



DEPARTMENT OF SPECIAL EDUCATION  
UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN, IBADAN, NIGERIA

# DYNAMICS OF SPECIAL EDUCATION PRACTICE

*In Honour of*  
PROFESSOR MOJI OYEBOLA

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# Dynamics of Special Education Practice

A book of Readings in Honour of  
Professor Moji Oyebola

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### CHAPTER 1

Assessment of Challenges Facing Children with Special Needs in Oyo State, Nigeria - **Joseph Olusola Fehintola Ph.D** 1

### CHAPTER 2

Developmental Aphasia; Assessment, Diagnosis and Management Options - **Uloaku, N. Okoro and Lawal, Ahmed Olaitan** 12

### CHAPTER 3

Counselling Children with Special Needs: The Role of the Special Education Counsellor - **S. N. Ubani Ph.D and Osuagwu C. E** 30

### CHAPTER 4

Social Integration and Social Support as Predictors of Quality of Life of Adults with Hearing Impairment in Oyo State, Nigeria - **Amaize, Sunday Omoikhudu and Oyewumi, Adebomi M. Ph.D** 50

### CHAPTER 5

Impact of Visual Impairment on Learning and Social Life of Persons with Visual Impairment - **Sunday Abodunrin Ph.D** 68

### CHAPTER 6

Facilitating the Learning Process of Children with Intellectual Disability Using Assistive Technology Devices - **Udeme Samuel Jacob** 82

### CHAPTER 7

Suicidal Ideation and the High Ability Learners - **Fakolade, O.A Ph.D. and Olajide Teniola Julianah** 94

### CHAPTER 8

Educating Creatively Gifted Students in Ibadan Metropolis - **G.A. Adelodun Ph.D and A.B. Asiru** 99

## **CHAPTER 9**

Inclusive Education within Early Childhood Development -  
**Gifty Nana Yaa Rockson & Sesi Collins Akotey** 112

## **CHAPTER 10**

Effect of Scaffolding Instruction and Social Stories on the Social Skills of Children with Moderate Intellectual Disability in Ibadan, Oyo State. - **Oyundoyin, J.O. Ph.D and Musa, Aminat Oiza** 125

## **CHAPTER 11**

Inclusive Education and Sexual Diversity Among Learners -  
**RabiAbbu-Sadat** 142

## **CHAPTER 12**

Sustainability Programmes and Disability: The Case of Persons with Disabilities in Nigeria  
- **Adebiyi, Benedictus Adekunle, Ph.D and Archibong, I.E. Ph.D** 153

## **CHAPTER 13**

Effect of Token Reinforcement and Storytelling on Listening Skills of Pupils with Intellectual Disability in Selected Schools in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria - **Esther O. Oyefeso(Ph.D) and Aremu, Omodolapo C.** 162

## **CHAPTER 14**

Gender, Age, Peer Pressure and Creative Ability of Selected Secondary School Students in Ibadan, Oyo State - **Mitchell N. Amaechi, Ikechukwu A. Nwazuoke Ph.D., Onyinyechi B. Ezeanochie Ph.D. and Oduwole J. Babatunde Ph.D.** 172

## **CHAPTER 15**

Achieving Sustainable Development Goal on Education For Persons with Disabilities in Nigeria: The Place of Second Chance Education Programme - **Adeleke Owoade Philip Ph.D** 188

## **CHAPTER 16**

Stress among The Caregivers of Persons with Intellectual Disability in Nigeria. - **Gafaar A. Salami Ph.D** 199

## **CHAPTER 17**

The Significance of Early Intervention For Language Development of Children with Hearing Impairment - **Aderibigbe Samson Akinwumi Ph.D**

207

## **CHAPTER 18**

Educating Persons with Special Needs in The 21st Century through Appropriate Educational Programmes for Relevance and Development in Nigeria - **Isaiah, O.O. Ph.D. and Lazarus, K.U. Ph.D.**

216

## **CHAPTER 19**

Governance as a Strategic Option for Improved Performance within The Nigerian Educational System - **Ogundoro Elijah Olufemi, Akinwumi Femi Sunday Ph.D and Akinyemi Olukemi Yetunde Ph.D**

223

## **CHAPTER 20**

Effect of Prompted Speech in Facilitating Speech Acquisition in Children with Nonverbal Autism in Ibadan, Nigeria - **Abiodun T. Adewunmi Ph.D, Kayode Emmanuel Orisajuyigbe and Bukola Oluwatoyin Hammed**

241

## **CHAPTER 21**

Promoting Disability Friendly Community: Implications For Health Promotion In Nigeria - **Olajide, O. E., Ph.D**

250

## **CHAPTER 22**

Therapeutic Considerations for Individuals with Communication Difficulties and Co-morbid Challenges - **Ayo Osisanya, Ph.D**

260

## **CHAPTER 23**

Modifying Attitudinal Barriers to Create Opportunities for People with Special Needs - **Bolaji, Y. O. Ph.D and Adeosun, M.A. (Mrs.)**

277

## **CHAPTER 24**

Safe Practices in The Teaching of Practical Concepts in Physical Education: Challenges and Intervention - **A. O. Fadoju Ph.D and Mr. M. A. Balogun**

286

## **CHAPTER 25**

Digital Literacy Skills And Media Resource Utilisation as Predictors of Lecturers' Productivity in The State-owned Polytechnics in Southwestern Nigeria. - **A. O. Egunjobi Ph.D. and O. A. Adebayo** 296

## **CHAPTER 26**

Prevalence of Risk Factors and Posttraumatic Stress Disorder among Economically Disadvantaged Pregnant Women in Egbeda Local Government Area, Oyo State. -  
**M. S. Eniola Ph.D and Afusat Olanike Busari, Ph.D.** 320

## **CHAPTER 27**

The Need for Adaptive Physical and Health Education to Promote Inclusive Education among Pupils with Intellectual Disabilities -  
**Olubukola Christiana Dada and Adegoke Oladipe Olaniyan** 340

## **CHAPTER 28**

Educating Children with Special Needs in The 21st Century for Development: A Case for Inclusive Education - **Komolafe, Adebayo Francis Ph.D** 351

## **CHAPTER 29**

Psychosocial Adjustment to Blindness - **Edozie, Isioma Sitamalife** 368

## **CHAPTER 30**

Self-esteem as a Predictor of Academic Achievement of Students with Learning Disabilities in Ilorin West Local Government Area, Kwara State - **Adedayo Adesokan (Ph.D) and Rasheed Alaro Adewale Hamzat** 372

## **CHAPTER 31**

Parenting Styles and Self-esteem as Predictors of Anxiety Disorders of Adolescents with Hearing Impairment  
- **Ogunwale Oluwatoyin Racheal and Adebomi Oyewumi Ph.D** 385

## CHAPTER 8

### EDUCATING CREATIVELY GIFTED STUDENTS IN IBADAN METROPOLIS

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#### **Abstract**

Numerous problems confronting the human race require creative interventions in order to make living conditions meaningful, comfortable and impactful. Creative solutions are significantly of utmost necessity because rigours of diverse kinds are meant to be reduced to the barest minimum. However, gifted students whose innovative endowments are expected to be exploited to advantage are uncatered for in Nigerian schools, most especially in Ibadan Metropolis. The creatively gifted students' potentially inventive prowess has not been put to expression simply because appropriate educational or instructional strategies have not been professionally adopted by the school system. The children need differentiated learning experiences and activities, which include brainstorming, bibliotherapy, questioning/lateral thinking approach, synectics, ability grouping, independent study among a host of other techniques. The teacher and resource person who facilitates the education of the children has some pedagogical roles to play to be able to handle the children effectively. The teacher should utilize the recommended instructional strategies to achieve the desired result among the students. The teacher is expected to adopt such instructional packages to meet the learning needs, styles and abilities of creatively gifted students. By virtue of such enrichment, the students can explore their creative instincts.

**Keywords:** Education, Creativity, Gifted Students, Instructional Strategies.

## **Introduction**

Human capital development has informed the need for education reforms, especially the valuable aspect. Human capital development is connected to raising the population of skilled, educated and experienced individuals for regional and national development (Ibe, 2008). More often, human capital development or formation commences at early stages of life for the purpose of discovering creative ideas and innovations in children, which are hoped to be harnessed and utilized for national benefits. A host of children whose creative tendencies distinguish them in our schools are referred to as creatively gifted students. These learners are characterized as having new ideas and expression that can be used to address diverse problems confronting a community such as Ibadan Metropolis. However, Primary and Secondary schools in Ibadan have not been able to cater for the needs of these unique learners in terms of educational provision. The foregoing suggests that innate intelligence, self-motivation and creative behaviour of gifted individuals are engendered in an environment appropriate for them. Both physical and psychological environments should be organized in such a way that the learning needs, styles and abilities of the learners will be catered for in both government owned and privately owned schools in Ibadan Metropolis. Hence, the needs of creatively gifted children and how schools can meet those needs are of utmost importance to all stakeholders in this direction.

Creatively gifted children display exceptional levels of creativity. These children might have developed some gifts and talents. A situation where the learners talents or gifts are apparent but not recognized by current educational provisions as schools in Ibadan Metropolis inadvertently ignore creatively gifted children's special needs. However, there are kinds of programmes that best meet the unique needs of this set of gifted students. Such educational programmes satisfy and challenge the creative curiosity in the children. Gifted children noted for creative behaviour are uniquely different from the entire group. The children's creative abilities or tendencies set them apart from non-creative ones. As remarked by Uyanwa and Aikomo (2004), creatively gifted students have a lot of distinctive features in considering them along other gifted individuals. There is always the likelihood of falsely assuming that



individual differences among all gifted children are small. There are many differences between one highly gifted individual and the other. As such differences exist between highly gifted children so also between two creatively gifted children. Generally, creatively gifted children may be more adventurous, act or prefer to handle projects independently. Some of these learners are curious, spontaneous, flexible, sensitive, intuitive and insightful. They have little tolerance for boredom and may also have a sense of humour and have more original ideas (Ozaji, Nnachukwu and Kolo, 2016).

Creatively gifted children are in various school settings in Ibadan Metropolis with latent abilities awaiting expression. These students need exposure, skill development and curriculums that challenge their emerging gifts and talents. These learners require exposure to opportunities to express their creative skills. It is on the basis of creative skills manifestation that assessment and appropriate differentiation for the needs of the individuals can be devised. It follows that creatively gifted students are to receive an appropriate level of creative challenges sequel to readily available test administration in schools in Ibadan. Creatively gifted children in all domains tend to display the ability to find problems, visualize, think logically, evaluate, analyse, synthesize, transform, regress, extend boundaries, use intuition, predict outcomes, resist premature closure, use concentration, use logical and aesthetic thinking and tackle problems and situations playfully (Davis, Rimm and Siegle, 2011). These children have complexity of personality, curiosity, interest in what things are like and how they work and a fluid of attention that constantly processes, what is going on around them. The children also enjoy the process of creation for its own sake.

In a similar development, Ozaji, Nnachukwu and Kolo (2016) highlighted the following as creativity characteristics, exhibited by gifted children:

- Display of much curiosity about many things;
- Being adventurous and always ready to take risks;
- Producing many ideas and solutions to problems;
- Expressing opinions fearlessly;
- Referring to adapt, improve or modify things to make the work better;
- Having a keen sense of humour;
- Revealing high feelings sincerely;

- Being attracted to things beautiful or orderly and
- Not worrying about being different.

Ajuxtaposition of the above tenets among creatively gifted children buttresses the fact that the creative instincts or endowments should be expressed towards addressing diverse problems in Ibadan Metropolis. There are many problems confronting every community. And these challenges require creative interventions in order to make living conditions meaningful and comfortable. Expressing views on the characteristics of creatively gifted children, Adelodun (2011) quoted Nwazuoke (1989) as saying that the children possess above average intelligence, ideational fluency, discriminating observation, ability to synthesize disparate ideas, cognitive flexibility and production of unusual but appropriate ideas.

Research into the productively creative personality has indicated intelligence as one of the major characteristics of gifted individuals. Creatively gifted learners are intelligent. However, simonton (2013) argued that there is no correlation between creativity and intelligence because some non-creative persons may be of high intelligence. Originality is another feature of the children. Gifted children who exhibit creative behaviour are characterized as having original ideas for problem solving. Originality of ideas as expressed by the children distinguishes them among the population of schoolchildren. Curiosity is also a quintessential tenet of children known for creative tendencies. These children are inquisitive. They ask divergent and convergent questions. They explore their areas of interest and they tend to be stable in their search for facts and figures. Additionally, the children equally display a high level of courage in the face of problem solving, criticism, ridicule and absence of reward. Courage is the propelling force that enables the children to engage in any problem solving session which also sustains them.

Gifted individuals exhibit perceptive ability as well as attitude. The children are perceptive. They are open to novel ideas and experience both of inner self and outer world. Their perceptive attitude is displayed via hobby and exploration of interest. Resilience in the face of problem tackling with the intention to bring about novel solution remains task commitment on the part of the children. The children have a preference for the unfinished, the disordered as well as the complex which involves them

an urge to discover underlying principles of events and phenomenon. Creatively gifted children think meticulously. The children are usually willing to delay judgment until adequate facts about a problem have been gathered. Therefore, the thinking process of these individual children is usually slow, cautious, inductive and reasonably logical. Precocious children possess attitudinal/behavioural independence. The children are not usually restrained and inhibited in the exhibition of their attitude and behaviour. They are independent and autonomous in relation to self-emotion.

### **Significance of Creativity**

Creativity has led many cultures and societies to advancement economically and technologically. It is an instrument to use for making needed progress in any society. Creativity has become a key factor for a wide range of productive activities in many economies. Many problems people are being faced with today ranging from political tussles, bad leadership, starvation, natural disasters to economic issues require creative solutions. Specific problems associated with Ibadan Metropolis such as financial incapability, inadequate manpower and welfare, poor provision of health services, poor equipment maintenance, crude waste disposal and unplanned city structures (Omolawal and Shittu, 2016), housing problems occasioned by urbanization (Popoola, Tawose, Abatan, Adeleye, Jiyan, and Majolagbe, 2015), health problems and associated risk factors (Abegunde and Owoaje, 2007), unemployment and poverty, road network problem, inadequate provision of basic infrastructure and social services, water and electricity supply (Adelekan, 2019) all need creative interventions. In addressing the above problems, education offered in the city should be looked into with a view to identifying students who have potential creative abilities for them to channel such to solving the problems identified above.

Gifted students equally benefit from creativity. For instance, creativity affords them the opportunity to connect personally with content area. Because of its demand on individual thinking, imagining and analyzing, gifted students immediately become more engaged. Their feelings, interests and intuitions play a central role in their learning. Originality and individuality are expressed by the students as well. The importance of self-expression for gifted students – discovering their own unique abilities, views, interests and so forth – can never be overestimated. Gifted children need time and opportunities to explore their individual

talent, style and vision.

Because of the wide range of processes and materials employed, creativity can more accommodate differences in learning styles as well as socio-economic and cultural backgrounds. Combining media such as text, art, graphs, drama, design, photography, tools and subjects such as Mathematics, Art, Geography, Architecture provides a far richer, more interconnected world for gifted students to make creative leaps (Hennesey, 2004).

### **Educational Strategies for Creatively Gifted Students**

In making educational provisions for creatively gifted children, the school needs to respect creative abilities of these learners. The teacher should put into consideration an environment that allows for the children's questions, inquiries, searches, manipulations, experimentations as well as idiosyncrasies. The following strategies are to be adopted by the teacher in meeting the educational needs, styles and curiosity of the children:

Brainstorming is an educational approach for the creatively gifted children. The teacher is to reiterate, during class session, that a problem may have diverse approaches to solving it. The teacher may require the pupils to indicate various ways of addressing a particular problem. As a strategy or technique, the teacher poses questions that come in the form of debate which is argumentative in nature. It is imperative that the teacher clarifies that no student, during a brainstorming session, is permitted to be judgmental to the idea of other student(s). According to Nyanwa and Aikomo (2004), the composition of the group of creatively gifted children should be between an odd number of any form. The reason is to avoid the possibility of a tie especially in certain decision-making process.

Bibliotherapy is also an instructional strategy for the creatively gifted children. The technique consists of providing well-chosen books to the children to crease self-knowledge and self-esteem and find relief from personal conflicts. Bibliotherapy assists the children in thinking constructively and positively. It increases their levels of abstraction. It should be remarked that selecting books for the children must be meticulously done to meet the needs, interest and ability levels of the students. According to Pehrsson and McMillien (2007), bibliotherapy is effective in promoting problem solving, increasing comparison, developing empathetic understanding and enhancing self-awareness.

Questioning refers to use of interrogative devices that can help the

children explore their inquisitiveness. The teacher could use questioning as a tool to develop creative behaviour in the children the more. Such open-ended and closed-ended questions raise curiosity of the children. Open-ended questions call for a variety of answers and encourage the development of divergent thinking, while close-ended ones have fixed answers. Godwin (2018) noted that effective questioning requires advancing preparation and such a teaching strategy is used for the students to engage them, in order to seek opinions, encourage creative and critical thinking or help them see other ways of thinking. Lateral thinking is related to questioning. The difference is that in lateral thinking, the teacher guides the creatively gifted children to adopt many tracks of thinking in approaching a problem. The teacher encourages lateral thinking (track of thinking involving many lines) among the children so that they will be able to diversify in their quest for problem solving (Nwazuoke, 1994).

Synectics is another useful technique the teacher can employ to enhance creativity in gifted children. Nwazuoke (1996) remarked that the technique revolves around making strange familiar and familiar strange. The procedure involves analysis, generalization and model seeking or analogy. Synectics resembles brainstorming in the sense that both of them promote ideational fluency in the children. The difference is that in synectics, some period is devoted to searching and understanding all aspects of the problems. This is called analysis followed by generalization. From generalization point, the idea or concept which is now understood becomes a known model. This manner the strange is made familiar and the familiar strange. For example, the structure of the eye (a new idea) when compared to a model of the bulb (a known idea) is better understood. Through synectics the children gain new concepts by relating new and strange things to familiar. Synectics is a way of enhancing creativity through looking at things that are familiar in new ways.

Ability grouping is a provision that allows creatively gifted children to be grouped on the basis of specific interest areas. Children who show creative tendencies towards nature, electrical application or abstraction should be grouped together in accordance with their mental abilities for the purpose of challenging one another in such groups. The teacher should be a facilitator of events in these groups, whereas independent study can be approached while the children are grouped on the basis of their mental abilities (Kerchhoff, 2006).

Independent study approach involves not only the exploration of a

topic of interest in details. The product of which must be original and disseminated to an appropriate audience. The teacher should guide the children in selecting a topic, framing the problem and establishing realistic goals and timeline. The specific role of the teacher is to ensure a novel product from the individual student. This approach is a reliable means of meeting the educational needs of creatively gifted children (Powers, 2008).

Resource room technique has been proved useful and helpful to gifted children, because the provision of resource rooms also serves as an instructional strategy for creatively gifted children. A resource room is a designated apartment where special materials are housed for educational purposes. Normally, resource rooms are used to enrich the school programmes and a minimum amount of time is allowed for participation after which the child returns to his regular classroom. Resource room use is beneficial to creatively gifted individuals because educational materials beyond those available in the classroom are available for the children to consult. Such textual materials include atlases, school-related dictionaries, encyclopedia, periodical indexes, bibliographical references, data-based information, softwares such as robotics on school subjects and topics of interest (Nyanwa and Aikomo, 2004).

### **Some Strategies for Promoting Creativity Among Gifted Students**

Teachers of the gifted can adopt the following strategies in promoting the creative behaviour of their pupils based on the recommendation by Denhard (2008):

Ask and Guess Tests is a situation in which gifted students are shown a picture and required to write as many questions as possible and list all possible causes of the situation depicted. For the students to explore various possibilities, the teacher affords them the opportunity to have enough time to gaze such a picture. The picture of a fallen student could be given to the students in which they are required to raise a host of reasons that can be adduced for the fall of the boy in the picture. Such reasons should also be in sequential order as the interlocutors may be asked to state their points within a given timeline.

Production Improvement Task is a session in which the students are asked to think of all the ways to make a game more interesting. In such a task, the game of football could be specified for the students. The teacher could ask the students to generate a list of points to make football more appealing to

spectators. He/she could make them explore areas of interest as such would enable them to feel at home while raising possibilities,

Unusual Uses of Task involve the students being asked to imagine as many interesting and novel uses for a brick, a tin can, paper chip or a leather belt. The learners could be guided by providing relia of each of these objects such that reasoning can be enhanced.

Just Suppose Task is an activity in which the students are required to examine a crowd at ground level so that only people's feet are visible or to imagine clouds with strings reaching down the earth and to decide what would happen if one climbed the strings. The use of video tape is necessary at this juncture. A scene that describes such Just Suppose Task could be played for the learners to watch. It would be of tremendous assistance in helping them suggest useful ideas.

Incomplete Figure Task is a line of duty in which the students add as many imaginative details as possible to complete the picture. This task is specifically designed for individual creatively gifted students who display artistic excellence in class.

### **Specific Roles of the Teacher in the Education of Creatively Gifted Students**

According to American Psychological Association, Centre for Psychology in Schools (2007), the following are specific overall functions of the teacher in the educational attainment of creatively gifted children:

The teacher can foster the students' beliefs that their intelligence and ability can be developed through effort and experience that foster higher motivation, aspirations and achievement. There are a variety of ways in which the teacher can support the support. The teacher should give a sense of control over their children's learning process by using such strategies as problem-based and discovery learning and independent study can promote several kinds of outcomes simultaneously, collaboration, problem solving and flexible thinking.

The teacher is instrumental in assessing what creatively gifted learners already know and providing them with opportunities to learn new materials, challenge misconceptions and acquire new skills. To determine the academic readiness of the children, the teacher should administer preassessments which can take a variety of formats such as quizzes, performance tasks, production of concept maps among others.

The teacher should not assume that age or grade is the best

determinant of what his or her students are capable of learning when making decisions about material(s) to present to them, particularly for students with advanced abilities or achievement levels. Instead, the teacher should evaluate his/her students' domain-specific creative reasoning abilities, relevant content knowledge and social as well as emotional needs and adjust the content and context in which it is presented accordingly.

The feedback the teacher offers can be most effective when it provides creatively gifted children with specific information about their knowledge and performance as related to learning goals while allowing them opportunities to develop metacognitive and reflective skills. The more the teacher knows about the cultural backgrounds of students and how differences in values, beliefs, language and behavioural expectations can influence creatively gifted students' behaviour.

Creatively gifted students' emotional well-being influences the quality of their participation in the teaching-learning process. It can affect their communication, their motivation and their engagements. The teacher is key to establishing a classroom climate in which all the students are accepted and respected, have opportunities to achieve a high level of challenge appropriate to their abilities and have opportunities for positive social relationships with adults and peers. The teacher can help facilitate the children's emotional well-being.

## **Conclusion**

Creativity flourishes in settings provided through quality education. Therefore, creatively gifted students should be educated in environments appropriate for them to be able to meet their educational needs and styles. Teachers who double as facilitators of the children's learning experiences should foster creative functioning among the children. Special attention should be given to the psychological well-being of this set of learners if their creative endowments can be exploited to advantage. Teachers are also employed to use the instructional strategies in relation to instructional materials. This should be professionally approached if the desired product can be derived among the children. In the face of multiple challenges confronting Ibadan Metropolis currently, employing appropriate techniques and sophisticated facilities to meet the creative abilities of gifted children remains a right step in the right direction.



## Recommendations

On the basis of the above, the following are recommended:

Teachers handling creatively gifted children should be up to date in the current trends and practices of gifted education. This skill will enable them to offer required services that meet the needs of the children. Creativity tests should be made available in regular schools in Ibadan Metropolis. This provision will enhance identification of potentially creative individual students in our schools. Provision of adequate instructional facilities such as libraries and computers in our school will enable the creatively gifted to advance the frontiers of their knowledge.

Resource rooms are needed in schools in Ibadan Metropolis for creatively gifted children to explore their creative instincts to advantage. School administrators should opt for ability grouping/pull-out programmes for gifted children to challenge their creative skills as a group. Educational policy makers should make conscious efforts at promoting gifted education in Ibadan Metropolis since the children's abilities and skills are needed for national advancement and prosperity.

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