

# PLANNING AND DELIVERY OF FUNCTIONAL LESSONS TO LEARNERS OF AGES THREE TO TWELVE IN LINE WITH THE UNIVERSAL BASIC EDUCATION (UBE) CURRICULUM IN NIGERIA

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Effective and qualitative teaching at the Nursery and Primary School levels entail a whole gamut of orchestrated preparations. Therefore, this paper examines the functionality of the lesson prepared by [lie trained-teachers will depend on (he life he/she brings to the topic(s), the stale of mind of the learners, and (he enabling environment, ll therefore implies that for the Current Universal Basic Education (UBE) Programme to achieve its set objectives, the teacher's activities in the teaching learning process is germane, and calls for a new vision, reorientation and reengineering from all its ramifications. More specifically, the Universal Basic Education (UBE) is crucial in determining a comprehensive education.

## **Introduction**

The classroom teacher is an important variable in the teaching-learning situation. What he/she does in the classroom determines the success or otherwise of the entire curriculum. For effective and qualitative teaching, under the UBE Scheme, teachers must step-up their leaching skills in the way they handle the teaching scenario, their handling of the learners in their custody, and their implementation of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) Scheme which is designed to give a new least of life to our children in particular, and the society in general.

Developing a highly educated, mature and professionally qualified teachers at the speed and on the scale planned is a huge challenge. Unless the children under consideration (ages 3-12) spend their time in warm, affectionate relationships with teachers whom they know well and love, they do not develop and learn with quality (Bruce, 2005). These children we are referring to need teachers who are trained to a high level in their knowledge and understanding of child development and educated in the humanities, arts and sciences so that they can help the pupils to learn effectively, achieve, enjoy and make a contribution. These are leaders of the future.

Recent studies (Demasio, 2004; Gopnik, A., Meltzoff, A. and Kuhl, 1999) on infant brain development show that most of a person's neurons are formed from ages 0-8. The period falls within Creche, Kindergarten, Nursery and early Childhood Education. If a young child does not receive sufficient nurturing, nutrition, parental or teachers' interaction, and stimulus during this crucial period, the child may be left with a developmental deficit that hampers his or her success in school. Therefore, all hands must be on deck to ensure a holistic planning and delivery of functional lessons in this 'fragile' segment of our education.

This background information takes us to what education and teaching entail at least in the context of this paper.

## **Education and Teaching**

Teaching goes beyond transmission of knowledge, it has to do with developing the innate abilities of the children. According to Afam (2006), teaching is the process of guiding the activities of the learners in order to produce desirable learning. It is what Alexander (1974) opined as the act of systematically presenting stimuli and /or cues. (A stimulus is anything or something that can cause activity.) To Coombs (1973), education is all institutionalized instructions or course of study designed to make the learning person or students experience the type of curriculum that is capable of providing essential learning needs. Education equips the learning individual with knowledge and develops the mind and character. Education equips the individual with the ability to think; fundamental principles equip the educated person with the capacity to think. The educated person has a developed mind. The developed mind is the basis of sustainable growth and development (Igbimi, 2006). Teaching on the other hand is a normative interactive human process involving complex decision-making on different aspects of classroom interaction. Let us draw this analogy put forward by Ehindero (2006) between teaching and marketing or selling. The teacher like the seller has a product (packaged knowledge) to 'sell' to an active, critically minded 'buyer' the students. To sell the knowledge or message, call it concepts, generalization, principles or laws embedded in different disciplines of the school curriculum, the teacher has to make the product 'attractive' to the buyer, he/she has to know through research and planning, the 'taste' or the buyers in order to determine how to develop and package the product to sell. In developing such products, the teacher will be guided by the Psychology of the learners, their levels of intellectual abilities, their preparedness or predisposition to learn, their learning styles, learning habits and the optimum atmosphere within which the learners can negotiate the meanings of the packaged knowledge with the teachers. The negotiation has to take place within the context of trust, commitment, willingness, understanding and professional ethics.

The above analogy sums up the functionality of lessons/intended activities for learners within the age brackets three to twelve years in the country. Before we delve into our discussion on the presentation and practice of learning activities for these sets of pupils, it is imperative to examine the structure and contents of the 9-year Basic Education Curriculum.

### 9-Year Basic Education Curriculum

**Table 1: Structure and Contents of the 9-Year Basic Education Curriculum**

Education Level	Core Compulsory Subjects	Elective Subjects
Lower Basic Primary 1-3	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. English Studies</li> <li>2. One major Nigerian language (Hausa, Igbo, Yoruba)</li> <li>3. Mathematics</li> <li>4. Basic Science and Technology</li> <li>5. Social Studies</li> <li>6. Cultural and Creative Arts (CCA)</li> <li>7. The Religious (CRK/IRK)</li> <li>8. Physical and Health Education (PHE)</li> <li>9. Computer Studies</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Agriculture</li> <li>2. Home Economics</li> <li>3. Arabic Language</li> </ol> <p>NOTE: Must offer one elective but not more than two.</p>
Middle Basic Primary 4-6	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. English Studies</li> <li>2. One major Nigerian language (Hausa, Igbo, Yoruba)</li> <li>3. Mathematics</li> <li>4. Basic Science and Technology</li> <li>5. Social Studies</li> <li>6. Cultural and Creative Arts (CCA)</li> <li>7. The Religious (CRK/IRK)</li> <li>8. Physical and Health Education (PHE)</li> <li>9. French Language</li> <li>10. Computer Studies</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Agriculture</li> <li>2. Home Economics</li> <li>3. Arabic Language</li> </ol> <p>NOTE: Must offer 1 elective, but not more than 2</p>
Upper Basic JSS 1-3	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. English Studies]</li> <li>2. One major Nigerian language (Hausa, Igbo, Yoruba)</li> <li>3. Mathematics</li> <li>4. Basic Science</li> <li>5. Social Studies</li> <li>6. Cultural and Creative Arts (CCA)</li> <li>7. The Religious (CRK/IRK)</li> <li>8. Physical and Health Education</li> <li>9. French Language</li> <li>10. Basic Technology</li> <li>11. Computer Studies</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Agriculture</li> <li>2. Home Economics</li> <li>3. Arabic Language</li> <li>4. Business Studies</li> </ol> <p>NOTE: Must offer 1 elective, but not more than 3.</p>

Source: Adapted from Osho, 2006

A close examination of table 1, above shows that children between the ages 3-12 years fall within the ambit of the lower and middle basic primary education. Lower basic - primary 1-3 while middle basic involves primary 4-6. Our major concern is the presentation and practice as regards each of the subjects itemized in table 1. The teachers who are the link between the curriculum and the learners should be proactive, and teach learners functionally.

The National Policy on Education (NPE) (2004, Revised Edition) Section 2.13 (e) states clearly that in carrying out the curriculum of children between ages 3-5, play should be considered as an important variable, and therefore should be a channel of instruction at this level. Children between the ages 3-5 fall within the Nursery or Pre-Primary Education. One of the purposes of Nursery or Pre-Primary Education (Section 2.13 (e)) is the inculcation in the child the spirit of inquiry and creativity through the exploration of nature, the environment, art, music and playing with toys, etc. However, it is discovered that the Pre-Primary Curriculum content is not embedded in the UBE curriculum package. This is unconnected with the fact that Pre-Primary Education in the country is mainly in the domain of private operators who design programmes that they deem fit without taking into cognizance the various peculiarities of children within this age bracket. (Eyengho, 2008) The Private Sector who are practically running Pre-Primary Education (without effective supervision from the government) in Nigeria always jump start the UBE Curriculum by introducing it to children between ages 3-5 years. For instance, Nursery Two (2) Pupils are introduced to Primary One (1) textbooks which are designed for the UBE Scheme etc.

So, one can notice the non-compliance of the Private Sector to the UBE Scheme, and this may be one of the contributory factors to the slow pace of the UBE Programme as smooth transition from the Pre-Primary Level to the Primary Level is haphazardly handled. The non-compliance of Private Schools to the UBE Programme are:

- > the use of language (English Language is being used right from Kindergarten to Nursery Levels);
- > age bracket in private schools (Nursery and Primary) negates the concept of the NPE and UBE;
- > learning content negates the UBE and NPE. Pupils are not allowed to learn according to the curriculum designed for them - leading to curriculum over-load.

**Table 2: Programmes and Methods of Teaching at the Pre-Primary Level**

S/N	Curriculum Content	Activities
1.	Outdoor Activities	Running, jumping, climbing etc.
2.	Learning through games	Puzzle: Matching objects, shapes, Pictures, Nesting Boxes etc
3.	Learning through Creative Arts	Painting and Drawing
4.	Learning through Verbal Expression	Talking Freely amongst themselves and gaining new vocabularies
5.	Learning through Children Literature	Reading and Writing
6.	Learning through Field Trips and Excursions	Visiting remarkable places and sites etc.
7.	Learning through Electronic Media	Using the Computer, Internet Services, TV, R;ijio etc.
8.	Learning through Plays, Songs and Dance	Dramatization, Acting Out Characters etc.
9.	Rote Learning	Repeating until they remember what they have been taught.

The table 2 above is in line with Hildebrand (1976) and NPE (2004) learning content for learners at the Pre-Primary Level.

For the Primary Sector where children between ages 4-12 belong, the NPE (2004) Section 4, 19(d) states clearly that teaching shall be by practical, exploratory and experimental methods and that (19(e)) the medium of instruction in the Primary School shall be the language of the environment for the first three years. During this period, English shall be taught as a subject. (19(f)) from the fourth year, English shall progressively be used as a medium of instruction and the language of immediate environment and French shall be taught as subject.

From the above, we can deduce that effective learning demands effective planning. Learning has to do with meaning making. The task of the teacher therefore is to search for the various meanings embedded in the learning content, and use these meanings to 'defreeze' the learners (who had been frozen before teaching). So, in making teaching and learning functional, the teacher should assist learners to search for meanings coded in each of the- discipline or subjects.

### **Planning and Delivery of Functional Lessons**

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g and teaching at the Nursery and Primary School Levels should be:

- a. Thoughtfully planned;
- b. Challenging;
- c. Engaging;
- d. Developmentally appropriate;
- e. Culturally and linguistically responsive;
- f. -Comprehensive across all developmental domains;
- g. Likely to promote positive outcomes for all young children. NAEYC (2003)  
National  
Association for the Education of Young Children

### Teaching Plans for Review

In writing the lesson note for children between ages 3-12 years the following should be at (the back of our minds):

1. Your name and the date
2. A title or brief description telling what the plan is about - an aspect of a work being read, a technique in writing, etc.
3. The context - the class to be taught, type of students, relevant school and community characteristics, time of the year if relevant.
4. The objective - how will students be better off after you have executed this plan? What will they be able to do that they could not do before? What will they know that they had not known before? State the objectives in terms of students' growth, not just stating what you, the teacher, intends to do during the lesson.
5. Materials needed - list texts, handouts, transparencies, videos, or other materials (that you would need to conduct the lesson);
6. Activities - (with approximate time allowed for each). These should be described in detail and appropriate for the students in the objective.

They should be in a logical sequence."

Details should include: steps in the activity: - be exhaustive;

a list (or lists) of specific questions or other discussion prompts you will use; Any guided imagery scripts, reading guides, or other original materials to be used. Notations on how class work will be conducted (small groups, etc.) Other notations explaining your choices.

7. Evaluation - a way to tell whether the objectives(s) have been accomplished.
  8. Follow - up - an additional activity to enhance students' learning that they can start immediately upon completing the activities listed above.
  9. Backup Plan: an alternative activity in case things do not go as you originally planned,
- Lesson Plans will be evaluated on the match between the activities and (the objectives and context, logic (including the explanations) amount of detail, originality, and presentation.

### Unit Plan

Addison (2000) describes it as something that is one whole of a larger thing. A unit plan or lesson plan **or instruction** which can be derived from the scheme of work should not be misconstrued as a lesson topic because a unit plan cannot be taught in one stretched lesson of 35/40 minutes, rather it can last for one or two weeks of different lessons. The following is a sample of unit plan as derived from the scheme of work.

**Unit Plan**                      b.  
**Topic:**                              c.  
**Class:**  
**Contents:**

**Time:**

**Unit Objectives;**

a.

	garden and husbandry.
The soil and farming	Identification and classification of soil types etc. 2 weeks, 2 periods of 40 minutes each, per week.
Primary Six Pupils	By the end of this unit, the pupils will be able to: cultivate and maintain school garden for various crops
Making different types of school	understand procedures for establishing and maintaining a mini-poultry farm identify and classify the different types of soil and their uses

**Source:** Adopted from Azubike, 2006,

With this type of unit plan or unit of instruction plan for two weeks of four periods of forty minutes each, the teacher can draw his/her lesson plan. Azubike (2006) view the lesson plan/note as an orderly arrangement of entering behaviour of the students, specific behavioural objectives, students' activities and strategies of delivery to be used in facilitating functional learning. It is capable of providing opportunity for the teacher to reason and organize his/her thoughts in writing before delivery. The ability of the teacher to keep abreast with the current curriculum, syllabus, scheme of work, unit plan or unit of instruction, discrete lesson notes, and method of teaching will determine the effectiveness of the teaching - learning situation.

### Lesson Notes

Lesson Notes are detailed analysis of how the scheme of work should be taught during each lesson period. They are very useful particularly for teachers in training and also newly - qualified teachers. They are a guide from the introduction to the conclusion of lessons. The aim of writing lesson notes is to ensure that each lesson is thoroughly prepared. Nothing is more fatal to discipline than unpreparedness. Writing the lesson notes is not the whole of the preparation, you must go over the matter, note the errors corrected by the Head Teacher, make use of suitable teaching aids and plan the use of your blackboard. Do not write down every word you intend to say. Your note should give an indication or summary of the subject matter.

The aim of the lesson should be one that can be achieved in a lesson and should be stated clearly and exactly. In other words, they should be achievable behavioural objectives. Everything in the lesson should lead towards achieving the already stated instructional objectives.

Prepare your weekly schemes of work to make it easy for you to plan your lessons readily and keep the lesson notes in special files for the sake of easy reference.

Teachers are expected to be knowledgeable people; and it is hopefully believed that teacher should know far more than his pupils.

Hence, in the course of teaching, various facts and ideas may crop up in the teacher's mind. The teacher may thus experiment an over - flooding of ideas and may while teaching one item may be lured into talking of another side even to the point of forgetting the original topic of the lesson. Such a way of teaching would be regarded as disorganized teaching and will lead to great confusion for the pupils. To avoid such rambling teaching, jumping from pillar to post - Notes of lessons become a necessity for limiting the teacher to teaching only the topic and ideas that come within the range of the topic for the lesson. Lesson notes are also needed by the teacher in order to concentrate on the subject facts of the topic and ignore irrelevancies in the course of teaching. Lesson notes equally help the teacher as guidelines for teaching.

### How to Prepare Lesson Notes

While it does not look creative enough to prescribe a set form for writing lesson notes, it should be noted that a good lesson note should contain the following among others:

- a. Official heading of the lesson notes;
- b. An introduction;
- c. Entry behaviour of the pupils;
- d. The body of the lesson notes;
- c. The concluding parts of the lesson notes;

### The Official Lesson Notes Heading

This refers to the official information items which appear at the heading part of the lesson notes. They include;

- (i) Title of the subject to be taught;
- (ii) The topic of the lesson;
- (iii) The class for which the lesson is intended;
- (iv) The date on which the lesson is to be delivered;
- (v) The duration of the lesson;
- (vi) Instructional materials for the lesson;
- (vii) Specific objectives of the lesson;
- (viii) Indication of the entry behaviour of the pupils;
- (ix) Evaluation; and
- (x) Assignment.

**Points to Note**

1. Lesson notes are very important to teachers for effective teaching
2. Planning a lesson involves the identification of the aim and objectives of the lesson; that materials or resources needed for the lesson; and the method of presentation of the lesson.
3. Lesson notes are vital guides for the teacher in the course of teaching. Lesson notes should clearly show the heading; introductory part; pre-lesson knowledge of the pupils as well as the concluding part of the lesson.
4. Finally, attempt should be made to know whether a lesson has actually achieved its expected knowledge (as compared against the desired lesson objectives) with the learner's post-lesson knowledge.
  5. Summarily, lesson note preparation according to Fredrick Herbert (1776-1841) involves five steps and these are useful as the basics for planning lesson note in leaching. These steps are:
6. **Table 3**

Step	Method	Characteristics
1.	Preparation	This deals with the planning of what, how and who to teach. The variables that provide answers to the above questions are the ages of the pupils, their background, their interest, their LQ. The teacher should look into their abilities etc. general background of the child.
2.	Presentation	Having prepared himself then comes the presentation of ideas and materials. This is done logically and systematically to induce and stimulates pupils interest and attention. Here, it is essential for the teacher to refer to the previous knowledge in analyzing and explaining difficult concepts to learners.
3.	Association	Here, pupils are expected to associate or relate new materials and ideas with previous knowledge or experience. The function of the teacher here is to guide and give appropriate direction to the pupils so that a comparative analysis could be made.
4.	Systematization/Generalization	This is the process of inculcation or recapitulating of what has been learned so far into the mind of the child. If new knowledge is being applied in other areas it means the needs have consolidated in their minds. Learners or pupils manifested systematization when they have formed the habit of writing down useful information from the knowledge acquired to aid their memory.
5.	Application	This is the process through which pupils apply whatever they have learnt to solve similar problems.

**Conclusion**

The teacher should ensure that in planning and delivery of the lesson plan/note the pupils should be the centre of attraction. The teacher needs all the attributes required to make his/her teaching in tandem with the UBE Scheme. Some of the attributes expected of a good teacher according to Stevenson and Stigler (1992) includes clarity, sensitivity, enthusiasm, standards and patience.

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