

# THE ROLE OF CHILD CENTRED BEHAVIOURAL OBJECTIVE IN AN INCLUSIVE CLASSROOM SETTING: MODEL FOR PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS

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## **Abstract**

*Inclusive education is about involving children with different abilities to learn together and help each other during teaching and learning process. Approaches that best match with the way that children learns are one's which puts children, especially young children, and the way they learn at the center of teaching and learning process. This paper examines the concept of behavioral objectives and its perception by primary school teachers as well as child centered behavioral objectives (CCBO) and its application in teaching/learning process. It also takes into cognizance how CCBO help identify the teacher's and pupils' roles in an inclusive classroom situation. It also identify the challenges faced by the primary school teacher's in adopting CCBO as the back-bone of teaching and learning process; which includes effective classroom management, writing a workable CCBO, timing, identify and support children with different abilities during lesson activities and lesson evaluation among others.*

## **Introduction**

Education is what happens to us from the day we start this life to the day we are going to die. In education, the aim of teaching and learning is to make a permanent change in the behavior of the learner. For change to be accommodated In the learner, his needs, desires and decisions must be incorporated into the teaching and learning activities. The national policy on education (FRN, 2004) opined that the quality of instructions at all level of education shall inculcate respect for the worth and dignity of the individual learners, and faith in one's ability to make rational decisions. In related development, Olorunmota and Ikuenomore(2012) stressed that education should be provided according to the child's powers and needs. The relation of the child with his self should be strengthened rather than severed.

However, the progressive (developmental) teaching approach as against the traditional (authoritative) teaching method forms the basis of child centered method(CCM). Russon and Winous in 1960 cited in Bello (2003) state that there are only two methods of teaching, the authoritative and the developmental. The traditional teaching method which is also referred to as teacher centered method is the situation whereby the teacher dominates the whole lesson either in terms of timing, talking, writing or lesson activities etc. While the progressive (developmental) is the situation

whereby the learner is guided and supported to find out and do things by himself; and thus referred to as learner centered or child centered method of teaching. It is usually believe by many educationalists and researchers that children learn and remember things when they are given opportunities to do or discover things by themselves. Children learn so much better when they follow their interest, explore their environment and discover for themselves (Rousseau 1962 in Stewart 1986). For teaching and learning to be an effective one or rather child centered, there must be a strong and reliable skeleton to carry the flesh. The skeleton here is the lesson objectives which are also called the instructional objectives or behavioral objectives.

### **Child Centred Learning (CCL) in an Inclusive Classroom Setting**

An inclusive school is an effective school which recognize and response to the needs of the learners. It accommodates learners with different learning abilities and ensures quality learning through different teaching strategies. Effective school usually produces learning outcomes for all learners irrespective of their individual performance and action. It provides programme/learning strategies which are highly responsive to yield a better product.

However in an Inclusive classroom, the learners irrespective of their abilities or disabilities are always placed at the Centre of leaning. It allows the children to learn by themselves with the support and guide from the teacher. Children are encouraged to learn and help each other during teaching/learning activities. In Child Centred Classroom, children of different abilities are allowed working together, helping each other and use variety of materials to perform variety of activities during lesson (ESSPIN, 2011).

Inclusive Education involves regular schools and classrooms genuinely adapting and changing to meet the needs of the children, as well as celebrating and valuing differences (Farrel and Ainscow, 2002). Considering the above discussion therefore, CCL and Inclusive Education are birds of the same feather. Inclusive Education is how we develop and design our schools, classroom, programmes and activities so that all students learn and participate together.

### **Behavioural Objectives**

Objective a relative term; it means a lot of things to different people and to various educational as well as other human endeavors. In English grammar for instance, it stands for object in philosophy; having existing outside mind, lens of microscope closest to the object look at etc. In everyday life, objective is being used interchangeably with aim, goal, target, intent, purpose, object, end, intention etc.

In every human endeavor, there should be a reason for all actions, like; why am I doing this ...? What do I stand to get if ...? Etc. considering the educational system of this country, the educational objectives are derived from the nation's overall goals which are clearly stated in the National Policy on Education. An objective should either be a general or a specific one. A general objective or goal is a broad statement which either

reflects one or more philosophies of education or what education ought to produce possibly at the end of the educational Programme (Denga, 2001). Example: “to inculcate permanent literacy and numeracy and the ability to communicate effectively. The above stated objective cannot be achieved just in one or two lesson. A specific objective on the other hand is the one which can be achieved in a short – while or rather within a particular classroom lesson. Example “pupils should be able to count from one to fifty”. This objective can be achieved in a single mathematics classroom lesson and is more direct and specific in its statement. The specific objective are intended to be achieved during a lesson, which influence the change of behavior of the learners and are referred to as the behavioral objectives and sometimes called learning outcomes because they covered the cognitive, the affective and the psychomotor domain areas of learning. Generally, there are actions verbs which help the teachers to write or state the behavioral objectives very well and clear.

**Some acceptable action verbs for writing behavioral objectives:**

Analyze	apply	build	calculate
Classify	compare	conjugate	construct
Contrast	create	define	demonstrate
Describe	design	distinguish between	identify
Draw	estimate	explain	predict
Illustrate	list	model	sort
Recite	show	solve	Summarize
Write etc.			

Sources: Felder and Brent (1997)

**Perception of Behavioral Objectives by Primary School Teachers**

When you look at the lesson plan of teachers at the primary school level and see how they write or state their instructional or behavioral objectives, one will wonder whether teachers understand the concept of behavioral objectives or not. I was opportune to work with Education Sector Support Programme in Nigeria (ESSPIN) as SSIT member, and what I come to see of primary teachers stating their B.O and practical zing it, is really a wonderful experience. Instructional objectives are the back-borne of the whole lesson plan or the lesson activities. If lesson objective is well stated and well fallowed, then it will yield a very good result. In stating objectives, things like the Robert F. Magers ABCDs of objectives and the verbs to be use in writing the statement need to be clearly put in place. According to Robert (1962) cited in Denga (2001); all objectives should have four criteria normally referred to as the ABCDs of objectives. A - Audience i.e.it describes who will perform the behavior, B– Behavior i.e. the behavior that will be performed. This has to do with the appropriate choice of the verbs; C – The condition i.e.(whether favorable or unfavorable) under which the behavior will be performed; D – The degree of performance expected i.e. D answers the question how well does the

teachers expect the behavior to be performed? Any objective that satisfies the four criteria listed above is regarded as the most desirable in teaching and learning.

The way you say things usually determine the way you perceive them, and the way you put things into writing is much more than even the way you say them as such it carry a lot more weight in explaining your understanding of the settings. Therefore teachers must be very familiar with the verbs use in stating behavioral objectives. Words which are more specific, more direct, clear and precise should be adopted in stating objectives rather than using very big, broad and ambiguous words. Some teachers think they can make pupils understand or know in a single lesson. This way of thinking should be eradicated in the minds of our teachers in the earnest. Therefore verbs like; list, count, identify, state, differentiate between, name, mention, show, read, write, call etc. are verbs which can be used by teachers in writing objectives. While verbs like to know, understand, comprehend, enjoy, appreciate, and believe, familiar with etc. should be avoided by the teachers in writing statement of objectives (Denga, 2001). The teachers should understand that it's the lesson objectives that determines everything during the lesson and not unplanned or out of point actions done by the teachers or pupils during the teaching and learning process.

### **Child – Centered Behavioral Objectives (CCBO)**

Approaches that best match with the way that children learn are ones which puts children, especially young children and the way they learn at the center of the teaching and learning process. This is usually referred to as child-centered learning (ESSPIN, 2010). In the child – centered approach to learning, the child, rather than the teacher is a frame of reference. Child-centered behavioral objectives (CCBO) therefore consider the learner (child); it's more specific statement that describes what the pupils should do during the teaching/learning process. It reflects ways in which pupil's behaviour will change and things the pupils will be able to do once the lesson is completed. As earlier mentioned, learning objectives is the skeleton of the teaching/learning process, and teaching/learning without an effective CCBO can leads the teachers and the leaners as tray. What the teachers need to remember here is that; CCBO describe “what learners should do not what teachers are doing or supposes to do”.

Child centred Behavioral Objective (CCBO), is about providing activities which help and support children to improve in their learning programmes by themselves. An Inclusive Education as well is about people making little improvement every day to help children learn better (ESSPIN, 2011).

### **Teachers' Role in Achieving CCBO during the Teaching and Learning Process**

In child-centered learning, teachers acts as drivers, directors, organizers, helpers, partners and supporters during teaching/learning process. The teachers' role is to be conscious of the development stage and the capacity of each child. The child centered approach stresses cooperation rather than competition that is why the teacher is also a

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partner in progress. Teacher as a director should ensure that the CCBO is strictly followed during the learning process. For proper implementation and achievement of CCBO in an Inclusive Classroom, the following points should be considered: -

- Teachers should use the appropriate action verbs in stating the CCBO when writing the lesson plan.
- The teachers should make sure that the presentation steps of the lesson tally very well with the CCBO.
- Clear instruction should be given to pupils before the commencement of each activity during lesson.
- Teacher should ensure that there is a good timing of activities during the lesson.
- Teacher should encourage the pupils to participate during the lesson activities.
- The teacher should go round the classroom to support children during lesson activities.
- Teacher should use different strategies to evaluate the lesson and should ensure that only volunteer pupils answer questions.
- Teacher should always relate his evaluation questions to the CCBO.
- Teacher should make sure that children work together and help each other during lesson.

### **Challenges Associated with CCBO during Teaching /Learning**

A lot of challenges are facing teaching and learning programmes. Depending on the situation, it ranges from learning environment, instructional materials, management, teachers' qualifications/professional skills government/community commitments etc. In ensuring successful CCBO, teacher faces a lot of challenges. The most common ones among others include:

- ✓ **Classroom management:** CCBO cannot be achievable if classroom is noisy and disorganized. Therefore teachers have to be very familiar with classroom control procedures. It's very well-known fact that classroom effectiveness and competence is demanded for all teachers. Teaching and teachers must encourage active learning and active learning depends on the teacher's ability to organize, harmonize and maximize the classroom transaction (Sunday 2012).
- ✓ **Writing a workable CCBO:** Many teachers do not find it easy to relate their CCBO to children activities. Many a times, one can notice in teachers lesson plan that teachers are writing "teachers will do ..., the teacher should say or do ..." "Meaning that from the statement in the lesson plan, the teacher are the ones doing almost all the activities during lesson. Teachers should note that in writing CCBO, emphasis should be given to what children will do or supposed to do, **not** what teacher does during lesson. .CCBO is the skeleton of the lesson plan therefore teachers should always relate their presentation steps to CCBO.
- ✓ **Timing:** There is an old adage which says "time waits for nobody." In a lesson of 30 –35 minutes, teachers should strictly follow their activities as writing in their

lesson plan so that CCBO will be a reality. If a lesson activity is for 5 minutes, teachers should always try their best to make it 5 minutes or less. Teachers should try not to entertain unnecessary question or arguments so as not to go astray during lesson delivery.

- ✓ **Supporting children during lesson activities:** CCBO cannot be effective while teachers are staying in front of the chalk board to teach or give instruction. This is a great challenge for many teachers. A teacher who is an advocate of child centered learning, supposed to go round the classroom to support learners during lesson activities. As a teacher, make sure that children mingle with each other and also help each other when activities are going on in the classroom. A research conducted by Education Sector Support Program in Nigeria (ESSPIN) indicated that children learn best when they interact with each other and remember about 90% of what they say and do (ESSPIN, 2010). In addition to this, children learn better when they are involved in group and cooperative learning. It makes learning fun when children interact and share ideas with each other. Children learn better in activities in which they are involved (El-Yakub, 2012). If this trend is maintained in an Inclusive class, those pupils with disabilities will always be assisted by other children thereby reducing the burden on the teacher.
- ✓ **Lesson evaluation:** Some teachers do not know how to relate their evaluation methods to the statement of the CCBO. For a teacher to achieve his lesson objective very well, the evaluation questions must tally with the CCBO. Another important point to note is that; teachers should always direct their evaluation questions to volunteers i.e. pupils who are ready to answer them. This will really help in making CCBO a successful one.

### **Conclusion**

Every teacher is a “master” of his own classroom. CCBO are intentions translated into action that enable the pupils to perform in certain ways. Many Nigeria teachers claim that they use child centered approaches but nearly all the evidence shows that they do not. Some untrained teachers may have not heard about the concept, and even some trained teachers might in practice simply not understand. Even some professional teachers who are familiar with the system might feel it undermines their authority and power as teachers (ESSPIN 2010). Inclusive Education can only be achieved through Child Centred Learning. Therefore, CCBO is the most important aspect of child centered learning. For CCBO to be valid and reliable it must include four things; focus on the intended outcome of the lesson, express the benefit of the lesson to the learner, be specific and be measurable. Formulating CCBO is not an easy task. Even the professional teachers, who taught for several years, sometimes have to formulate and re-formulate CCBO to suit the teaching and learning process i.e. by considering the interest of the learners. For teachers to be familiar with the CCBO, a lot of training/awareness needs to be put in place. For in-service teachers, professional development training needs to be

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conducted on how to write CCBO and implement it during teaching and learning process. While for pre-service teachers, their courses need to be widen/updated to include much coverage on the writing and implementing of CCBO in classroom process.

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