PHILOSOPHY OF PRIMARY EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

MADE SIMPLE

by

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PREFACE

Despite a plethora of books on philosophy of primary education, the need to write more books cannot be daunted. While the subject matter remains relatively stable, the authors and their methods of presentation are dynamic and are varied. This course shall consider:

1. Philosophy of primary education in Nigeria
2. Policy statement for junior primary schools and
3. Recent trends in primary education.

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to:

1) Late John Chor Kajo
2) My Students all over the world
3) My teachers and colleagues in the teaching profession.
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INTRODUCTION

This course shall consider:
1. National policy provisions on it
2. Policy statement for junior primary school
3. Recent trends in primary education

We shall therefore proceed as follows:
1. The concept of philosophy
2. Philosophy of Education
3. Introduction to the philosophy of pre-primary and primary education.
5. Basic outlines of the National policy on pre-primary education in Nigeria. Nature, purpose, types of Nursery/Primary Education.
6. Recent trends in primary-education.
CHAPTER ONE

1. THE CONCEPT OF PHILOSOPHY

Philosophy Defined: Etymologically the word philosophy is said to have been coined out of two words meaning love of wisdom, philo meaning love and sophia meaning wisdom. The two when put together usually arrive at “Love of wisdom" this wisdom could be above life, some branch of study etc.

The term ‘philosophy; can be looked upon simply as the natural investigation of the truths and can also be understood as the critical study of the basic principles and concepts of a particular branch of knowledge e.g the philosophy of science. We may also look at it as a system of principles of guidance in practical affairs (a philosophy of life).

We may look at philosophy simply as a science of reasoning (rationale) for actions, events, situations, behaviour, etc.

2. PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

Philosophy of Education is a field of enquiry, speculation and application in which philosophical methods are applied to the study of a problem, topic or issue in education. Characteristics of these methods is the attempt to think as accurately, clearly, coherently and systematically as possible.

The philosophy of education has a special concern with knowledge and theories. Education philosophers are not only concerned with practice but also with how philosophy relates to other fields of study in the attempt to shed light on educational problems and issues.
CHAPTER TWO

3. INTRODUCTION TO THE PHILOSOPHY OF PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION AND PRIMARY EDUCATION

National policy on Education is government's way of achieving that part of its national objective that can be achieved using education as a tool. The five main national goals of Nigeria which have been endorsed as the necessary foundation for the national policy on education are the building of:

1. A free and democratic society;
2. A just and egalitarian society;
3. A united, strong and self-reliant nation;
4. A great and dynamic economy;
5. A land of bright and full opportunities for all citizens.

Nigeria's philosophy of education therefore believes that:

a. Education is an instrument for national development and the interaction of persons and ideas are all aspects of education.

b. Education fosters the worth and development of the individual for each individual's sake, and for the general development of the society;

c. There is need for equality of educational opportunities to all Nigerian children, irrespective of any real or imagined disabilities each according to his or her ability.

d. There is need for functional education for the promotion of a progressive, united Nigeria; to this end, school programmes need to be relevant, practical and comprehensive, while interest and ability should determine individuals direction in education.
Nigeria's philosophy of education therefore is based on:

a. The development of the individual into a sound and effective citizen;
b. The full integration of the individual into the community and
c. The provision of equal access to educational opportunities for all citizens of the country at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels both inside and outside the formal system.

The quality of instruction at all levels has to inculcate the following values:

1. Respect for the worth and dignity of the individuals;
2. Faith in man's ability to make rational decisions; and human relations;
3. Moral and spiritual values in inter-personal and human relations;
4. Shared responsibility for the common good of society;
5. Respect for the dignity of labour;
6. Promotion of the emotional, physical and psychological health of all children.
7. Acquisition of competencies necessary for self reliance

The philosophical insights mentioned in the introduction are elaborated briefly here. The philosophy of pre-primary and primary education indicates that parents and teachers must have the ability to receive and understand the true nature of the children under their care. Some of the insights are:

**Needs:** The current development in education emphasizes child-centred education. It means that the teacher must strive to discover the needs of the children he or she teaches. Basic needs of children are physiologic, include foods, elimination, rest, exercise and fresh air. Social needs are belonging, feeling secure, again recognition and being loved.
The ego of self needs are the need to be loved, the need to feel wanted or liked, the need to have a sense of security, and the need to develop self-respect. School parents and teachers must know that differences exist among children in the home and in the class. Needs of children being taught, the teacher is like a medical doctor that cannot cure a disease without what it is and its care.

**Interests:** Children learn best when they show interest. The primary school teacher must discover children's interests in order to build them up in their learning. In doing so, learning of basic skills up in their learning, simply isolated drills and exercises but are achieved by harnessing such learning to actual interests. Children's actual interests could also provide starting points from which to move onward in educationally valuable direction. Motivation would be improved because action would be more meaningful on the basis of the children's interests. Learning would be more permanent and more integral to the children's development because of the learning is gained under the pressure of whole-hearted interests.

**Growth:** Dewey in Diale (1990) says that growth is the enjoying and further development of experience realized by people to be valuable. Hence the aim of education is to bring about such growth.

Grant (1954:42) puts it clearly when he says that the aim of education is to help the child to develop as well as possible mentally, physically, morally, socially and emotionally. Education, therefore, is growth or the process of development from birth to death of every individual human being.

Maturation and readiness are parts of growth. The teacher has a duty to know the educational growth of the children he or she teaches in order to help them grow well educationally.
Curriculum:

All subjects taught in the pre-primary and primary schools should aim at helping the children to live the present and preparing them for the future. The curriculum should be revised regularly to meet the demands of the ever-changing society. The values that the primary school should be concerned with its educational function are stated in the National Policy on primary education.

Play:

Play is an educational progress has a long history in Western Education. Plato the Greek philosopher saw play as the best way to bring children's education, on the ground that any other way at that stage would involve compulsion or force which was unbefitting for a free person. Children learn a lot detect children's talents through play activities. This mostly useful in the pre-primary and first three years of primary school. The way to education of children is the "play-way" because without interest there is no learning. The child's interest is all in play.

Learning Experience:

Learning is the process of coming to know something physical or conceptual thing, event of situation. Coming to know always involves an object, and learning is therefore is a subject-object relationship. Some Teachers can always provide learning experience before coming to school to learn. For human beings to learn is for them to acquire knowledge through experience. Learning begins from the known to the unknown.
Activity:

The pre-primary and school curriculum is to be thought of in terms of activity and experience. Activity is very important in the education of children. The teacher must strive to provide children with activity in every lesson taught. Children learn best when they participate or have an activity. Children learn by doing which means learning through activity.

Self-Expression:

Children learn to express themselves in speech, writing, creative arts, singing, drawing, carving, painting, dancing, and clay modelling etc. Opportunity for choice is the only clay necessary condition for self-expression.
CHAPTER THREE

4. CONTRIBUTIONS OF SOME LEADING PHILOSOPHERS

1. Fredrick W. Froebel (1782-1852) was a German Philosopher and educator. He compared children to plants. He stressed that children required as much attention and nourishment as plants in the garden. His philosophy was that children should be allowed to develop naturally by doing and by spontaneous play activity.

He carefully planned play materials and made them available in homes to create meaningful learning experiences for children. His research and concern centered on the first seven years of a child's life. His work "Education of Man" became the foundation of the kindergarten in 1837. Froebel emphasized the extensive use of play materials for children 1-7 years old. He believed that teachers should create meaningful learning experiences for children. He stressed the fact that children develop in stages and teachers cannot do their job well without understanding the stages of children's development. Froebel died in 1852.


He was born in January 12, 1746 in Zurich, Switzerland. He was adequately educated and was influenced by the political conditions of his country, Switzerland, and by the educational ideas of Rousseau.

Pestalozzi took poor children to his house and making them work by spinning and weaving and learn simultaneously to become self-supported. He had a strong belief in the resources of human nature. That man himself was responsible for his moral and intellectual state. That education should develop man's innate facilities to think from primary to higher education in Switzerland. He
established institutes which served as experimental bases for proving his method in its three branches, namely; intellectual, moral, and physical developments; later included vocational and civil training. He believed that life itself educates the living. He was one of the first people to stress the need for popular education. He believed that every man has inherent powers capable of development and has equal rights to be educated. He devised a teaching method aimed at strengthening the child's own faculties—power of mind, power of doing things, power to see, hear, speak, and understand to make the child proficient and secure, able to help him and others. And modern primary education, as he pioneer of playway methods.

3. Maria Montessori (1870-1952)

She was born on 31 August 1870 in Italy. She studied medicine at the University of Rome. She served and held various positions in government and higher institutions in Italy. While she was working at the Psychiatric clinic of the University of Rome, she became interested in the educational problems of the mentally retarded children. She then founded the Montessori method of teaching young children by direction of their natural activities rather than by strict control. When she was director of the Orthophrenic school of Rome, her new method of teaching proved very successful.

While she was the anthropologist in the University of Rome from 1894-1905, she continued her studies in philosophy, psychology and education. In 1907, Maria opened the first "Casa dei Bambini." (Children's House) for young children from the San Lorenzo slum district of Rome. She applied her method learning to the
children of normal intelligence. As it was a successful experiment, other Montessori schools were opened. The Montesti method emphasized: (a) development of initiative and sense perception through freedom; (b) provision of self-help instructional materials; (c) early development of writing and reading skills; (d) she held that children should be taught to write before they read. Maria Montessori for forty years traveled to Europe, United States and India lecturing, writing and establishing teacher training programmes. In 1922 she was appointed government inspector of schools in Italy but she was forced to leave the country in the Netherlands where she died on May 6, 1952. She remembered for the playway methods of teaching and learning.

4. John Dewey (1859-1952) was born in Brinington, Vermont and grew from a shy youth to a man whose influence spread throughout the world. After his graduation from the University of Vermont, he taught classics, science and algebra for a short time in high school and later studied and received his Ph.D Degree. He taught for ten years at the University of Michigan. He also taught at the University of Minnesota, University of Chicago and Columbia University. He was a defender of Chicago and democratic process. He wrote many books including Democracy and Education, Reconstruction in Philosophy, Experiment and Nature etc.

John Dewey was the founder of the project method growing urbanization, children were losing the great deal of the practical knowledge and sense cooperation that existed among rural people. He thought that schools should make up for this presenting a real task for the children to tackle. It puts responsibility on the children and gives scope for their initiative.
CHAPTER FOUR

4. BASIC OUTLINE ON THE NATIONAL POLICY ON PRE-PRIMARY AND PRIMARY EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

1. Pre-primary Education: This is the education given in an educational institution to children aged 3-5 years prior to their entering the primary school. Pre-primary education is also known as kindergarten education or Nursery education. The government encourages private efforts in the provision of nursery education throughout the country. Therefore, nursery/primary schools on private basis are found in all the 774 local government areas of Nigeria.

774 local government areas of Nigeria. The nature of pre-primary education is found in the individual effort and group or organizational efforts such churches organization, parents-teachers Associations opening nurser schools in many secondary schools for children of staff and interested members of the Community.

Standards and structures including facilities differ based on the financing of the schools.

The purpose of pre-primary education (National policy on Education 1998:7).

a. Effecting a smooth transition from the home to the school;
b. Preparing the child for the primary level of education;
c. Providing adequate care and supervision for the child while their parents are at work, farms, markets, offices etc.
d. Inculcating social norms;
e. Inculcating in the child the spirit of enquiry and creativity through the exploration of nature, the environment, art, music and playing with toys.
(f) Giving the child opportunities for developing manipulative skills that will enable him to function effectively in the society within the limits of his capacity.

g. Providing basic tools for further educational advancement, including preparation for trades and crafts of the locality.

There are two types of primary education in Nigeria which are public and private. Public primary schools are established and run by governments, while private primary schools are established and run by individuals and organizations.

iii. *Influence of pre-natal, home and environment on the Nursery/Primary School Child.*

A pre-natal influences (from conception to birth):

In evaluating the importance of influences during the pre-natal period, it is by far the most important period of human growth and development despite short length of nine months. Lugo (1989:295) says that the environment forces exerted on the mother could influence prenatal development. The mother's conditions psychologically, physically and socially serve as the total environment for the developing organism.

If the mother is health, happy and comfortable in all the three areas and receives proper prenatal medical care, she will have a healthy baby.

Prenatal care includes advice on proper diet such as proteins, minerals, vitamins, fats and carbohydrates. The evidence for the importance of the relationship between diet and the health of the mother and the unborn baby is clear. Deng (1993:34) says that the
general health of a pregnant mother has a great influence on the health of the baby. A healthy and happy mother is most likely to produce a healthy, happy, socially and psychologically well adjusted child.

b. Influence of the Home:

The home is the foundation of the society. The home is the first school of the child. Deng (1993:26) states that the family or home institution is one of the primary agents of socialization and its impact on the education is not contestable.

The child learns from the mother being the best teacher, the father and other members of the family. The influence of the home on the child is great because socialization begins from the home; love and care start from the home; learning to obey, respect for others, and learning all the social norms and the display of the acceptable behaviours and attitudes. The influence of the home on the child are great making the home as the first school of children.

c. Influence of Environment on the nursery/primary school child:

Environment influences our development throughout our whole life because the fertilized cell responds to its environment throughout all the stages of its existence from conception to death. The environment of the unborn child depends on the health of the mother varies according to her diet and activities.

Environment is always a critical factor in our response and in our growth. Farrant (1970:40) states that after birth the child is subjected to a more complicated environment composed of
physically, emotional and social forces. The physical environment experienced varies greatly from one person to another even in the same family. Differences in development may be due to host of causes all of which are environmental.

According to Farrant (1970:41) man is the most free being to choose his environment, and the most able to adapt it to his wishes. Choice is a factor we must take into consideration in any study environmental effects.

Child's mental development is affected by his prenatal environment. Unfortunate physical and mental effects upon children have been traced to drugs taken by mothers during pregnancy. These are environmental effects. After birth, the child's environment is immensely broadened and the child is subjected to constantly changing physical, emotional and social experiences.

These all influence child's mental development. It has been shown that conditions of diet, sleep, health and social contacts have influence upon the child's mental development.

iv. Preliminary programmes and curriculum of Nursery/Primary Education.
A. Programmes and curriculum of nursery education.
Nursery education is a programme should seek the cooperation of the school and the community. Deng (1993:43) says that the support and involvement of the total community are essential in evolving an educational curriculum for the nursery child that is enough to cover the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains. Provision of education for the nursery starts with a well articulated curriculum also for the parent and the nursery teacher.

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Denga (1993:44) states that the curriculum is closely followed by the development of training materials for use in the programme. Such materials include teachers manual, handbook, and teaching methods, teachers cannot push the children to learn what they are not ready to learn. The content of what is to be learnt by the nursery children and the methods to be adopted in teaching them start from the simple to abstract.

Concrete objects, names of things and people; games weight and heights are appropriate content for the nursery children.

1. **Information on personal data is very appropriate**
2. **Physical development with appropriate**
   Physical materials which can promote physical development - toys, balls, pencils and paper for drawing and writing, swings, musical instruments and other materials that can stimulate physical growth. Games are very good for physical development.
3. **Social development:** This involves communication skills, socialization which starts at the home or family level. Learning to respect and be polite to others, learning social behaviours.
4. **Emotional Development:** Parents and nursery teachers must display emotional stability to be able to influence the children. The nursery child should learn to control his or her emotions such as joy, sorrow, anger, love, laughter, aggression, anxiety and jealousy; Denga (1993:84).
5. **Mental Development:**
   The content here is to encourage interaction with people; to emphasized verbal and non-verbal communication. The child can start to learn names of domestic animals, names of play things and listen to stories about people and animals, the nursery children use stories and sticks to add and subtracts numbers.
b. Primary Education Curriculum

The curriculum content of primary education emphasizes the following aspects:

1. Literacy and numeracy skills;
2. Elementary science
3. Study of social norms and values of the Community and that of the country.
4. Physical and Health Education which includes awareness of healthy habits and diseases prevention habits.
5. Character, moral and religious education.
6. Aesthetic and creative education involving outdoor and musical activities.
7. Teaching of local crafts, domestic science and agriculture.

v. Teaching Methods:

Teaching methods are procedures or ways teachers use in imparting knowledge. Teaching methods are various ways used by teachers in teaching and understanding.

Teaching methods provides ways to use teaching aids to facilitate teaching and increase efficiency.

Some Teaching Methods are:

Story-telling, playing, teaching aids; discussion; questions and answers; project method; reading; dramatization; class excursion; problem-solving; use of resource persons and assignment method.

1. Teaching methods should provide for natural tendencies of the children to do or make things and express themselves.
2. Children should not be told things they could find out for themselves, using their own experiences without spending too much time.

3. Mastery of subject matter requires careful preparation and the use of the use of teaching aids contributes to the economy of effort and time which gives confidence.

4. A good introduction of a lesson arouses interest and leads to focus attention on the lesson.

5. Important points should be emphasized and should recur throughout the lesson.

6. The weak children need the teachers' attention more than the bright children.

7. The teacher should or must always use suitable methods in his or her lessons presentation.

The above seven points are important to know with regards to the teaching strategies in the classroom. Nursery teachers way of teaching the children at this stage of their development is through the PLAY method and the second method to it is the STORY method.

Stories provide younger children with increased avenues for self-expression as well as provide the teacher with added insight into their habits, almost any topic. The story can be told by the teacher, who should be well aware that children like stories which express feelings similar to their own.

Some of the most revealing stories can be treated and told by the children themselves about any interesting headings or topic.

The importance of teaching aids in learning shows that:

1. Learning experiences can be made more memorable through the use of teaching aids.
2. Teaching aids can supply a concrete base for conceptual thinking and hence reduce meaningless word responses of children.

3. Teaching aids can make children's learning more permanent.

4. Teaching aids stimulate interest and self-activity on the part of the learners.

5. Teaching aids can contribute to understanding and vocabulary development.

6. Teaching aids assist in educating pupils but should not be used as a means of entertainment.

7. Teaching aids provide experiences not easily obtained otherwise and contribute to the efficiency, depth, and variety of learning.

Some teaching aids are: chalkboard, pictures, bulletin boards, posters, cartoons, visual materials, maps, radio, television, films, models, charts, graphs, slides, food samples, diagrams, and flannel graps and so on.

vi. Evaluation of performance of nursery and primary levels.

A. Evaluation of performance of nursery children is through observation in education is never over-emphasized.

The teacher of the nursery child must be ready to observe the child in all aspects of the child's life while in the school from Monday to Friday. The teacher must learn to record all the observation made during each week, through the term and through the school year. The evaluation of performance must be made in the processes of development physical, mental, social, moral, and emotional. Whatever the teacher observes in all the areas mentioned in the learning process is carefully and adequately recorded.
No nursery teacher should be ignorant of children's development in their educational growth. Through observation the true assessment of performance of children at nursery level is adequately obtained.

B. Evaluation of performance at primary level:

Evaluation of performance of primary school children is through continuous assessment. In some states, the primary school child Primary school leaving certificate examination. Evaluation of pupils' performance at this level requires adequate and careful records of the children's continuous assessment.

The primary school teacher has a great responsibility in carrying out his or her duties very successfully.
CHAPTER FIVE

VI. RECENT TRENDS IN PRIMARY EDUCATION

Nursery and Primary school organization and management.

The organization and management of nursery schools are the responsibilities of the individuals and organization that established them.

The Nigerian primary education system has in the last few decades suffered a lot of setbacks, deterioration and decay; this has contributed greatly to the lowering standard of education in the country because the whole education system of the country rests on its primary education system has in the last few decades suffered a lot of set-backs, deterioration and decay. This has contributed greatly to the lowering standard of education in the country because the whole education system of the country rests on its primary education system from total collapse and reappears its lost glory and image, the Federal government in 1963 established by decree No. 31 a National primary education commission (NPEC).

The commission was short-lived because cynics had continued to question its commission was reconstituted vide decree No. 93 of 25th August, 1993 to put primary education on its correct footing.

The commission is headed by an Executive secretary who is appointed by the Head of state to serve for a term of 5 years. He works with two board members and 4 directors to make sure the objectives of the commission are achieved.
Functions of the Commission are:
1. To collate after consultations with all state governments periodical plans for a balanced and co-ordinated developments of primary education in Nigeria.
2. To prescribes maximum standards in all aspects of primary education throughout Nigeria.
3. To collate, analyze and publish information relating to primary education in Nigeria.
4. To carry out regular personnel audits of primary school teachers in each state of the federation.

Funding: The commission is founded by the Federal State and Local Governments, at 65% federal, 20% state and 15% provided by all local governments.

State Primary Education Board (SPEB)
The Board is headed by a chairman and works with other board members.

Functions of the state primary education board are:
1. Management of primary schools in the state;
2. Recruitment, appointment, promotion and discipline of teaching and non-teaching staff under it on grade level 07 and above;
3. Posting and deployment of staff under it, including inter-state transfer;
4. Disbursement of funds provided to it from federal and state governments;
5. Retirement and reabsorption of teachers;
6. Setting up an effective functional supervisory unit;
7. Responsible for the approval, training of teaching and non-teaching staff;
8. Assessment and funding of salaries and allowances of teaching and non-teaching staff based on the scheme of service drawn up by state government.

Local Government Education Authority

The education authority is under very close supervision of the state primary education board.

Functions of the local government education authority are:

1. Day to day administration of primary schools in the local government area;
2. The appointment, posting, transfer, promotion and discipline of staff on grade level 01-06 in the local government area;
3. Recommending to the state primary education board for discipline, promotions of the staff on grade level 07 and above;
4. Submission of annual statistics, accounts and monthly returns of primary schools in the LGA to the state primary education board;
5. Payment of salaries allowances, and benefits of all teaching and non-teaching staff under it.
6. Undertaking general maintenance of schools, etc and
7. Acquisition and distribution of instructional materials to schools under the LGA.

Primary Education therefore is organized and managed by the three tiers of government in Nigeria, Federal, State and Local Governments.

ASSIGNMENT:

Write short notes on:
1. Universal Free primary Education
2. 6334 System of Education
3. 934 System, m of Education
4. UBE
5. SUBEB
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