



TEACHING AND EVALUATION
IN REGULAR AND
SPECIAL SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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Creative and Effective Teaching of Health Education in Schools

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Introduction

The hallmark of creative thinking is conceiving of something new or generating new ideas. Creative activity is an effort directed at making a change of significance in any aspect of human undertaking. Creative teaching is the use of newly evolved methods and techniques in the act of effectively imparting knowledge to students.

Naturally, any new thing brings with it excitement and renewed interest. This is perhaps why scholars, subject associations and technocrats in government and non-governmental agencies are at all times searching for new teaching methods that will enhance students' ability to learn easier and better. Education in Nigeria is an instrument "*per excellence*" for effecting national development (NERDC, 2004). Health education is an integral part of total education. It is concerned with the provision of health knowledge, stimulating of appropriate attitude and practice which enables recipients to stay healthy and thereby play a meaningful part in the development of the community to which he or she belongs. Health education is a teaching subject in primary and secondary schools curricular in Nigeria.

Creative methods of teaching abound through the frantic efforts of researchers and scholars in education, but the adoption of these methods of teaching into health education have not been fully realized. This is largely due to the fact that most teachers are still deficient in the knowledge of their applicability.

Some creative methods of teaching and their applicability to health education are examined. Also, techniques available for use in adopting any of the methods are explained.

Concept of Health Education

Health education is all planned programme of activities carried out to help people improve their quality of life. It also involves the use of knowledge acquired from basic and applied sciences to educate people to improve their practices for effective living. It is a process with intellectual, psychological and social dimensions relating to activities which increase the abilities of people to make informed decisions affecting their personal, family and community well-being (Park, 2002).

Wass (1995) while quoting Green and Kreuter(1991) defined health education as any combination of learning experiences designed to facilitate voluntary actions conducive to health. It involves teaching individuals, families and communities what to do to be healthy and avoid illness.

Health education can take place within the school, home, hospital, industries, market places and so give room for different forms of health education such as school health education, community health education, public health education, industrial health education, and patient health education.

Moronkola (1999) observed the following as the aims of health education: To instill in people the need for healthy life for quality living that will ensure high productivity, to teach people how to take care of their personal and community health, to change people's negative attitude towards health to positive ones, to encourage people to use available health services to make people see the need for preventing diseases rather than spending more money on treatment, to encourage people to continue with their local ways of life that promote health. Ajisafe (1980) categorized the objectives of health education into two: those which are fundamental and can be attained as a result of instruction, and secondly, those which

may be achieved by the individual but which reflect attitudes, practices and personal behaviour which are difficult to measure and which may or may not be the goal of all.

Primary and Secondary Schools Educational Objectives

Schools prepare citizens for general and specific roles in the society. The general roles are for people to be a law abiding and patriotic citizen: while specific roles include engaging in a profession and maintaining a family. Each school and level of school train different categories of graduates due to the knowledge they are exposed to as well as the environment in which the teaching-learning situation takes place.

According to the National Policy of Education (2004) primary education is education given in an institution for children aged normally 6 to 11 and it is the basics and key to the success or failure of the whole educational system with the following objectives:

- a. Inculcation of permanent numeracy and the ability to communicate effectively.
- b. Laying a sound basis for scientific and reflective thinking.
- c. Giving citizenship education as a basis for effective participation in and contribution to the life of the society.
- d. Mould the character and moral training and development of sound attitudes.
- e. Develop in the child the ability to adapt to the child's changing environment.
- f. Give the child opportunities for developing manipulative skills that will enable him to function effectively in the society within the limits of his capacity.
- g. Provide the basic tools for further educational advancement, including preparation for trades and crafts of the locality.

The policy also stated that secondary education is a form of education which children receive after primary education and before the tertiary stage with the following aims and objectives:

- a. Preparation for higher education through provision of increasing number of primary school pupils irrespective of sex or social, religion and ethnic background.
- b. Diversifying its curriculum to cater for the differences in talents, opportunities and roles possessed by or open to students after their secondary school course.
- c. Equipping students to live effectively in our modern age of science and technology.
- d. Developing and projecting Nigerian culture, art and language as well as the world's cultural heritage.
- e. Producing a generation of people who can think for themselves, respect the views and feelings of others, respect the dignity of labour, and appreciate those values specified under our broad national aims, and live as a good citizen.
- f. Fostering Nigerian unity with an emphasis on the common ties that unite us in our diversity.
- g. Inspiring its students with a desire for achievement and self improvement both at school and in later life.

Health education and its relevance to children in schools

It is imperative for students to be taught health education in schools because of the following identified reasons:

- i. Present health practice is poor, data from many developing countries revealed that a great majority of children are not healthy as they should be. Much of this unfitness is brought about by unhygienic modes of living. Similarly the records of hospitals, clinics and private practitioners of medicine revealed departures from health that have been produced as a result of unsound health practices. Again, the study of communicable diseases constantly reveals the spread of disease as a result of unhygienic habits.

- ii. Technological advancement has produced new and complex conditions which require that children and their parents must learn to adjust their mode of living. Encircled by the complexities of modern living, the child is often led by the environment in the wrong direction. He/she eats the wrong kinds of food and he often eats too much and engages in too little exercise.
- iii. Superstitious beliefs about many diseases have led to the development of hygienic practices. There are areas in the world where it is traditionally assumed that diseases are invoked on people by a god or goddess. It is also believed in certain communities that if someone offends another person the offender can be punished with sickness invoked on him. Furthermore, the method of treatment of such diseases is usually most unhygienic.
- iv. The traditional attitude towards illness which prevents people from making adequate use of physician and at times seeking advice from medical quacks has resulted in incalculable damage done to many lives. Children need health education to caution them against pitfalls of medicine received at the hands of untrained doctors.
- v. Health practices are better started at childhood.
- vi. There are many children with background of different health practices. Children should know the good and the bad so that they would not be easily influenced by peers.
- vii. Many homes do not have time to teach health related matters to children.
- viii. It improves directly or indirectly health status of the pupils, since good health status enables one to perform better. It is a known fact that healthy children will perform better in their academic endeavour.
- ix. Teachers are more current in health issues than many parents and so can make the children to keep pace with increase in medical science knowledge. Teachers also function in detecting unwholesome health practices and

abnormalities of health in students. e.g. squeezing of eyes or inability to see near or far objects or hear sounds. Such deviances are reported to hospital for medical attention. Students can in this way continue to enjoy good health

Teaching Methods in Health Education

Pedagogy is used to mean study of teaching methods. Teaching is the act of imparting knowledge. Health Education seeks to teach health topics that will improve the students' knowledge for good health attitude and practices.

Health instruction at school can be carried out in many different ways such as; (i) classroom, dining room, play ground and elsewhere in the school premises. (ii) As separate lesson from time to time on specific aspects of health; (iii) As part of integrated work on various topics (iv) As a separate subject and (v) as a subject taught along with another subject.

Udoh, Fawole, Ajala, Okafor and Nwana (1999) stated that health instruction can be incorporated into the school curriculum through any of the following processes (i) the psychological (teachable moment) or incidental plan in which the teacher takes the advantage of the teachable moment as they arise. Such moments may arise from an accident, a national disaster or events such as flood or health drive (ii) the integrated plan in which the teacher focuses on a specific health problem in all subject matter areas (iii) The corroborated plan which provides for the development of health units within several subjects areas (iv) the specific health course or direct health teaching plan in which health topics are taught as a separate subject or course for a term, a semester or a year; or as a definite block of time appropriately placed and spaced to give continuity and sequence to health teaching.

Health Education like any other subjects in schools curriculum can be taught using many methods of teaching. Seweje (2010) corroborated this when he said that various

methods can be used in health education. Some of the methods suitable for teaching health education include.

(i) *Lecture Method*

It is traditionally employed as a standard teaching method because of its economy. It is quite useful in attending to a large group of students, and enables the teacher to be flexible and spontaneous in his/her approach to the lesson. In lecture method, the lecturer may ask questions from learners and learners may ask questions from the lecturer which in turn provide the teacher the necessary feedback that enables him adapt lecture to the needs of learner. However, critics of this method have pointed out that; (i) it makes learning passive to students (ii) promotes self restraint on the part of the learners. (iii) teachers are usually over domineering, and (iv) lecture method is not appropriate for small children who may find it difficult to comprehend elaborate speeches however graphic or lucid. Frequent use of the lecture methods without modification can be too demanding on the students and hence counter productive (Nwosu, 1984)

(ii) *Project Method*

It is a method of teaching in which learner's interest can be greatly aroused. The project should be so conceived that the students are deeply involved in the planning and organisation of the project. He is expected to discover facts. He/she should have access to adequate information source. The project should make specific contributions to knowledge in the form of a report or a piece of equipment. Projects can be very rewarding in terms of achieving behavioural objectives as it demands knowledge, understanding, discussion and cooperation, analysis, synthesis, experiment and evaluation.

(iii) *Assignment and Discussion*

Seweje (2010) quoting Mills (1982) observed that a lecture room is linked to a market of ideas, where experience and ideas are actively exchanged. The teacher should not monopolize the market or devalue the contributions of others. By assignment and discussion, ideas are collected and pooled by both the teachers and students. This becomes a challenge that calls for efforts and initiatives. This may involve experiment, handling of samples, making things, observation of films, use of library e t c., thereafter, a discussion is held. This method, if skillfully handed, can be of great and lasting value as it ensures: active participation of the class and encourages initiative and the spirit of inquiry. This method is useful in motivating students and is particularly valuable in changing attitudes through participation in group discussion.

(iv) *Demonstration Method*

It plays a prominent part in the professional development of teachers especially health education teacher as the interest of large group of students can be aroused. However, a good demonstration requires a great deal of time and effort for proper presentation. Some demonstrations suffer from a too rapid sequence of events – something new happening before the proceeding points is assimilated and there is a danger that a demonstration may display several features simultaneously and a person can watch only one thing at a time.

(iv) *Discovery or Inquiry Method*

The ability of a student to discover things for himself or herself is important in the sciences. This method is a teaching style where a learner seeks to discover solution to a given problem through a rigorous search. Discovery can be done under intense guidance of a teacher or without the guidance of a teacher. The guided type allows the learner free choice

investigation on choice of problem, method to use and solution. Steps involved in discovery method include;

- i. Defining the problem.
- ii. Formulating hypothesis.
- iii. Gathering data.
- iv. Analysis of data.
- v. Reporting findings.
- vi. Drawing conclusion.
- vii. Generalizing of findings.

Inquiry Method can be used when a lesson requires that student should make a search. Examples of a content area in health education in which the method can be used are , causes and consequences of teenage pregnancy, psycho-social causes of drug abuse and causes and prevalence of child mortality in urban areas.

The roles of a teacher in the method include that of planner, facilitator, questioner, and sustainer of inquiry. He/she is a manager and evaluator.

This methods allows the learner to be active receiver who is actively involved in thinking critically, seeking, discovering, re-organizing, testing information and drawing conclusion. Also it attempts to use content areas in health education to solve identified health problem of the society. However, the method can be time consuming.

(vi) Investigative/Laboratory Method:

Health education is an applied science subject; therefore some of the activities involved in health education can be carried out in the laboratories. Olagunju, (2002) explained laboratory method as an activity carried out for the purpose of making personal observations of processes, products or events. Essentially, the method is used to ascertain the veracity of certain claims, proposition, principle or theory. It can also be valuable in determining cause-and-effect relationship in health education. Laboratory extents to field outside such as hospitals,

geriatric home, rehabilitation centers, family planning clinic, directly observed treatment short- course centers and convalescence homes.

The use of laboratory methods is effective as it develop in students the ability to observe, infer classify, measure and interpret data. However, the method is both time and material consuming.

Effective use of laboratory methods no doubt requires the expertise of a teacher. The teacher prepared ahead of laboratory exercise as well as ensures the following;

- (i) Preparation of guidelines in the form of instructions. This should be self-explanatory enough for students to comprehend and use during the exercise.
- (ii) The students are grouped in order to allow for management and thorough supervision. It must be noted that laboratory work requires that teachers pay attention to individual students.
- (iii) The selection of specific concept for investigation. The teacher must ensure that the concept selected can be investigated within the time allocated to the lesson on the timetable.
- (iv) Provision is made for worksheet to record students' observations on the concept in question.
- (v) Ensure quick feedback to the students as this will encourage them the more to learn.

Techniques of Teaching Health Education

In health education, various techniques can be used in adopting any of the teaching methods available. These are:

(i) *Concept mapping*

A concept may be thought of as a construct. It is a directly conceived object of thought. In health education concept is referred to as basic principles, basic theme, fundamental tenet or broad image.

Concept mapping is a teaching approach that involves the breaking down of contents using concept maps. It involves

the listing and arrangement of the main ideas/ concepts and words that are important keys to the understanding of the entire subject structure in a hierarchy with the most general or abstract concepts on top and the specific, more concrete concepts are lower down in the hierarchy. (Tunde, 2004)

The illustration of concept structure in health education is presented as follows. The top inclusive concepts could be "Nutrition is the science of how food is provided, processed, handled, sold, prepared, stored, eaten, and how the food is digested, absorbed and utilized. The second step concept could be "Food is a chemical mixture of complex substances that include carbohydrates, protein, fats, vitamins, mineral and water". The listed substances are also called nutrients. The next level is "Adequate nutrients means intake of food in reasonable balance ratio that will include all required nutrients in order to meet the health needs of the body. Healthy growth and development as well as increase in levels of performance at school depend on adequate supply of good nutrients. Good nutrition is a function of availability of food and informed choice. It is hoped that a student who incorporates concepts such as the ones illustrated above into his/her attitude and practice will have a health education that is adequate and lasting.

(ii) *Enter-educate*

It is a technique of educating people on health issues in order to create favourable attitudes for eventual health behaviour change through the means of entertainment. It has been documented that radio and television soap operas, popular music, street theatres are used to educate the public about such health issues as family planning, HIV/AIDS prevention, environmental health , female equality, improved, sanitation and female genital mutilation (Rogers, 2000).

Enter- educate allows audience to see positive and negative role models of health related behaviour, Enter-education is well articulated for public health education purpose. However, in order to make use of the techniques for

classroom teaching purpose health education teacher can incorporate such activities like story telling, class performance and use of class-mates puppets in health dramas.

(iii) *Value clarification*

This is a teaching technique designed to help student answer some of the confusing and often conflicting question about individual sense of identity. It helps students engage in critical thinking and self-analysis before the formation of personal value on the issue at hand. In this wise, students are encouraged to acquire skills to clarify themselves of the conflict and base their health behaviour on their value position.

The use of this technique involves ranking, classifying responses and conducting public interview. In order to make the best use of this technique, the teacher should provide guidance in the following specific areas

- i. Identify issue of relevance.
- ii. Consideration of issue from different perspectives.
- iii. Consideration of alternative plans on the issue.
- iv. Collection and organization of facts concerning the issue.
- v. Assessment and clarification of all collected facts on the issue
- vi. Choosing among all the alternative values.
- vii. The use of the value chosen in taking decision on the issue.

Effective Teaching of Health Education

Human activity that produces intended outcome is said to be effective. Learning is the main goal a teacher is set to achieve in learner after teaching. Effective teaching means that learners are adequately engaged throughout a lesson period with activities that are crucial to learning. Learning activities in this context include listening, thinking, writing, drawing and observing. It therefore means that in order for learning to take place, greater attention of the learner is required. In order for the teacher to gain the attention of the learner for greater part of the lesson period the following can be of immense assistance.

(i) *Teacher's demeanour*

The comportment of the teacher to a large extent could assist him/her to play a higher role as a facilitator of learning. The appearance, attitude and behaviour must be professional. A teacher must refrain from introducing such peculiar mannerism of dress, speech and movement during lesson in order not to distract the attention of the students. A teacher must have a good mastery of his/her subject matter and this must be well demonstrated in classroom so that learner can have confidence in him/her and command their respect.

(ii) *Methods and materials*

Methods make a lesson more organized, orderly and systematic. The choice of method must be based on age, sex, and interest of learners as well as the topic. Teaching aids when appropriately chosen and used encourage the learner to participate in the lesson.

(iii) *Time management*

Specific time is always allotted to each lesson on the school timetable. The teacher must therefore plan his/her lesson to be accommodated within the time schedule. In other words a teacher must start and end lesson within the time limit on the timetable. This will allow the learner to view the lesson as a whole and form his/her opinion on the subject matter.

(iv). *Quantity and quality of subject matter*

The subject matter must contain enough materials for students to learn. The teacher should avoid presenting so many facts in a lesson so as not to leave the students confused. The topic must not be too narrow and dry. The topic must be concise and presentation precise to allow the teacher to enlist the attention of the students.

(v). *Classroom environment*

Learning environments must be stimulating for effective teaching and learning to take place. There must be adequate space for the teacher to move about and demonstrate. Students must be comfortable while sitting to listen to lesson being delivered. A calm and peaceful environment aid easy communication between the teacher and students.

Conclusion

Teaching is the process of helping another person to learn. Teaching is effective only when knowledge has been imparted in another individual. Introducing new dimension into the delivery of instruction, arouses the interest of students. A variety of methods are available and more are still being discovered. In using any of the methods, some techniques can also be adopted. Teachers should as a matter of duty attend seminars and conferences as this will enable them to be acquainted with recent developments in the art of teaching.

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