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ECE 225



**Meeting Special Needs in
Early Childhood Education**
Module 3

ECE 225 (Meeting Special Educational Needs in Early Childhood) Module 3

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Module 3 Meeting Intellectual and Sensory Challenges in Early Childhood

Introduction

The formation of a newborn in the womb and ultimately the society at large is through the senses. In a situation where a measure of limitation is imposed due to circumstances of birth or whatever, the challenges posed need to be adequately confronted. The same measure of strategy has to be put in place to meet other intellectual challenges since they partly determine the quality of integration, relevance and contribution of the newborn in the community.

The place of a service provider, or a teacher “therefore to identify as discussed in the previous module and in this module use the information to meet the educational and social challenges emanating from the circumstance.

The challenges that will be met in this module include the under-listed areas:

Unit 1 Meeting Special Educational Needs of Gifted and Talented Children in Early Childhood

Unit 2 Meeting Special Educational Needs of Children with General Mental Challenges

Unit 3 Meeting Special Educational Needs of Children with Specific Learning Challenges in Early Childhood

Unit 4 Meeting Hearing Challenges in Early Childhood

Unit 5 Meeting Special Educational Needs of Children with Visual Challenges in Early Childhood

Unit I Meeting Special Educational Needs of Gifted and Talented Children in Early Childhood

1.0 Introduction

The two factors that brought the gifted and the talented together are hinged in the superior cognitive abilities and general creativity. The extent to which these children can influence the direction of development and accelerate the world of man are evident in the event leading to Sputnik in Russia and also the first incursion into space by the United States of America which resulted from appropriately utilizing the gifted in their community.

Therefore, to initiate appropriate step, the awareness of caregivers and teachers of both the challenges and, how to meet their required adequate exposition highlighted and institutions. In some cases, some of the milestones depicting these children tend to be at variance with the person of the adult working with them. They are termed destructive, arrogant and disobedient whereas there is more to the expression beyond these traits.

Some issues discussed are institutionally based (administrative). Teacher-based, policy-based and in addition general school practices as the case may be. In Nigeria, the Suleja Academy is named at developing the gifted and the talented. The extent to which this has been achieved is a matter of evaluation interest.

2.0 Objectives

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

- advance reason for the inclusion of the gifted and talented in special education programme
- state the philosophy involved in meeting special education needs of the gifted and talented.
- identify strategies for enrichment
- list the abandoned children who are talented and gifted
- develop a programme for Nigeria in this area
- identify your target for the education of the gifted and the talented.

3.0 Main Content

3.1 Congenital Causes of the Gifted and Talented

Early School Admission: The practice in Nigeria is such that no concrete programme is put in place for the gifted and the talented in early childhood. This is not to justify the absence of these traits in early childhood years. Terman (1954) has given enough support establishing that they exist in early childhood.

Identification Procedure: This resides mostly in the caregiver/teacher and others working with the child. What is important mainly is that the teacher must possess a quality geared towards encouraging diversity of expression among children.

Curriculum Enrichment: In the course of curriculum review, Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC'S), several innovation measures are finding their way into the curriculum. These are in the aspect of content, alternatives and even delivery strategies. Often, projects are becoming the focus of the curriculum.

General Screening Procedure: It is important to put in place adequate method to which children can participate so as to hunt for the understanding ones which can be followed up. This should be within the range of ages 2 and 5.

3.2 Provision of Administrative Setting

Flexible Administrative network

1. Acceleration
2. Special class system
3. Enrichment
 - Tutorials
 - Project focus (problem solving into contemporary issues)
 - Specific teacher training for exceptional, personality-based selected teachers.
 - Rigorous effort for the identification of individual interest of children identified by the teacher.

3.3 Supporting Enrichment

There are several means by which the child's learning can be enhanced through enrichment.

- Encouraging discovery learning
- Encouraging child-to-child interaction
- Encouraging conceptual learning
- Divergent thinking
- Student-based curriculum design
- Enrichment of teachers specially selected to work with the gifted and the talented
- Excursion and target visit to institutions of national and engineering interest
- Research and development on longitudinal basis will go a long way to establish the gains and pattern used in meeting challenges in early childhood.

Self-Assessment Exercise

Produce a plan from newspaper cuttings on how to enrich a 5 year old using the methods discoursed above.

3.4 Caring for the Abandoned Gifted and Talented with Disability

It is important to know that giftedness and talent are no respecters of persons, sex, and disability. The other group that would be neglected are:

- The economically disadvantaged children, especially in early childhood when they have to battle against ill-health, violence and other social and environmental limitations.
- Culturally deprived: Those covered in this setting are those children who for one reason or the other are living within a foreign culture, require language orientation or prejudice as the case may be.

For all these, a definite approach appropriate for their state should be put in place.

4.0 Conclusion

In this unit, you have gone through the features which predispose a child with giftedness and talent to special educational needs. Even though a definite interaction was not identified in early childhood years, certain landmarks were scratched for further exploration. In an effort to duly respond to the needs of children at this level, it was revealed that it is responsive administrative curriculum and policy initiative that will be most desirous for them.

5.0 Summary

In this unit you have learnt that:

- There are specific strategies that can be adopted in meeting the educational needs of the gifted and the talented.
- These strategies are geared toward individual exploration of the environment, completion of projects and enriching the curriculum for the gifted.
- Teachers working with the gifted and talented will require continuous selection and special training so as to make them stimulants and not killers of interest.
- Giftedness and talents can also be found among those who are disability disadvantaged and culturally deprived
- Process of research and development in this area especially at the early childhood level should be further encouraged.
- There are indications that the NERDC is gradually responding to curriculum review capable of encouraging creativity and diversity in early childhood.

6.0 Self-Assessment Exercise

1. Trace the history of the education of the gifted and the Talented across Russian and America in the middle of the 20th Century. What advice can you give Nigeria in this area?
2. Draw 7 step strategic plans for Nigeria to achieve same fit.

7.0 References/Further Reading

Adeniyi, E.O. (1997) (ed). *National Feedback Conference on School Curriculum*. Yaba: NERDC.

Safford P.L. (1978). *Teaching Young Children with Special Needs*. St. Louis: The C.V. Mosby Company.

Terman, L.M. (1954). *The Discovering and Encouragement of Exceptional Talent*. *American Psychologist* 9 (6), 221 – 230.

Unit 2 Meeting Special Education Needs of Children with General Learning Challenges

1.0 Introduction

The background to the unit is an appreciation of the far reaching influence of human right and right to develop no matter the state of the mind, physique and brain. Before this dignifying status accorded this category, “early victims” has been dehumanized and tagged as “idiots” “imbecile”, “mentally retarded” etc. over time however; proper human value has been added to the persons resulting in dealing with issues and not person. The quality of perception unfortunately is yet to gain adequate and appreciable hold on developing communities, Nigerians and her professionals including the educationist.

Ability varies, so are the individual obstacles required before full attainment. In this case, the source of challenge is essentially the brain (regarded as the control room) thus resulting in general inability to adapt to daily behavioral and learning requirement.

In spite of the picture of the brain, it has a right to be developed. This is the justification for adequate exposure of teachers, caregivers and everyone that will be able to appreciate, acquire and apply the principles governing the education of this category of children. If the morsel cannot be consumed as a whole, why not break it down into smaller unit until the whole has been consumed. If serious academic approach will prove futile, why not novel, simple and play away method that are participatory in nature. This is the cry of the mother with the children under focus.

2.0 Objectives

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

- state the features of a child with general learning challenges
- identify the need of the child
- develop appropriate individualized programme for the child under consideration
- counsel parents of children with general challenges
- select material appropriate for early childhood needs of a child with general learning needs
- state how best to encourage parents and teachers working with children with general learning challenges in early childhood.

3.0 Main Content

3.1 Case Study I

Ode, is the first child out of four children in the family. The mother had a very prolong battle with malaria and threatened abortion all through second month of conception till the fifth month. The eventual period subsided subsequently. Delivery was normal without any

inducement, crawling, sitting, neck support, smile, general response to motor stimulation did not show any sign of awareness until after 4 years. Speech and language awareness was virtually nonexistent. The sucking reflex was also delayed considerably. Toilet training was out rightly unlearned. Ode was moved from one daycare home to another until eventually a residential centre admitted her. With the activities of the physiotherapist, dietician and the pediatrician, at six, ode started responding to all the lags. Essentially, she was acting like a one and half year old girl.

3.1.1 Case Study 2

This case study represents an extreme of a general learning challenged child. In other cases, moderate extent in the delay can be observed. This is the case under consideration in this unit.

3.2 Methodology

Individualized Instruction

This is a product of detailed analysis of the child functioning across the board: psychomotor, task completion daily help skills, grasp, language etc. Based on this comprehensive analysis, each milestone is pegged. What has the child been able to do – at what state of the full skill is he operating, what would it take to take the child to the full stretch of the task. The case with a child may not be the same with another child.

Systematic Programming

This implies that the child is allowed the opportunity to use dilative materials, imitation, respond to music, cross and motor skills, colors. The activities are repeated several times which corresponding reinforcement.

Instant Reinforcement

For children with general learning challenges, the need for frequent reinforcement following every unit of task cannot be over emphasized because this is the basis for sustainability of task as the case may be.

3.3 Curricular Content

For this purpose and for general orientation, the following are the list of virtually everyday activity adaptable;

Content

- **Language development:** Oral communication, including listening to the teacher, following directions; building vocabulary. By giving ones name and address, talk in sentences, speaking clearly and describing pictures, storytelling, copying, tracing, labeling etc.
- **Motor development:** Gross and fine motor skills, physical education and manipulative activities, self-awareness

- **Cognitive development:** Memory training, following directions and solving puzzle problems.
- Sensory training
- Music
- Health and safety
- Social studies: home and community
- Arithmetic concepts
- Self-help: feeding, dressing and undressing, toileting, hair combing, caring for belongings.
- Socialization: taking turns, greeting, obeying rules, sharing, etiquette and playing.
- Art and craft: coloring, painting, paper work, collage etc.
- Dramatization: songs with gestures, playing house, pastomising actions, and acting out simple story.
- Practical arts: washing, and drying dishes, setting and cleaning the table, serving, making beds, room cleaning, yard care, errand running and other household tasks.

Assessment

Meaningful and comprehensive assessment is the key to individualized prescriptive teaching; it must be based on systematic diagnosis of individual strengths and needs.

Delivery

Note the following ingredients:

- test analysis
- learning must be familiar and meaningful
- multi-sensory approach
- overhearing of task must be guaranteed
- always gain attention and establish eye contact
- criterion referenced rather than norm-reference.

3.4 Parent/Teacher Orientation

The teacher should be aware that the issue is that of what is always termed “watered down content”. Even at that, the issue should be appreciated in terms of more time being required by the child. As a result of the frustration experienced by mothers, they are often put together for appropriate skill transfer and counsel from other parents with familiar experiences. Essentially, regular and systematic communication will be required to assist parents in going all the way to avoid abandonment. This is a very regular experience especially from parents of children with very severe challenges.

4.0 Conclusion

This unit has created adequately an overview of the challenges associated with general learning needs which are of both moderate and severe level. There is no doubt that the case study has provided deep insight into both the intense emotion and disappointment associated with general hearing challenges. Further the supportive system as reflected in assessment, curriculum content and its delivery and networking among parents are examined in this unit.

5.0 Summary

In this unit you have learnt that:

- The features of a child with general hearing needs affects the key area of developmental milestones
- Only a comprehensive diagnosis can lead to effective individualized programmes.
- Achievement can only be guaranteed through prompt reinforcement
- There are several components of the curricular which is aimed strictly to allow for self-help and high degree of independence.

6.0 Self-Assessment Exercise

Identify 6 daily living skills relevant to a child with moderate general mental challenges.

7.0 References/Further Reading

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Dunn, L.M. (1973). *Exceptional Children in the Schools: Speech Education in Transition*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston Inc.

Unit 3 Meeting Special Education Needs of Children with Specific Learning Challenges in Early Childhood

1.0 Introduction

You would recall that at the level of identification of children with specific learning challenges it was explained that very often the trait is more revealing at the school subject level. Nevertheless, attempt was made to highlight factors predisposing a child to learning disabilities. At this level of meeting the challenges posed from the earlier discussed behaviour, the focus will go beyond just the years before age seven to extend to years through the elementary/primary or years 1 – 6 in the school system.

It is important however to mention here that this area of specific learning disabilities has impinged on virtually every aspect of special educational needs more than any singular category. The reason is not farfetched. Every ability is identified in it. To one, it may be perceptual; others may be language related, reading, writing, number operation and so on. In addition it has affected even practices in the regular school system in an effort to respond to the learning needs of every child in the school system. Also, worthy of note is the fact that specific learning needs/challenges can be addressed and solved once and for all.

2.0 Objectives

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

- identify the specific learning needs of a child in early childhood
- develop an appropriate checklist for diagnosis
- institute broad based approaches to working with children in this category
- relate with parents, other professionals and institution putting in place programme of intervention
- identify the diversity of challenges across various scope of care in early childhood.

3.0 Main Content

3.1 Case Study I

Boy Oman is the first son in a family of four. The senior sister has just completed her senior secondary school certificate examination. Their father, a marine engineer, and mother, a public servant. The senior sister is very brilliant, has never repeated a class before. The junior sister and the other boy also had no problem with their education. This was not the same with Boy Oman. Boy Oman was observed to be very destructive at home, damaging every electrical socket in the house. He could repair all the radio and electrical system at home; boiling ring, iron etc. He was also outstanding in number operations, handset operations and repairs at 8.

However, he has had to repeat two classes at the primary level before finally promoted to the sixth year. His handwriting was poor, he jumbles alphabets, misses out some and avoid reading of any sort but very accurate with tune of adverts on television.

On admission to a private secondary school, he was asked to repeat junior school year one because his notes were not perfect, he copies note last among mates but was very outstanding in mathematics, agricultural science, introductory technology. One of the conditions laid down by the school, which was not willing to take responsibilities for additional support, was for a psychologist to assist him in school and empower the school on how to deal with this case. They acknowledged he was a talented boy but could not cope with school learning.

An assessment was conducted and it was discovered that Boy Oman has problem with conglomeration of alphabets and how to make meaning out of their collection. In the process of working with him, number operations became a means of reinforcement while doing other letter based assignments. He ended up studying physics, mathematics, chemistry, technical Drawing at the senior Secondary School level. In the course of interview with parents, it was observed that he had no recorded event at birth or during conception. His birth was brisk but was delayed in his blood after delivery.

3.1.1 Case Study 2

A Retarded Teenager with Down 's Syndrome

Sarah, now 16 years old was born when her mother was 45, she has two bright older sisters, both married, in their thirties with able children. No other cases of Down's Syndrome are known to exist in the extended family. Both of her parents are college graduates, the father being a successful executive who has been the president of the local parents' association for retarded children. For the past 10 years, they have devoted their lives to their retarded daughter, moving from an exclusive community to a lower-middle class, interracial one near a day care and sheltered workshop center which Sarah now attends. But they find Sarah is still not very well accepted. For this reason, they have dropped most of their outside activities.

Sarah has developed intellectually at about one third the normal rate, so she is estimated now to be like a five-year-old cognitively. Her highest skills are in caring for herself. She is well groomed, well dressed, large tongue, but those who know her well can usually understand what she wants. She has essentially no academic skills even after years in a special school and can do very few household chores adequately. After much training at the center, she has been taught to sweep the floor fairly well. At home she does not work. Sarah is somewhat stubborn; she forms strong likes and dislikes toward her peers and the staff, but is generally quite affectionate and cheerful. She loves her father, but expects her mother to care for her constantly. She is rather overweight and is neither good at physical exercise nor does she like it.

Her parents are now both in their sixties, with the father soon to retire. They are deeply worried about what will happen to Sarah when they are too old to care for her. The sisters will not take on the job. Furthermore, they feel that Sarah should have been institutionalized years ago and that the parents' estate should be divided between them to enable their very able offspring to have greater educational opportunities. If the parents

honours the sisters' wishes, they are fearful their Sarah will end up in the large state residential facility unless a small public, special-purpose boarding house is established where the emphasis would be on recreation and continuous care.

Self-Assessment Exercise

List 10 clear benefits you derived from the case of Boy Oman.

3.2 Individualized Diagnosis

- The goal is to identify the child's area of needs e.g. reading, number operation, word attack, blending, sound perception, or writing;
- Determine the child's strength and weaknesses. This will assist you when planning how to meet the challenges you have identified;
- The subsequent discussion are aimed at both underlining the determination of area of specific learning needs as well as using them to meet the needs of the child.

3.3 Provision of Planned Motor Activity

If you still recall the early childhood indication for this group of children, you will appreciate the place of psycho-motor activities. The therapist goal is to:

- Stir up participation and pleasure
- Jointly establish goals the child can work at
- Obtain feedback from the various activities put in place. This could be through facial expression.
- Build the ego of the child
- Create
- Build positive self-concept.

Motor generalization is assumed to possess the ability to predict success in subsequent learning. For example,

- balance and maintenance of posture
- locomotion
- contact (including grasping and releasing
- receipt and propulsion.

Each of these areas can be translated into a wide variety of activities in early childhood. A variety of games that involve initiative movement, including alternately paced walking, running, hopping, skipping, pipping in place can be introduced. Balance beam and balance boards can be used. Translation of visual cues to motor acts, or inhibiting motor acts. Use of tricycles, balls of all kinds' sizes, including the use of both hands (bilateral) and, one hand (unilateral).

For this purpose, the use of professionals in physical education is desirable.

3.4 Use of Inter Sensory Approach

It has been established that there is a relationship between visual perception and reading. A child who perceives images inaccurately or in distorted fashion, or who has difficulty in distinguishing figure, frame background; would presumably be handicapped in learning to read. The use of perspective drawing, dissemination of object in the midst of several other distracter, spot the difference in two picture frame with various degree of alterations as it used to be in newspaper cartoons.

In the overall, the activities should involve eye-hand coordination; eye-tracking exercises, hand-control exercises and shape tracking exercises.

3.5 Environmental Control Approach

The learning environment can enhance increase in retention or otherwise. However, this trait is common to children at different level. Some are overtly responsive to stimulation in their environment. This may be demonstrated in:

- The actual size of the classroom itself. There may be need for use of cubicle
- Learning centers should be well defined
- Visual displays should be simple and sharply focused, emphasizing plan use of color and dimension to highlight the central feature
- Specifically designed environment based on child characteristics as discovered during assessment
- Decongest area of unused materials
- Control the classroom as much as possible to allow for optimal learning.

3.6 Behavioural Modification Approach

This is concerned with the programming of situation and contingencies to alter an individual's response to environmental stimuli.

Steps - Define a targeted behaviour:

- create a baseline (measure occurrence before therapy)
- treat the undesirable behaviour
- obtain "how far" the behaviour has changed
- reinstate further treatment.

These are various undertaken which accompany those simple steps mentioned. They are:

- Extinction
- Reinforcement
- Token Economies
- Punishment (withdrawal of + Reinforcement)

- Overcorrection
- Behaviour Modification at home
- See parents as change agent and train them on what to do to facilitate positive behaviour.
- This is because it makes little sense if the parents are indulging what was being punished at the setting of school as the case may be.

Sometimes, the feeling is that such programmes should be home based.

3.7 Resource Room

Often, there are skills identified missing in the child that will require one-on-one. This is usually done in a Resource Room. The schedule should be well drawn in a way that the child will not be withdrawn from beneficial activities among his peers. Also, there is a point in time when the withdrawal of the child becomes necessary. There is need for a specialist teacher to work with both the child and other teachers working with the child in the classroom. Actually they must meet regularly to redefine goals and achievement.

3.8 Teacher-Parent Teamwork

The use of behavioral-therapy, resource room utilization and possibly home tutoring demands that continuous communication goes on between the teacher and parents.

4.0 Conclusion

Even though the essential focus is specific learning challenges, the truth is that the specific areas discussed can be found in all the challenges: visual, hearing, intellectual, speech and language, physical and emotional needs and even parent-teacher communication.

It is expected that appropriate platform should be found in assisting even children whose specific learning needs are so transient that they can go on with their learning without any stigmatization.

5.0 Summary

In this unit, we have reviewed strategies used in meeting specific learning disabilities in early childhood and to some extent beyond the age of 10. The case study indicates that a child so described could be hidden without appropriate identification. To approach the need, we require:

1. In-depth isolation of the specific need
2. Institute a plan. A plan for the child could involve:
 - motor acuity
 - inter sensory approach
 - control of the intercessory environment
 - modification of behaviour across the institutional

- programme and domestic setting;
- the use of resource room adequately schedule for optimal benefit and inclusion and
- finally there must be:
- an effective communication
- conveyance of genuine understanding of the child's need
- soliciting of parental support in the day-to-day running of the programme and fulfillment of obligation.

6.0 Self-Assessment Exercise

Identify a specific learning need and develop an intervention applying at least five dimensions outline the setting, highlighted in the unit.

7.0 References/Further Reading

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Ihenacho, I. J. (2005). Programmes and Services for Individuals with Learning Disabilities. *The Special Child*. Vol. 1 #1, 11 – 12.

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Unit 4 Meeting Hearing Challenges in Early Childhood

1.0 Introduction

The all-embracing status of hearing in both special and language development sometimes confuses among decision to choose preference for visual challenges of whatever degree, or hearing impairment if they are a gift, or an endowment given without any inhibition.

The drawing board on which hearing challenges are placed is a continuum. So also are the other criteria used in classifying these challenges. Some are either pre-lingually/challenged; adventitiously or congenitally or post lingually. Challenged; sensory neural deafness or conductive. Sometimes, the word 'deaf' is technically used as against hard – of – hearing.

Meeting the needs posed by these challenges in early childhood is not a mean exercise. Recently, a new dimension has been introduced as a result of electronic implant, with the intention of eliminating the challenges. For a school or non-surgical options, a broad overview will be provided in the presentation. These are in relation to early childhood and some spilling over years beyond these formative years.

2.0 Objectives

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

- renew the behaviour of a hearing challenged child in early childhood
- state activities of intervention in early childhood
- describe the association method
- identify the component of total common action
- classify setting within which hearing challenges can be met.

3.0 Main Content

3.1 Psychology of the Hearing Challenged

Hearing predisposes one to large volume of information in the environment. It sometimes reveals to one how much love is available in the environment or the amount of danger that can be perceived. It transfers an age-long secret in the mind of others in a very short moment. The ear can translate the events on the street where the eyes cannot see as joyous or as a warning. Through hearing, the voice of the mother can be determined as a comforting shield when there is heat. It can build confidence of someone's being around even when one is alone.

However, it is a different thing when a baby has to develop without hearing from the womb or from very early childhood. The level of security, trust, language acquisition would have to change from the natural sequence. Actions will be seen without being able to quantify the rationale behind it. More so, speech which is basically an auditorially acquired skill

would have to become artificial. Looking into people's mouth to make meaning and interpretation of people's gesture becomes one's major means of communication. Sometimes, when there is a measure of residual hearing, the lack of clarity in the information flow would have been better shot out.

The whole case is worst when the need is not appropriately perceived, identified by parents or guardian who only feel the expression of the child is mere expression of stubbornness. Even when they do appreciate the loss, they do not have a clear mind of what it means to stay before the television without hearing any sound. Several interpretations will be assigned to the gestures, the feedback of whether one was right which cannot be immediate. Loss of hearing imposes a great deal of limitation on a child who experiences it from birth. A teacher must appreciate this.

3.2 Pre-School Intervention

This is very customary with this category of children more than others in view of the early childhood deprivation.

Goals

- It gives the child opportunity to experience other children in sharing, playing and taking turn, during socialization;
- For a child without hearing or partial hearing, appreciating some guiding rules in interaction may be lacking. Hence there must be early socialization opportunity, through day care, kindergarten etc.
- Opportunity to develop language, speech and speech reading.

Skills

Through the use of hearing aids, the child can be made to develop receptive and expressive language skills, through auditory training and speech focused attention by the caregiver. The child must learn to localize and identify sound, discriminate it and classify it appropriately e.g. goat, dog, door banging etc. Allow for extensive verbalization

1. Talk to the child appropriately
2. Dialogue
3. The child should listen to stories
4. Share nursery rhymes
5. Greeting an auditory environment in general involves:
 - readiness to listen
 - use voice to get attention
 - repeat speech frequently
 - discuss using object as focus
 - encourage parents to do same at home or immediately the need has been discovered

3.3 Association Method

This is the major means of introducing reading to the child. Reading” in this sense is not necessarily the print. The child must be taught how to read situations, indications in the environment, but often they must be labeled. E.g. cup, spoon, cat (large number of picture cards will be required at this stage.) After this, sentences can then be progressively introduced e.g. the boy is running, sleeping on the bed, drinking water.

3.4 Total Communication

The concept of total communication seems to be the compromise ground on which the controversy between the pure oralist and the manual sign language proponents stood. Shonibare 2005 carried out very extensive study in this area highlighting the key components:

- Speech
- Hearing aid and auditory training
- Lip reading
- Sign language
- Figure spelling
- Gesture
- The pad and pencil method.

If this composition is used from the early childhood, it is believed that the impact of hearing loss would have been reduced as much as possible this will give the child adequate opportunity to develop intellectually.

3.5 Sign Language Typified

Even though there are several means of communication through which a child with hearing challenges can be entered into, the truth is that most of them feel very convenient with sign language. It looks like a mother tongue. They acquire it naturally. In Nigeria what is most prevalent is the American Sign Language, with several word modifications from one deaf community to another. For this purpose, we shall only consider the manual alphabets. This is the use of one hand to configure shape that will either be conventional or in few cases they resemble the lower case of the English alphabets.



Fig. 5-2. Traditional manual alphabet. (From Litton, F. W. *Education of the Trainable Mentally Retarded*. St. Louis: The C. V. Mosby Co., 1978.)

With the use of the alphabets, words can be specified. This is the service of finger spelling. To form words in sign language, some configurations of the alphabets are made to follow a particular motion or impact a part of the body.

3.6 Service Delivery Setting

At the level of early childhood in Nigeria, the service delivery setting can be divided into three:

Special School/Centre

From home most parents send their children with hearing challenges to day care centers as early as 2 years. However, as they grow they are registered in special schools where specific attention is paid. It is worthy of notice that most of the formal school settings are not yet running a pre-school public school programmes. Often, parents come together to fund the school programme.

Mainstream Programme

- schools for the deaf within the regular school system
- special class in a regular school setting

Experimental Class

It has been experienced also, a situation where children with hearing challenges are placed in the same class with hearing children. This is the most ideal but full administrative support is lacking. Ultimately, special attention will be required to build up the required deficit. This is the focus in early childhood. So also is socialization.

4.0 Conclusion

In this unit, you have been exposed to the enormity of hearing loss in early childhood. In addition, various approaches used in creating an environment where the child can at least respond and begin to build concept are also highlighted. Even though, the controversy between the oralists and the manualist was not highlighted, the solution is total.

Communication was presented. In essence, it gives you an overview of what it takes to work with a child in early childhood with hearing challenges. The setting is also not detailed but to show what obtains generally. You may be opportune to improve on the content of what obtains when you come in contact with the children in early childhood.

5.0 Summary

In this unit you learnt that:

- Hearing challenges affects speech development and if not adequately attended to in early childhood has behavioral implications.
- Broad based effort has to be put in place to create an auditory environment as the child grows.
- The association method can be use to start teaching reading.
- The total communication comprises of all the means that can be used to teach language and communication to a hearing challenged child
- The manual alphabets are partly the basis for the use of sign language.
- Parents should be involved in stimulating the child's environment.

6.0 Self-Assessment Exercise

1. With the use of Association Method, identify three concepts (Word) and state steps of teaching the concepts.
2. Observe communication in sign language among given deaf community and write a page report on use of eye contact, degree of perceived communication and your perception of delight recorded on the scene.

7.0 References/Further Reading

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Unit 5 Meeting Special Education Needs of Children with Visual Challenges in Early Childhood

1.0 Introduction

From interactive and general observation of events around us, it will be true to say that people at one time or the other exhibit visual challenges which can be met and they move on. At the same time some of the challenges may not require special educational approach of special materials, special personnel, special method and special content.

Overtime however, the truth is that visual needs are easily identified especially when total. The responsibility of caregivers at this level is to be able to identify in early childhood or put forward for referral which can confirm suspicion and return them into the school system. Further duty of caregivers at the post identification level is to utilize the remaining vision for educational purpose, provide support for unhindered access and adopt materials. At the early childhood stage, concerted effort has to be made to compensate for whatever denial that might be inherent in people's attitude, social environment and acquisition of knowledge and skills for further development.

2.0 Objectives

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

- state strategies for early childhood intervention for the visually challenged
- identify the components of early childhood intervention for the visually challenged
- explain the method used in teaching reading and writing to the visually challenged
- list adaptive materials for the visually challenged
- develop a programme for enhancing daily living skills of a visually challenged child in early childhood
- mention educational setting for service delivery/teaching.

3.0 Main Content

3.1 Preschool Intervention

The stages considered here include infancy and toddler period. If diagnosis confirms blindness, programme should commence from first weeks or months and should be continuous throughout the early years. Professional should:

- home visit and
- educate parents

This may involve:

- individual parent counseling
- parent group counseling
- demonstration of procedures to parents
- observing and recording the child's progress
- provide materials for use at home.

Mother/infant Communication: A mother of a visually challenged infant might help her child to be secure in the knowledge of her presence by e.g.

- holding
- talking
- lightly blowing
- humming
- maintaining touch contact
- create alternative to eye contact and reinforcing smile, body posture and Caregivers should be able to respond to the child's search for environmental stimulation through:
 1. Rooting
 2. Discrimination through smell
 3. Anticipation
 4. Hand scanning.

Developing Compensatory strategies: It is important to stimulate the child's "vision" through:

Grasping – hand-mouth relationship

Smelling – observe smell of different agents with voice or sound

Sucking – to determine presence of mother

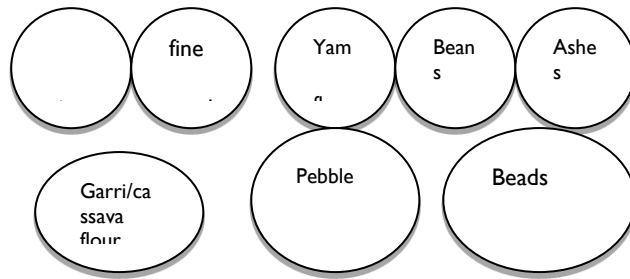
Hearing – listening to sound clues.

An example of series of activities that could assist a child are listed in this part e.g.

Example I

Activities to facilitate Hand movement away from the body:

- Induce the child to bang a cup with a spoon
- Clapping of the hand of an adult with the baby's hand with holding
- Paste a varied object surface on a tray (collage) allowing the child to feel e.g.



- Feeling of different parts of Teddy Baby and other objects
- As language develops ask for feedback and description of thing felt.

Example 2: Activities for locating sound and object in the environment

- Provide rattles with different shape, sound types
- Fill small plastic, thin object with maize, rice, pebbles, beads etc and roll on ground for child to locate position.
- Attach sound producing object to body of the child e.g. sound producing shoes, bib, waist, coat etc.
- Create adequately for the lighting in the room, increase number of switches on until the awareness can be expressed by the child.

Note behaviour as a response to full light.

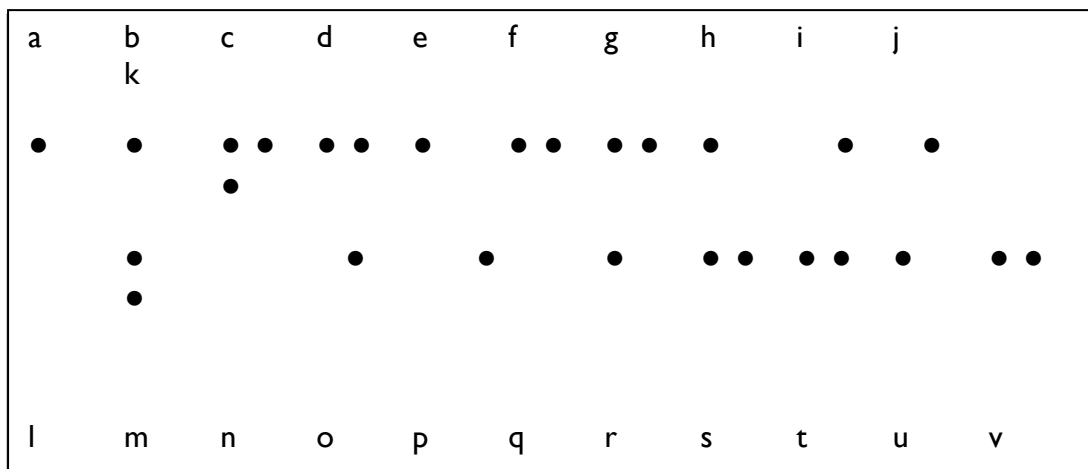
The essence of this stimulation is to provide caregivers with alternative strategies provided the objective is clear at the back of the mind of provider. Lots of creativity will be required to make the child's environment stimulating and compensatory.

3.2 Reading and Writing

The history of education for the blind showed that this area was the first to draw the attention of teachers/facilitators. They used, though not consistently:

Embossed letters – wood carvings – strings glued or otherwise fastened to paper – writing on waxed tablets – letters pinpricked into felt. These efforts were geared towards making the blind to see using their hands.

The use of Braille code which has passed through several forms is currently used to teach reading and writing to the blind. Presently, Braille can be 'typed' on mechanical braille writers or printed by computers in addition, a slate and stylus system is used by the blind for note taking. What is important in the use of Braille notation is that adequate tactile stimulation should be put in place in early childhood to allow a sensitive fingertips coding and decoding.



Braille Alphabet. (From Gearheart, B.R. and Weishahn, M *The Handicapped Student in the Regular Classroom* Ed. 2 St. Louis: The C.V. Mosby Co, 1980).

14 Point Type

Few parents realize that during the progress of these

Diseases the eyes of the patient may develop serious

18 Point Type

Few parents realize that during the progress of these

Diseases the eyes of the patient

24 Point Type

Few parents realize that during the progress of these Diseases the eyes of

30 Point Type

Few parents realize that during the progress of the

Figure 1: Example of large type sizes

3.3 Stimulating Mobility and Orientation

The teaching is to help the child to do virtually all that the sighted children can do with proper training.

What is Orientation?

It is the establishment of position in space and relative to other objects in the environment. *Review the activities mentioned in infancy.* This is a continuous skill which is geared towards locating posture after subsequent movement. For example, keeping to the left and right in space, on the ground, and on the dining table.

What is Mobility?

This is the actual locomotion (self-generated movement) of an individual from one position to another in the environment. This may include:

- skills on proper heel and toe gait
- control of body posture (head, hand etc.)
- detecting inclines and declines

Obstacle Detection

The goal here is to attain independent movement and the early childhood years can serve as “phobia reduction period” against exploration of environment. There are however, examples of means used in attaining this independence.

Independent travel in which the tactile, olfactory and visually all the services are put into use to locate one’s direction, path etc. This calls for intense training:

- Sighted guide
- The big cane
- Dog guides
- Electronic devices which produce sound when obstacles are imminent.

The level of this development is fairly low in Nigeria due to poor environmental prediction and uniformity. A sighted guide or use of cane is very common. These methods should be accompanied both by required mobility training. Both personnel and content should be developed.

3.4 Adaptive Educational Materials/Equipment

These include:

- Long cane
- Braillewriter
- Adapted sports equipments (audible balls, etc)
- Model – building plan, bus
- Games
- Abacuses
- Braille atlases
- Braille maps
- Signature guide
- Longhand writing lait
- Parallel docks and wristwatches
- Cassette players/tape recorder.

Teacher's resourcefulness will determine how well these can be used.

Technique of Daily Living Skills

The focus is geared towards:

- Personal care and grooming
- Dressing
- Toileting
- Care of clothing
- House cleaning
- Cooking in the kitchen
- Safety awareness
- Use of tools
- Sewing
- Use of GSM/ Telephone
- Identification of money and other belongings.

3.4 Educational Setting

In Nigeria, the practice is such that professionalizing some delivery for children with special needs are not available in public setting cheaply. Often, with the assistance of the community, a child with visual challenge obtain general socialization peer group, interaction which may not be adequate, considering the compensation required.

Special Schools/Centres

These are public school with pre-school facilities and qualified professionals some are day pupils coming from home.

The principle of least restrictive environment in terms of integration and mainstreaming is gradually widespread. As a result, schools are located within a regular school system.

This type of arrangement is currently on in all the states of the federation. At the Federal Government Level and some states the visually challenged are fully served in an inclusive setting. They are in the same class with sighted students and being taught by the same teacher with additional support from a special education teacher.

This principles as a worldwide approved setting will be discussed later under Contemporary issues in Special Education.

4.0 Conclusion

The early childhood period, as a foundation for all the necessary developmental milestones, and developments in school have been discussed here. Especially, the place of professionals

and even the mother of the infant were adequately explored. Activities geared towards various principles in early childhood were also identified.

In the same light, you were exposed to preparing a child in early childhood for reading and writing as a low vision and visually challenged person. The orientation and mobility of the child was examined in the light of materials which could assist the child to attain a high level of independence. We further discussed the setting and unlimited service delivery setting and the ideal which will be examined in Module V.

5.0 Summary

In this unit on meeting visually challenged needs in early childhood you have been provided an overview into the:

- Unique status of early intervention as it relates to a congenitally blind child.
- Place of home visit and parent education as an extension service to families of children with visual challenges
- Processes involved in creating mother/infant communication and developing compensatory strategies.
- Examples of activities in early childhood for children with visual challenges
- Place of reading and writing for low vision and blind children
- Meaning and activities involved in mobility and orientation
- Techniques of daily living skills
- Educational service delivery setting present in Nigeria and trends for the future.

6.0 Self-Assessment Exercise

Identify 5 abstract concepts, highlighting how you intend to teach the concepts to a 4 year old child with total visual challenges.

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