

## Methods Used by Primary School Teachers for Teaching Health Education

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Health education has been defined in many ways by different authorities. For the purpose of this discussion, the definition offered by Galli (1978) will be adopted. According to him, health education is a process whereby the individual, in cooperation with the instructor, is provided an opportunity to apply new knowledge and act in healthful ways. The term "Methods" also means different things to different people at different times and situations. In this chapter, the term will be used to cover both the strategy and tactics of teaching, and it involves the choice of what is to be taught, and the order in which it is to be taught (see Pollock and Oberteuffer, 1994).

Educators know that methods always have a lot of impact on what is taught and what is learnt. Pavlid (1967) pointed out that different methods of teaching stimulate the personal interests of pupils, prompting them to seek information on their own initiative. This type of learning encourages the acquisition of knowledge and the strengthening of health habits. To this end, primary school teachers need to have adequate knowledge of various teaching methods as well as materials and skills in using them effectively in order to stimulate the interests of pupils they teach.

It has been suggested by Adedeji (1985) and NCE/DLS Course Book on Physical and Health Education, Cycle 2 of (1990) that the use of the following methods for teaching health are appropriate, lecture, discussion, textbooks, problem solving approach, group method, project method, assignment, field trips and value clarification. It must be noted here that as a way of ensuring the use of effective teaching methods by teachers there is the need to survey the various methods used by different categories of teachers in the primary schools.

The effectiveness of using a variety of methods in teaching health education is an indication of the quality of knowledge a teacher has acquired during his training. Similarly, positive health knowledge, attitudes, and practices by pupils is an index of the quality of teaching methods used by the teacher. Observation seems to show that most primary school pupils have negative attitudes and practices toward health. If pupils tend

to show negative attitudes and practices toward health. If this is so, then there is a great need to evaluate the types of methods used. This chapter reports the results of an effort in this regard.

### **Why Pay Attention to Methods?**

Good methods promote effective health education as well as scientific accuracy (Ademuvagun and Oduntan 1986). Nwana and Agusiegbe (1991) pointed out that teachers need to acquire a good knowledge of current methods and materials for teaching health education, because, according to them, no matter how simplistic a content may seem, it is the methods and materials that determine the effectiveness of performance. They quoted Umoh (1981) as reporting that primary school teachers cannot fulfil their health education responsibility to the school children if they themselves are taught by teachers with inadequate knowledge and wrong health concepts, and indeed wrong methods.

A study of the methods used by health education teachers in teacher training colleges in Anambra State revealed that the lecture/discussion method was the most commonly used method (see Nwana and Agusiegbe, 1991). It was found out that the following methods were used 'sometimes' by majority of the respondents: problem-solving technique (47.4%), group method (68.4%), term paper (78.9%), field-trips (73.7%), and exhibitions (68.4%).

### **The Study**

Thirty-eight teachers teaching health education in different primary schools in Pankshin, who are part-time students of Federal College of Education, Pankshin as at the time of the study constituted the sample for the study. A questionnaire was used for data collection. It was designed to gather information about the respondents' age, qualifications, years of teaching experience, years of teaching health education, the frequency of the use of selected methods, other methods used but not mentioned in the list of methods in the questionnaire and the frequency of using practical illustrations to facilitate the methods used. The list of methods was derived from a book, the teaching of physical and health education by Adedeji A.J. (1985) and NVE/DLS course book on physical and health Education, cycle 2 of (1990) by the National Teachers' Institute. Also the list of the practical illustrative terms was derived from a write-up on methods of teaching health education by Opara (1993). Frequency counts and percentages were used for data analysis.

### **Results**

The results of data analysis are presented below. It was found that 6 of the respondents were less than 30 years, 19 were between 30 and 40 age bracket, and 41 of them were

41 years old and above. Also, all the respondents were holders of Grade II teachers' Certificates. Other findings of the study are presented in Table 1-4 below.

Table 1: **Years of Teaching Experience of Teachers**

YEAR OF TEACHING	RESPONSES	
	F	%
Less than 5 years	8	21.1
6 - 10 years	10	26.3
11 years and above	20	52.6
	38	100

38  
3  
114

Table 2: **Years of Experience in Teaching Health Education in Primary School**

LENGTH OF TEACHING HEALTH EDUCATION	RESPONSE	
	F	%
Less than 5 years	9	23.7
6 - 10 years	9	23.7
11 years and above	20	52.6
	38	100

Table 3: Frequency of the Use of Teaching Methods

TEACHING METHODS	FREQUENCY OF THE USE			
	ALWAYS	SOMETIMES	NEVER	TOTAL
Lecture/Discussion	25(65.8%)	7 (18.4%)	6(15.8%)	38(1000%)
Text Book	24(63.2%)	10(26.5%)	4(10.5%)	38(1000%)
Problems-solving	16(42.1%)	17(44.7%)	5(13.2%)	38(1000%)
Group Method	5(13.2%)	26(68.4%)	7(18.4%)	38(1000%)
Project Method	0 (0%)	17(44.7%)	21(55.3%)	38(1000%)
Field Trips	3 (7.9%)	15(39.5%)	20(52.6%)	38(1000%)
Value Clarification	3 (7.9%)	11(28.9%)	24(63.2%)	38(1000%)

Other methods used, but not listed in table 3 above are demonstration method/discovery method dramatization, play-way, assignment methods, and questioning method.

Table 4: Frequency of the Use of Practical Illustrations to Facilitate Methods

PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION	FREQUENCY OF USE			
	ALWAYS	SOMETIMES	NEVER	TOTAL
Songs	14 (36.85)	21 (55.3%)	3 (7.9%)	38 (1000%)
Fables	0 (0%)	16 (42.1%)	22 (57.9%)	38 (1000%)
Proverbs	0 (0%)	25 (65.8%)	13 (34.2%)	38 (1000%)
Games	15 (39.5%)	17 (44.7%)	6 (15.8%)	38 (1000%)

### Discussion

Tables 1 and 2 show that the majority of the teachers 20 (52.6%) have been teaching for 1 years and above. Table 3 shows that the lecture/discussion method was the most commonly used method as indicated by 25 (65.8%) respondents who use the method always, and 7 (18.4%) use it sometimes and 6 (15.8%) never used it at all. The following methods were used "sometimes" by the majority of the respondents: problem-solving, 17 (44.7%) and group method, 26 (68.4%). The following methods were never

used by most of them: project method, 21 (55.3%); field trips, 20 (52.6%); and value clarification, 24 (63.2%).

Table 4 shows that the commonest practical illustrations always used to facilitate methods are the games (39.5%) and songs (36.8%). Also the majority of the respondents sometimes use proverbs, 25 (65.8%). The table also revealed that many have never used Fables (57.9%).

A look at the years of teaching experience of teachers investigated showed that the majority of them, 20 (52.6%), have taught health education for eleven years and above. Nwana and Agusiegbe (1991) reported that practice should lead to progressive improvement in teaching methodology and that the length of teaching should be expected to improve experience in the use of methods.

It is not surprising to see that the lecture/discussion (65.8%) was the most commonly used method of teaching. The method is very much easier to manipulate and needs less skills than some other methods. The method is characterised by the giving of facts with or without clarification, and has the advantage of giving many facts within a short time and many individuals will be reached at the same time. For these reasons, there is the tendency for many of the teachers to use this method to teach as many pupils as possible within a short time.

Similarly, games and songs were used by the majority of the respondents. Songs and games are the most enjoyable ways of expressions and actions, especially in primary schools. These are practical illustrations used for teaching. In songs, however, only one idea should be taught to enable pupils get the point easily (Opara, 1993).

It is very important to note that a high percentage of the respondents (63%) indicated that they use textbooks always. This may be due to the fact that textbooks on health education act as reading materials which provide health information on relevant health topics.

The problem-solving is used always and sometimes by the majority of the teachers (42.1%) and (44.7%) respectively. This is known to encourage learning through the process of finding out facts. The project method is not always used by respondents. This may be due to the fact that materials needed for the project are not always readily available.

Field trips and value clarifications, are never used by the majority of the respondents. But these methods are known to help pupils to get practical knowledge and to be familiar with health concepts.

## Conclusion

It would seem from the findings of the study that whereas the majority of the teachers have the necessary experience and qualifications, they need to introduce creativity in their methodology. They should learn to use innovative methods that allow the children to get involved in lessons and to use practical illustrations that can augment teachers-centred

methods. The Primary School Management Board in Pankshin in conjunction with that Teaching Service Board can organise workshops and symposia for serving primary school teachers to acquire skills for the use of these innovative methods.

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