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PED 433



Children's Literature
Module 3

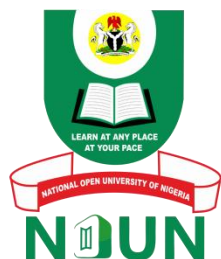
PED 433 (Children's Literature) Module 3

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Unit I Strategies Teaching Children's Literature

1.0 Introduction

Modules 1 and 2 of this course material dealt with basic issues about Children's Literature. Module 1 dealt with Concepts of Children's Literature and Module 2 dealt with ways factors in developing children's reading skills.

In this module, the emphasis is on presenting children's literature. Thus unit I of this module deals with strategies of teaching children's literature.

2.0 Objectives

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

- compare individual reading, group reading and controlled reading strategies
- identify and deal with reading problems.

3.0 Main Content

3.1 Strategies for Teaching Children's Literature

Successful teaching of children's literature must be based on two important factors. The first is that the teacher must be knowledgeable about different purposes and types of reading. You should read again the content of unit 3 of module 2 of this course material which dealt with this to refresh your mind. Another important factor concerns choosing appropriate strategies in form of relevant meaningful activities to use to teach the pupils. The purpose of this unit is to present to you some strategies/activities you can use to teach literature.

Individualized learning

This is one person pupil reading with same guidance. The attributes of individualized learning include children assuming responsibility for their learning, proceeding with activities and materials at their own level or rate in school, home, elsewhere. Choice of learning experiences is made by the children.

The role of the teacher involves:

- stating lesson object pre-testing the children to permit skipping objectives known by them, including activities to elicit children's active participation. Correction of performance is immediately made available to children. If evaluation result is not satisfactory, the child may re-study and be retested by the teacher.
- Giving follow up projects to permit children to apply learned knowledge and skills.

Groups reading

Group reading means a number of persons placed or gathered together and assigned to read about a topic and give a report after. You have to note that whether it is group reading or individual reading it is the individual in the group who reads.

3.2 Controlled Reading

The literature teacher should at any given time control the reading activity of the class through the following:

Control of individual reading

The teacher could provide guided questions which will provide clues to what he wants the individual to read. With these questions, the pupils can read for specific information from the text. Such questions are usually given before the text or passage is read so that they stimulate, encourage and guide the individual reader on the directions the teacher wants him or her to go.

Examples of guided questions are:

What does the passage or text say about Mr. X? How many children has he? Which school did he attend? Is he lazy or hardworking? Etc. Individual pupils should find the answers to these questions as he or she reads the passage or text at home.

Control of group reading

The teacher can control the group reading activities of his or her class by grouping the class. Various group leaders can be assigned to take control of the groups. The various group leaders may act as the speakers of the group. The teacher can assign a text or novel or poetry to each group. Children will read the assigned books at home or the class. The group leaders will summarize the books they have read to the whole class. The groups can be asked questions on differences and similarities existing between one group and another.

Formation of discussion groups

The teacher can also decide to organize discussion groups on what was read from a text or passage or novel, or poetry or short stories. The teacher may give a guide question like "What would you have done if you were in a similar situation? The teacher can decide to allocate marks to the groups. This will create healthy competition and lively discussion in the class.

Formation of Drama Groups

The teacher can form drama groups in the class and every member of the group would be given a portion of his or her reading which he or she will memorize. Pupils are given specific roles to play so as to dramatize the characters in the novel or story read.

In all these activities, the teacher of children's literature is a guide. The teacher should not dominate the activities, but bear in mind that the children are learning and participating actively. He initiates, motivates and encourages the children to ask questions, participate in discussions, and act their roles in plays. His or her involvement at intervals is to ensure the literary activities of children do not derail.

The teacher should take care of individual differences e.g. sex, age, background etc. He should create a positive attitude in the minds of the reader. He should provide interesting novels, texts, short stories, etc. He should train children to read a variety of texts.

He should motivate children to read, let the children see the purpose of reading.

Self-Assessment Exercise

Explain formation of discussion group as a class control activity of the teacher.

4.0 Conclusion

Individual reading is one person reading while group reading refers to a number of persons gathered together and assigned to read a story or text and give a report after. Controlled reading refers to the teacher controlling the reading activities of the class.

5.0 Summary

The following are some important reading methods:

- Skimming, scanning, intensive reading, extensive reading.
- The reading problems are: sub-vocalizing, finger pointing and regression.
- The individual or group reading is controlled by the teacher.

6.0 Self-Assessment Exercise

Compare and contrast individual and group reading.

7.0 References/Further Reading

Abbott, G. & Wingard, P. (1981). *The Teaching of English as an International language: A practical guide*. Ibadan: Collins.

William, D. (1990). *Language Teaching: An Integrated Approach*. Ibadan: Spectrum Books.

Unit 2 Important Considerations in Planning and Literature Lesson

1.0 Introduction

In Unit 3, we discussed suitability, enjoyment and availability as criteria, among others that influence choice of children's literature in school. It is hoped that you gathered that criterion of suitability helps us to determine the extend literature theme, treatment of ideas, level of language, characters and plot, suit the children's developmental levels, maturity, needs, interests, personal problems, social situations, feelings and creative abilities etc. The criterion of enjoyment determines literature children enjoy to read and availability determine and provision of children's literature. These criteria should influence choice of children's literature and not teachers taste and preconceptions.

In this unit, we shall discuss the criteria for choosing children's literature

2.0 Objectives

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

- identify the criteria for choosing children's literature
- discuss the criteria for choosing children's literature.

3.0 Main Content

3.1 Factor to Consider in Presentation to Literature Children

One factor to consider in presenting literature to children is for the teacher to be widely read in children's literature. This will enable him to match the literature to the individual child's needs and interests. Another factor is for the teacher to systematically plan the lesson so as to satisfy the needs and interests of the children. Successful literature lesson plan would start with posing and answering the following questions:

- What types of literature should I teach the children? – Short stories, novel, folk tales, myths and legends, Real-life situations, poems and drama etc? The scheme of work will help the teacher to choose the topic if there is one.
- The second question is: To whom do I teach this topic? To find answers to this question demands the teacher conducting a needs analysis of learners by examining the characteristics of his pupils such as their names, age, developmental levels, gender, socio-economic background, literacy level, urban/rural status, etc.
- The third question is: What are the literary content tasks to be treated. This would lead to the subject content task analysis of the content of the literature material. This is followed by the question: What do I want the children to learn or be able to do after the literature lesson? The answer to this question demands stating the

objectives of the lesson in behavioural terms in the three domains (Cognitive, Affective and Psychomotor)

Through pre-testing the teacher determines the readiness of the children for studying the chosen topic. From the stated objectives, the teacher will select what teaching methods, media and teaching skills that needed for the presentation of the literature lesson. The teacher will now decide how to encourage literature reading through drama, creative writing, poetry or tape-recorded versions of episodes. He will now decide whether the lesson will be presented to a group of children or to the individual child.

What useful activities (improvised drama in the classroom, television and radio, poetry; children's writing, and reading stories aloud etc.) should be provided to encourage children's interest? The books theme, treatment of ideas, language level, character and plot must suit the maturity, interest and emotional capacity of the children. For example, children up to the age of five like stories of animals, toys, pets, parents, grandparents, and children like themselves who get across, play, get up, go shopping and who are fed and scolded, loved, taken out and put to bed. Sometimes, children love made up stories that are about themselves and their own recent activities.

From this delight in the familiar animals etc., children move up to the kind of story which opens up in their familiar world a wide range of possibilities than they normally exploit. They like little people - sometimes animals and fairy creatures; but often actual children – whose behaviour is somewhat unconventional, who break the rules; or are just unable to cope with them, who get into trouble, challenge authority, and triumph over people who are bigger or older than themselves.

My Naughty little sister is an example of the kind of book that bridges the gap between the familiar world of the average child and the unconventional familiar world of little people such as Peter Rabbit. A book such as the Seven White pebbles identifies situations where the child's fears and anxieties are very real, and this is a preparation for the naturalism that will come into his stories as he grows older. Stories within his range of experience, and at this level of simplicity, will continue to appeal to children at least up to the age of eight.

Between the ages of nine and ten years, children enjoy folktales of the kind found in the collections of Joseph Jacobs and Andrew Lang. They give the child a sense of security as he finds that they belong to the life of different environments that he has to adapt to. The child's first experience of the story will be through the teacher, who tells or reads and shows him pictures.

Later he will find himself able to join in the parts of the story, to tell parts or all of it himself, perhaps to act it or write about it; and often the greatest thrill comes when he finds that he can read the story for himself in his own book. The story of how he comes to possess traditional tale through the, perhaps, three years of nursery and primary school days may well reflect the history of his whole development as a person during that time.

In finding stories for his class, the teacher can explore collections of folktales from many sources. Many teachers find that children enjoy the repetition of a small selection of old favourites, but there is a need to bring variety to the child's experience of story, if only to move away from fixed responses from time to time.

At 11 years, allegorical stories of the type of Pilgrims Progress – often tales of moral struggle, following the structure of an arduous journey can take hold on the imagination of the children.

The teacher should note that an average child's experience of literature in school is very largely a shared experience. Consequently, the teacher and the class children should regularly and frequently share stories. With selection of literary materials over, the teacher will pose and answer the last question in his lesson plan.

How do I determine the extent to which the learning has been achieved? To answer this question, the teacher prepares to evaluate students learning in terms of the achievement of set lesson objectives, with a view to re-planning, re-teaching and re-evaluating any phases of the lesson plan that need improvement.

Self-Assessment Exercise

Explain the teachers' role in presenting literature to children.

4.0 Conclusion

There are three broad methods within which most learning takes place:

- Presentation of information to large class group of students
- Self-paced study or individualized learning with each student studying at his or her own rate or pace.
- Small group discussion/interaction between teacher and student or among students. There is now a shift from large class teaching to more emphasis on self-paced learning or individualized learning.

5.0 Summary

The teacher's role in planning literature presentation to children starts with systematic planning of the lesson. The lesson plan assists the teacher to identify the needs and interests of children so as to suit children's literature to their needs and interests.

6.0 Self-Assessment Exercise

Identify and describe elements of planning a literature lesson for children.

7.0 References/Further Reading

Moody, H.L.B. (1971). *The Teaching of literature in Developing Countries*. London: Group Ltd.

Jerrold Kemp & Dayton Deane (1980). *Planning and Producing Instructional Media*. New York: Harper and Row, Publishers.

Unit 3 Criteria for Selecting Children's Literature

1.0 Introduction

In Unit 2, we discussed the importance of children's literature in meeting children's needs. It is hoped that you gathered that children's literature among others, satisfy children's curiosity, security needs, affection needs, spiritual, emotional and intellectual needs. It provides also fun for children and restores children's confidence in their cultural heritage.

In this unit, we shall discuss the criteria for choosing children's literature.

2.0 Objectives

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

- identify the criteria for choosing children's literature
- discuss the criteria for choosing children's literature.

3.0 Main Content

3.1 Criteria for Choosing Children's Literature

The following are the criteria for choosing literature for children:

- Suitability
- Enjoyment
- Availability.

We shall examine these three criteria.

Suitability

The most evident general criterion for choosing literature for children is suitability. The criterion of suitability poses the question: How do the literature theme and treatment of ideas, characters and plot and the level of language suit the child's or children's maturity and interests, personal problems, social situations, creative abilities, understanding, responses and feelings? Overall, this means the suitability or the appropriateness of the literature (novel, short stories, drama, folk tales, legends, myths poultry etc.) to the child or children.

The criterion of suitability demands that a book or novel, short stories, drama, folk tales, legends, myths poetry and so on should be produced largely with a child's developmental needs. Indeed, such literature must be one that deals honestly with children, portrays them candidly and in a medium to which they can respond with imagination and pleasure.

You will recall that children present different levels of development, maturity and interest as well as different relations to the written language of 4 – 5 years, 7 – 8 years and 9 – 12

years. At 7 – 9 years the child's mind is not just impressionable but also stores experiences capable of building up associations when properly stimulated.

At 12 – 18 years, as the child approaches adulthood, his psychology, understanding and interest become mature and distinctive more than his linguistic skills and conceptual powers have by now developed sufficiently to enable him derive aesthetic pleasure from his literature reading. All teachers of literature must be aware of these children's characteristics and should not allow their own tastes, interests and preconceptions to influence choosing children's literature.

A teacher must determine the stage of a child's development before he chooses literature that will suit, stimulate and please the child in any genre of literature given to him.

Enjoyment

Enjoyment is the second criterion of choosing literature for children. This is because literature for children or anyone else is to be read because it is enjoyable; if it is not enjoyed it won't be read. For example, books specially written for adolescents should deal with their everyday concerns and problems of adjustment to approaching adulthood, like problems about love, parent-child conflict, careers, and drugs are enjoyable to adolescents.

Self-Assessment Exercises

Explain suitability as a criterion for choosing literature for children.

Availability

It is one thing to select a wide range of literature to suit needs and experience of children, it is another to see that they are available and they reach the children. A look at book stands, schools and public libraries up and down the country will reveal a dearth of children's literature by Nigerian authors. If the situation is poor in the urban cities, the situation in the rural schools could better be imagined. Many of our children come from impoverished reading background with no opportunities and encouragement to widen their background in primary schools. Those who show initiative have been constrained by the unavailability of libraries.

It is also pertinent to ask where the bookshops are in Nigeria, where the Nigerian child can buy books, especially if he lives in the rural area. How many books can he buy with limited funds? And at school how does the child gain access to a library perhaps locked up in principals' offices. Where are the neighbourhood libraries to which he can go to borrow books outside school hours. The answers to all these questions are depressing as the library facilities and bookshops are very few where they exist.

There are not adequate children's sections in public libraries. This results in the scarcity of children's books or literature. The result is that children have now very little to read outside their textbooks. They therefore have little to talk about commonly. Since children do not have enough to read, they spend their leisure hours in other undesirable ways. They are easily frustrated and their intellectual growth is stunted.

Remedy

In order to make more suitable reading materials available to children, families, communities, schools and Government should strive to establish more libraries for children at least in

every Local Government Area. Authors and publishers could also take the wind out of the sail of apathy towards children's literature by organizing symposia, writing workshop and seminars for authors.

Finally, government has a part to play towards improving the present supply of children's literature. This will encourage reading. Reading is the key to wisdom. If we want good resourceful citizens, then we should provide them good children's literature.

It is desirable for a teacher to allow these criteria to influence his choice of children's literature instead of his own tastes. The teacher is a guide, helper, and clarifier. To be able to decide what literature is suitable or appropriate for his class children at any point in time, the teacher should be widely read in literature for children. It implies that the teacher's task too, is to familiarize himself with a wide range of children's literature, so as to be able to match the literature to the individual child's needs and interests.

In doing this, the teacher is putting himself in the best position to know what is exactly right as literature for the direct experience of the children in his class, both as a group and as individuals.

You should note that the range of literature for children either to read or to learn about oneself and others, or for information, fun and for escape is so wide that it is possible to suit the literature to children's needs and experience. The implication is that it is only the literature that satisfies identified criteria that children should be reading and if such literature that meets these criteria for all children are not available then they should be written.

Self-Assessment Exercise

Enjoyment is a criterion for choosing literature for children, Discuss.

4.0 Conclusion

The criteria that influence the choice of children's literature are many. These are: suitability, enjoyment, and availability to mention but these.

5.0 Summary

The literature children read must be varied enough to appeal to the many reasons for reading; reading to learn about one self and others; reading for information, or for fun and escape. What literature to read to precisely suit personal needs and experience, personal interests, particular creative abilities and social situations etc. makes suitability the first criterion for choosing children's literature. This is followed by other criteria like enjoyment. Literature chosen can only be read by children if it is enjoyable. Then what is suitable and enjoyable should be available. To answer this question makes availability an important criterion for choosing children's literature.

6.0 Self-Assessment Exercise

- List three criteria for determining the worth of literature to be chosen for children.

- Explain (a) One thing the teacher must avoid and (b) One thing he must do in choosing literature for children.

7.0 References/Further Reading

Alan Davies (1973). *Literature for Children*. Oxford: The Open University Press.

Chidi Ikonne. [1969], Emelia Oko, Peter Onwudinjo (1992) *Children and Literature in Africa*. Calabar: Heineman Educational Books (Nigeria) Plc.

Unit 4 The Teacher's Functions in Preparing Literature

1.0 Introduction

In Unit 4, we discussed important considerations in planning presentation of literature to children. It is hoped that you gathered that literature lesson planning starts with identifying the type of literature to teach student from the literary scheme of work; examining the characteristics of the learners and assessing their needs so as to suit the literature to the learners' needs and interests. This is followed by the subject content task analysis, statement of objectives, which determine the teaching methods, materials, teaching skills and evaluation criteria.

2.0 Objectives

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

- explain the teacher's functions in presenting literature (Novel) to children.

3.0 Main Content

3.1 The Role of the Teacher in Novel Presentation to Children

The novel is a form of prose fiction literature capable of providing learning experience of unique value. If well selected and imaginatively taught, this form of literature can develop considerable enthusiasm and interest in students and will easily lead to extensive personal reading at the natural speed of the individual reader.

The teacher's role in teaching students novel is first to accept that prose fiction is a field which demands a good deal of flexibility from the teacher and that some degree of individual and group work may be necessary. The teacher should encourage intensive and extensive reading so that everybody is actively participating with nobody left inactive. The teacher is expected to foster a general reading habit in the children. The teacher observes certain basic principles to solve problems usually involved in the development of general reading habits. These basic principles are as follows:

- Teacher must give children demonstrations and examples
- Give suggestions
- Make provisions,
- Reinforcement.

We shall explain these concepts:

Example: The teacher imparts the habit of general reading by a process of demonstration and example to stir the basic interests and readiness of his students. The teachers example will comprise producing from time to time a new story, essay or poem which surprises children by its appropriateness to what concerns them (their personal problems, social

situations and the world in general as they see it). The teacher will also judiciously make use of allies among his students. Those who show most resourcefulness should have opportunities of presenting their discoveries to the class, and if spontaneous admiration is evoked in the class, the teacher should praise the effort.

To encourage a readiness to contribute, it is good a idea to make occasions for every student or child in the class to produce something he or she has come across, of interest, allowing perhaps an average of 5 minutes each or even less and showing appreciation of everybody's efforts, no matter how modest.

Suggestion

The teacher must do more than give examples to students. In proportion as he manages to stimulate willingness, he must also suggest how it can be followed up. The teacher must suggest what books, stories etc. might be read, and also where they can be found. The most helpful thing he can do is to provide a reading list of authors, titles, and topics which are likely to have a genuine appeal to students at any particular level. The reading list should be duplicated so that each student can have his or her copy, and may perhaps kick off items as he or she reads along.

Provision

Reading lists should always be linked as closely as possible with what students can be expected to find available in the library or bookshops without undue trouble or expense. In some places, there may be public libraries, and teachers should make it their business to know what IS available there, and make suggestions to the school authorities of what they would like to see added. In other cases, the school itself should endeavour to purchase these books.

Government, school authorities and teachers should ensure that funds, premises and personnel are available, according to local means, for the provision of libraries which are well cared for, well stocked and convenient. Efforts must be made to encourage the use of libraries for general reading, not only for the writing of assignments.

In some cases, teachers may be able to establish class libraries as well, so that the supply of books for general reading can be closely linked with the rest of the programme of study. The books available must be of a kind that students can easily cope with on their own to promote compulsive reading.

Reinforcement

The enthusiastic teacher will find various ways not only of creating a reading habit, but of maintaining and extending it. Not making it seem too much of labour. What is meant here is that the teacher works with students by praise and encouragement rather than by blame and compulsion.

The teacher can get students to keep records of what they read, and even provide special exercise books or loose – leaf folders for the purpose. This can be made into a practice which promotes a degree of personal pride in achievement. Such students' records could include information such as:

1.	Title	6	Principal characters or topics
2.	Author	7.	Brief outline of story theme
3.	Publisher	8.	Points of interest or disapproval
4.	Date of publication	9.	Memorable quotations or extracts
5.	Date read	10.	Opinions expressed about the book others etc.

The teacher should create a healthy interest in students when they read books for the sake of reading not for examinations and marks or grades. Students should read for fun, for enjoyment and information. Teachers may also consider various ways of socializing the reading habit of children, for example, by encouraging children's membership of literary societies and related activities both inside the school and in a wider societal basis. Teacher may organize various kinds of inter-school literary functions, possibly a famous literature writer can be invited to school to talk to say final year students in a particular locality.

Self-Assessment Exercise

Explain suggestion as a role of the teacher in the presentation of a novel.

The teacher and the study of a novel:

The teacher should explain the structure of a novel to students as follows:

- Setting – this means the geographical, historical, social, sometimes political environment or background in which the story in the novel is set.
- Character here refers to the persons in the story.

The teacher should teach about the characters using the following:

- What the author himself said
- What the main character himself says or does or who he/she relates with others
- What other characters say about one another
- What a character's presented as thinking, feeling, doing or refraining from doing.
- How is the story in the novel presented? Teacher should teach - the students need to be to observe matters of personal attention as well as note that events can be influenced by social machinery like in the duties of police officers, flood or a plague.
- Use of language – teacher to explain the use of language e.g. sub-families, dialects, registers and personal idiolects which may be employed in the course of a single novel.

The teacher aids the study of a novel with:

- choice of edition getting off to a good start by reading passages from the book before students ever see it: any visual aids is introduced at the right time. Providing a structure of the study. In the course of his preliminary assessment, the teacher will have considered how the book can best be divided into sections.

Making it real -The need for helping students to grasp a work of literature by making sure that they have an adequate and correct idea of any fundamental problems or concepts that have been emphasized.

- Varying the method: since the reading and study of a novel is often an extensive journey, the teacher can help a great deal by using different methods in dealing with various parts. The bulk of the reading will be done by students individually or privately. The teacher may decide to read some parts aloud to the class, especially if there are effects of drama or humour which he can bring out.

The teacher can introduce variety in the methods used to test or assess the reading of various sections. Keeping stock – As a book is of some length and complexity, it is necessary for students to retain some impressions of what has gone before and it is usually helpful to compile the list of characters, with a few comments on each.

Discussion, and the leading of discussion, is one of the subtle arts which a teacher of literature needs to develop to a high degree. The teacher should avoid monopoly of the discussion by one or just a few individuals in the class or by himself. Discussion should be guided by two important principles.

First, to arrive at the truth, as far as possible – and second, to bring in as many individuals as possible. Discussion best arises out of questions and a skillful teacher will devise sets of questions which pass from factual, to the interpretative and finally to the speculative. It is important to the teacher to know how to formulate the fundamental issues present in a book. The teacher should bear in mind that critical books are a means to study, not an end in themselves.

4.0 Conclusion

The teacher of literature performs various roles in the course of teaching children's literature.

5.0 Summary

The roles that teachers of children's literature perform include:

- Encouraging students to do intensive and extensive reading.
- Giving students demonstrations and examples, suggestions, provisions and reinforcement. Explaining the setting of novel character's narrative, the language, making it real and talking it over so as to achieve set objectives.

6.0 Self-Assessment Exercise

Take a published novel or story for children and describe four you will teach the content to your pupils.

7.0 Reference/Further Reading

Moody H.L.B. (1971). *The Teaching of Literature in Developing Countries*. London: Group Ltd.