a financial perspective

In this category the various financial backers will be looking for value for money. They will be looking to see whether the programme has achieved its goals. However they will also be concerned with the cost benefits of the programme. Costs need to be examined in relation to outcome measures for the children and within these measures, there needs to be an examination not only of capital costs, such as heating, lighting but also in terms of consumable items. Finally I would argue that there needs to be cost benefit analysis in terms of satisfaction of the users – i.e. parents, staff and children.

Activity

List 5 quality indicators in early childhood education.

Answer

- Learning activities
- Environment
- Quality from staff
- Quality from family
- Community
- Financial perspective

4.0 Conclusion

Early education programmes need to be dynamic and adaptable if they are to of maximum value. The indicators that I have suggested cannot all be evaluated objectively, but I believe that they can be valuable as part of an on going evaluation process if is accompanied by dialogue and discussion. The traditional experimental psychology procedures of evaluation, which use experimental and quasi-experimental designs, are too rigid to cater for this newer approach and fail to utilize the strengths of the workers in the field. Educators and members of the community must be engaged in the evaluation of the projects, as Action Researchers. If evaluation is carried out throughout the process and involves the project workers as part of the evaluation team, amendments can be made to improve the programme. With an approach of this kind it is less likely that the data collected will be left unread on the shelves, rather it will be used to produce more effective early childhood education programmes.

5.0 Summary

In this unit we have learnt indicators of quality for evaluation. These indicators include among others:

- Learning Activities
- Environment
- Assessment of children and learning outcomes
- Indicators of quality for staff
- Indicators of quality from family/community perspectives
- Indicators of quality from a financial perspective

6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment

In curriculum evaluation what are the indicators of quality from a family/community perspectives?

7.0 References

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