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RESEARCH ARTICLE

IMPORTANCE'S OF TEACHING LEARNING MATERIALS FOR YOUNG CHILDREN

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Early childhood education aims at total child development, in a learning environment that is joyful, child centered, playful and activity based. It is expected to provide necessary maturational and experimental readiness to the child for meeting the demands of primary school curriculum. He needs an understanding adult in the form of his teacher to help him to help himself to explore manually and verbally, and to learn the lesson of life from both people and objects.

Objectives: To assess the method of administration of teaching learning material for young children.

Material and methods: For the present study, 100 numbers of Government Lower Primary School and Senior Basic School where there is provision for early childhood care and education were selected. The Schools were from both the urban areas and the rural areas of Golaghat District of Assam. From the list 20 numbers of schools from each of the five blocks were selected randomly. In this way 100 numbers of Government Schools having Early Childhood Care and Education (Ka-Sreni Schools) were selected.

Results: Most of the schools do not have sufficient teaching learning materials for early childhood care and education and the teacher have not received any special training regarding preparation and use of teaching learning materials effectively for making the learning environment more easy and joyful. The teachers strongly felt that, the use of teaching learning materials in the classroom interaction make the environment more joyful

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INTRODUCTION

Early childhood education covers zero to six years is of crucial importance especially from the point of view of the development of child's language, intelligence and personality. It is the foundation for the elementary education during later years. Early childhood education aims at total child development, in a learning environment that is joyful, child centered, play and activity based. The Early Childhood Care and Education favors on the holistic developments of the child and preparing child for school. It is expected to provide necessary maturational and experimental readiness to the child for meeting the demands of primary school curriculum. The young child whether he be two and a half, three, four or five years old is one who needs space to be vigorous, alone and or part of an active group, for his happiness, concern and self expression. He needs materials, which are appropriate to his size, ideas and feelings. He needs an understanding adult in the form of his teacher to help him to help himself to explore manually, verbally and to learn the lesson of life from both people and objects.

Many families are not in a position to provide such as an enriching and stimulating environment to children because they themselves live in deprived conditions and they do not know how to give the desirable stimulation to their children. The more experience the child receives at this stage, the richer will be the dividend. The school with good management, able personal, enough space for free movement and proper equipments to play are the source of these experiences.

Objectives

To assess the method of administration of teaching learning material for young children.

Operational Definition

Teaching Learning Materials

To develop the ideas and concept among children, child oriented activities are planned and they are called teaching learning activities. For implementation of these activities some equipment/materials like cards, charts, models are prepared and they are called Teaching Learning Materials. Teaching Learning make learning process easy and by use of these

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materials the participation of children in class room processes and the capacity for self learning improves simultaneously the work become regular and Joyful for the children. Teaching Learning Materials plays a major role in clarifying concept learnt by the children. The fundamental objective in use of Teaching Learning Materials is to make learning more effective. An effective, competent and talented teacher can use Teaching Learning Material effectively

Review of Literature

Blase, Fixen, and Phillips (1984); Joyce and Showers (2002); Kealey, Peterson, Gaul, and Dinh, (2000), expressed that behavioral rehearsal (e.g., practice, role playing) of new skills and individualized feedback are often recognized as important phases in staff development efforts. Candy (1991) and Johnson and Johnson (1989), expressed that in a more immediate sense, professional development in early childhood takes place to accomplish two primary objectives. First, is it anticipated that professional development will advance the knowledge, skills, dispositions, and practices of early childhood providers in their efforts to educate children and support families. A second objective is to promote a culture for ongoing professional growth in individuals and systems. Dewey (1959, p. 27), also viewed learning as a continuing reconstruction of experience. Thus the optimal education should be both active and constructive. This kind of education has a social direction through a joint activity within which people consciously refer to each other's, use of materials, tools, ideas, capacities, and applications. He placed greater emphasis on interaction, than did Piaget. His focus was on designing a curriculum to reflect the circumstances children faced as members of a community living in the modern world. Fostering democracy, independence and real experiences in the classroom were major goals for Dewey.

Fukkink and Lont (2007), in a meta-analysis found that specialized training does in fact improve the competencies of early childhood teachers, including their attitudes, knowledge, and skill. Johnton (1989), is concern for the whole child, in addition to the physical needs of very young children, significantly extends the scope of the early childhood teacher's role. Joyce and Showers, (2002), stated that effective trainings aim to assure opportunities for trainees to practice key skills in the training setting. Karr-Morse and Wiley (1997), said that children who are played with, spoken to, and allowed to explore stimulating surroundings are more likely to develop improved neural connections which aid later learning. Maloney, Phillips, Fixsen, and Wolf (1975), stated that training provide feedback on the practice of new teaching skills immediately or later on-the-job.

Martinez-Beck and Zaslow (2006) stated that indeed, the professional development of practicing early childhood educators is considered critical to the quality of experiences afforded to children. Ministry of education in 2008, notes that learning in ECDE centers enable children to mature holistically. It stresses that the learning environment should be organized to meet the needs of the children. Children needs include enjoyment and satisfaction during play.

This can be realized only by use of teaching/learning resources. Various materials include toys' dolls, charts and pictures. When the children's needs are fully satisfied, they feel comfortable to move to the next activity. According to Ministry of Education (2008) it encourages understanding rather than rote learning. When teachers do not use the resources, it is possible that rote learning will be these; they only master concepts without in depth understanding. With the use resources, children relate what they learn with the real life aspects. Teaching learning resources enable children to open up their mind explore their creativity as well as their wide range of thinking. To guide children to open up their mind, the teacher ought to ask them leading questions on related resources. Montessori (1998), said that use of concrete teaching learning resources assists in the development of five children's senses. This reduces the monotony of the teacher using only one material to enhance learning. Muithungu (2003), expressed that materials can be made available by parents and the community as a whole for the ECDE centers within the locality. This can be successfully done by organizing for material making day in school. The community members and parents can collect and others can donate to the school.

NCCA, (2004, p.32), published that early childhood is a time of tremendous opportunity for active exploration and for interpreting the experiences. NCCA, (2004, p. 54), published that outdoor and indoor learning environments should be motivating and inviting to all children, so that they are encouraged and helped to explore and to use all the possibilities offered for fun, adventure, challenge and creativity. Rich and Drummond (2006), expressed that first hand learning experiences fuel children's imagination and unquenchable thirst for understanding. This type of learning occurs in everyday contexts when children engage in activities which matter to them. Smith, Cowie and Blades, (2003 p.413), expressed that the adult has a responsibility to provide rich environments where children are able to explore, touch, manipulate and experiment with different materials and where children can ask questions, make hypothesis and form new concepts.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was conducted in Golaghat District of Assam. For the present study, 100 numbers of Government Lower Primary School and Senior Basic School where there is provision for early childhood care and education were selected. The Schools were from both the urban areas and the rural areas of Golaghat District of Assam. For Selection of the samples 20 numbers of schools from each of the five educational blocks were selected. The educational blocks were East Block, West Block, North Block, South Block and Central Block. The five blocks were selected purposively so that the data collected represents the entire Golaghat District. The list of names of schools having Early Childhood Care and Education Centers (locally known as Ka-Sreni) was collected from the office of the District elementary Education office and Axom Sarba Siksha Abhijan Mission Golaghat. The Block wise lists of the name of schools were given by the programmer (Management of Information System section) of Sarba Siksha Abhijan Mission Golaghat.

From the list 20 numbers of schools from each of the five blocks were selected randomly. In this way 100 numbers of Government Schools having Early Childhood Care and Education (Ka-Sreni Schools) were selected from different areas of Golaghat District. A checklist has been prepared for the teachers of the early Childhood Care and Education Centers. Prior permission was taken from the District Elementary Education officer of Golaghat District before collecting the data from the schools. After visiting the schools, the head master/mistress of the school was contacted and with due permission of the head teachers, the teachers who were dealing with the Early Childhood Care and Education Center (locally known as Ka-Sreni) were interviewed personally with the help of checklist prepared to assess the use of teaching learning material for implementing Early Childhood Education. For analysis of surveyed data the interview schedule was thoroughly coded and appropriate tables were designed. Preliminary analytical devices expressed in frequency and percentage was used.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

When the responses have been analyzed it has been seen that 98 percent of the schools were having the teaching learning materials for the early childhood care and education and when the teachers were asked to specify, at least five numbers of special teaching learning materials were available for the early childhood care and education centers. They said that 20 percent of the schools had collages, 51 percent had charts,

regarding the availability of teaching learning materials for early childhood care and education center.

The Table 1 reveals that higher percentage of teachers said that they don't have sufficient amount of teaching learning materials in the classroom for the young children. 75 percent said that there is no any expert person for preparation of teaching learning materials in the school. 58 percent of teachers have not received any training regarding use of teaching learning materials for the early childhood care and education. It shows that most of the teachers are unaware of the importance of teaching learning materials for the young children. It may be because the stage of early childhood care and education are very specific and it need minute observation of the teachers, therefore it can be said that a long term or need based training should be imparted to the teachers of the early childhood care and education on using different teaching learning materials for the young children, so that they can prepare the need based teaching learning materials at the low cost or no cost. The National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) defines high quality preschool as whether programs adhere to the following 10 structural bench marks.

Teacher's have a bachelors degree;

- Teachers have received specialized training in teaching four years old.
- Teachers complete at least 15 hours/year in service training

Table 1. Percentage of teachers showing different response regarding availability of teaching learning materials for the early childhood care and education center

Sl. No.	Information regarding availability of teaching learning materials	Teachers response in	
		Yes	No
1.	Sufficient teaching learning materials for class room transaction	47%	53%
2.	Any expert for preparation of teaching learning materials in the school	25%	75%
3.	Training regarding use of teaching learning materials	42%	58%
4.	Special training required for administering teaching learning materials	89%	11%
5.	Teaching learning materials stimulates learning	99%	1%
6.	Use of teaching learning materials for each activity of early childhood care and education	57%	43%
7.	Planning needed for use of teaching learning materials for early childhood care and education	84%	16%

Table 2. Percentage of the teachers showing response on availability of teaching learning materials as per different aspects of development

Sl. No.	Developmental stages	Percentage in	
		Yes	No
1.	Teaching learning materials for cognitive development	77%	23%
2.	Teaching learning materials for physical and motor development	67%	33%
3.	Teaching learning materials for finer motor development	63%	37%
4.	Teaching learning materials available for concept formation of colours, shapes and sizes	76%	24%
5.	Teaching learning materials available for language and emotional development	72%	28%
6.	Teaching learning materials are sufficient for the formation of different concept in early childhood care and education centers	64%	36%

32 percent had cards, 28 percent had puzzles, 37 percent had dominoes, 35 percent had threading beads, 31 percent had musk, 28 percent had blocks of different sizes, shapes and colours and 25 percent had abacus, its reveals that all the school had teaching learning materials and when the teacher were asked that the teaching learning materials available in the schools were purchased or locally prepared than 60 percent replied that the teaching learning materials were locally prepared. It was also revealed that 92 percent of the teachers replied that the teaching learning materials was supplied from the Government of Assam. Table 1 shows teacher's responses

- Assistant teachers have a child development associate degree or equivalent.
- A comprehensive curriculum that cover domain of language/literacy, math, science, social-emotional skills, cognitive development, health, physical development and social studies.
- A maximum class size less than or equal to 20 children.
- A child teacher ratio of 10:1 or better.
- At least 1 meal served each day.
- Vision, hearing, health screening/ referral for children.

- At least one family support service, which may include parent conferences, home visits, parenting support or training, referral to social services, and information relating to nutrition.

materials is to be supplied by Axom Sarba Siksha Abhiyan Mission. In case of showing different views and involvement of the teachers in use of teaching learning materials it was

Table 3. Percentages of the teachers showing different view and involvement in use of teaching learning materials

Sl. No.	Teacher's	Teachers response in	
		Yes	No
1.	Individual attention can be given to children when teaching learning materials is used by young children	76%	24%
2.	Personally involve with the children when they are using teaching learning materials	72%	28%
3.	Teaching learning materials available in the classroom are used by all the children	61%	39%
4.	Learning is more and environment is joyful when the teaching learning materials are being used	88%	12%
5.	Children learn faster by use of teaching learning materials rather than traditional methods of teaching	95%	5%
6.	Children learn song, rhymes and story more easily by use of teaching learning materials	96%	4%

Although 43 percent of the teachers said that they cannot use teaching learning materials for all the activities for the young children. But the higher percentage that is 99 percent of the teachers feel that teaching learning materials stimulates learning and use of teaching learning materials while practicing classroom teaching by the teachers helps the students understand the unit in an effective manner. Moreover learning become practical, joyful, burden less and long lasting on the students part. It also naturally reduces the work and effort on the part of the teachers. In short, appropriate use of teaching learning materials creates an activity based and learner centered class. When the responses of the teachers were analyzed on the availability of teaching learning materials as per different developmental stages it was observed that although there are different teaching learning materials available in the classroom supplied by the Government of Assam it was found that most of the teaching learning materials were kept inside the box and almost in bad condition and teachers were not motivated to use these in the classroom interaction. The teachers mostly followed lecture method they read the lesson and explained it later.

Although higher percentage of the teacher's responded that they have teaching learning materials for cognitive development, physical and motor development, finer motor development, teaching learning materials for concept formation of colours, shapes and size and also for language and emotional development but when they were asked to specify the teaching learning materials as per the developments, the teachers were not confident enough to specify the teaching learning materials as per developmental stage, the reasons may be inadequate training regarding use of teaching learning materials, lack of motivation to change the traditional methods of teaching and to practice the improved methodology like competency based, activity based, child centric, joyful learning centered strategies. 36 percent of the teachers felt that the teaching learning materials available in the classroom are not sufficient for the formation of different concepts in early childhood care and education centers but as observed in the classrooms and discussed with the teachers it was found that where there was trained teachers of early childhood care and education the different teaching learning materials were provided for only those schools by the Axom Sarba Siksha Abhiyan Mission. Since the teachers were trained in phased manner so it was found that there were many school still left for whom the training of early childhood care and education is to be provided and special teaching learning

observed that the teachers believed that children learn faster and quicker the activities like songs, rhymes, story, number, colours and shapes by use of different related teaching learning materials. Although the teachers feel that these types of activities are learn faster by use of teaching learning materials but it was observed during the survey that the teacher's personal involvement is not up to the mark. They hesitate to sing or recite the rhymes with action and have rigidity to their body movement. They generally follow the lecture methods and some time they demonstrate different cards and charts. But a wise teacher should have a wide acquaintance of songs and rhymes. They should be able to enjoy with the children. They should encourage the use of music and rhymes through spontaneous expressions both indoor and outdoor. The teacher should be flexible in use of instruments. They should encourage the children to be creative in use of instruments rather than follow a stereotyped procedure. The teacher must use songs, rhymes and music often so that children have a chance to get better acquainted with it through repetition.

95 percent of the teachers feel that the attraction of the children in the classroom is more when the teaching learning materials are used by the children. Therefore it is very important for the teacher to take into account the age, interest and abilities of the children enrolled, a flexible schedule should be planned for the classroom. The activities are so planned as to allow for-

- Healthy alternation of vigorous and quite play.
- The individual child to follow his own interest.
- Plenty of opportunities for practicing social relationship.
- Freedom to be alone, if a child so choose and
- Variety through organizing special activities like painting, pasting, science and nature experiences

A good learning programme should offer many learning opportunities for the children. Finally when the teacher were asked do they feel themselves to be competent enough to use teaching learning materials for administering early childhood care and education, only 42 percent of the teachers could confidently say that they are competent enough to use the teaching learning materials for the young children. It was observed that a very few schools can afford to have expensive equipments and materials; much depends on the imagination, resourcefulness and creativity of the teachers. If resourceful, the teachers can have a good collection of materials for children's activities from the things in the environment.

Instead of selecting sophisticated and expensive materials the imaginative teachers should always go in for sturdy and easily replaceable materials. The teachers should be constantly in search of new things and materials that will challenge the children. The teachers should be well informed about the indigenous materials available in the surroundings and what could be brought from the market. Proper arrangement of the teaching learning materials would facilitate their use. All the materials should be attractively arranged in the classroom so that the children can take them out themselves. This in turn will help the children to learn through the materials and only the competent teachers will be successful in using the teaching learning materials.

Finally it also reveals from the findings that the 42 percent (Table 1) of the teachers has received some training regarding use of teaching learning materials and from the findings it also reveals that these 42 percent of the teachers could confidently say that they are competent enough in using teaching learning materials. A research agenda in early childhood professional development is needed to unpack basic information on processes that promotes the development of skills and competencies necessary to provide high qualities, evidence based early childhood experiences and identify interactions that occur between form and process and influence the outcomes of professional development efforts. Research is needed that evaluate relative contributions of professional and personal characteristics of staff, context of training, coaching/consulting practices, roles and relationship, systematic and contextual variable and the interaction effects among them.

Conclusion

It is evident from the above results that there are still some teachers who felt that they are not yet competent enough in mediating teaching learning materials for Early Childhood Care and Education. It also reveals from the study that almost all the teachers felt that teaching learning materials is very important and one of the stimulating factors which help children to learn faster in the initial stages. Therefore majority of the teachers showed their interest to get some training for effective use of teaching learning materials, at the same time they also felt that some adequate amount of teaching learning materials must be prepared or purchased for creating a child centric environment in the Early Childhood Care and Education Centers. The study concluded that teaching learning materials help the children develop holistically hence smooth transition to primary schools. This is because children get attracted to them, hold the interest and facilitate cognitive development. During the absence of the teacher in class children can be kept busy thereby developing their psychomotor skills.

Recommendations

Sample from both the Government School and Private School should be taken to see the competency of the teacher's regarding mediating teaching learning materials for the young children's and also to see the availability of teaching learning materials in the classrooms.

Some special teaching learning materials could be prepared and demonstrated to the teachers as well as children for proper implementation in the Early Childhood Care and Education Centers.

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