

Curriculum Transformation in Music for the Special Needs Children

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Abstract: *The major purpose of this study was to determine curriculum transformation for special needs children in Music. A descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study comprising of all music teachers (55) from 257 secondary schools in Anambra State. Data was collected using structured questionnaire. Mean and standard deviation were used to analyze the data. Findings revealed that teachers have adequate training, and government support towards development although, they lack instructional materials and time required to motivate special needs children on motivation skills. Recommendations were made based on findings from the study.*

Keywords: *Developmental skills, Motivational skills, Training skills, Special needs children, Music teachers.*

I. Introduction

Curriculum transformation in music can be viewed as a complete change usually into music curriculum with an improved usefulness to the learners in a school. According to Reimer (2003) music is systematically organized course of teaching and learning universally sought and cherished by all humans irrespective of the race for the value it adds to life. Such value according to the researcher is as follows:

- Music should be taught in schools to enhance the child's ability to feel and to react to stimuli.
- Music is culture oriented and as part of African lives, there are many cultural needs of music education.

The primary purpose of inclusion of music in the school curriculum is to help the child to develop his aesthetic potential to the best of his ability (Federal Republic of Nigeria [F.R.N.] 2004). Olawode and Adeleke (2008) believe special needs children need attention, care and training because of one disability or the other which make them function differently from the normal ones. They require an intellectual discipline towards sound for it is a conscious act of mental concentration.

Special needs children need ICT learning to support music. Much as a set of percussion instruments might do. According to Ihebereme (2010), considerable success seems to have been recorded in the area of provision of ICT equipment at the tertiary level. For curriculum to be transformed for special needs children it needs Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other concerned members of the public should be called upon to contribute money to buy ICT equipments in secondary schools. At the secondary school in particular and special needs children provision of ICT equipment is grossly inadequate.

Planning is essential at both curricula and instructional levels. Planning helps a great deal in transforming any instructional model. The Government needs the modification of instructional programs to be motivated. The Educators need to increase instructional time by the use of lengthened school day in music for the special needs children. The government and some philanthropic organizations should initiate in-service and scholarship training schemes for the special needs; also grants should sometime be given to them for musicological research projects. The music class for the needy ought to be interested from the start and especially the environment (Elliot, 1995). Music teachers require the opportunity for musical experiences the cardinal factor in their teaching method. Music is a positive force on all aspects of special needs children. Is an art of developmental activity and the goal of music education at the school stage of life of individual child should be towards his balanced development (Farrant, 1980). In the opinion of Onwuekwe (1998) music can be effective with special needs children in music with learning difficulties when it is offered as a reward for particular behaviour. Nzewi (1990) believes that indigenous musical instrument and the development of some instructional materials would motivate children into action, to enable learning to be retained.

At present, many special needs children lack music education and entrepreneurship skills and might find it difficult to have their own music studio to make money.

Purpose of study

The main purpose of the study is to ascertain the motivational, training and development skills required by music teachers for the implementation of music curriculum to special needs children in Anambra State.

This study is significant because it will:

- Assist teachers in re-enforcing on areas found wanting.
- Assist curriculum designers in focusing on areas that needs transformation in the music curriculum.
- Add body to literature and theory on various skills identified special learners to attain sustainable living through skills acquired.

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study:

- (1) What motivational skills are required of music teachers for special needs children in Anambra State?
- (2) What training do teachers possess as required for teaching special needs children in Anambra State?
- (3) What developmental skills are required for teaching special needs children in Anambra State?

II. Methodology

A descriptive research design was adopted for the study. The area of the study was Anambra State. The population for the study was made up of 55 music teachers from 257 Government Secondary Schools in Anambra State. Structured questionnaire used to collect data was made up of two sections (A & B). Section A contains demographic information of respondents such as school, age, and experience while section B contains 15 questions on motivational skills (5), training (5) and developmental skills (5) needed to assess special needs children by music teachers. The teachers responded to the items by choosing the option thus: Strongly Agree (SA) = 4 points, Agree (A) = 3 points, Disagree (D) = 2 points, Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1 point. For each item an overall mean score for each item was computed as 2.5 and above showing agreement with the statement made in that item; And below 2.5 showing respondents disagreement with a particular item. Three experts, one in the field of Music Education, one in the field of Measurement and Evaluation and one in the field of Special Needs Children face validated the instrument. Data was analyzed using mean and standard deviation.

III. Results and Discussion

Results in Table 1 shows that a general conducive classroom is provided for teaching music to special needs children which has the highest mean of 3.55 as agreed by music teachers. Results also show that music teachers use a variety of methods and techniques for teaching with a mean of 3.26 as also agreed to the statement. However, music teachers disagreed that musical instruments are enough for doing this teaching with a mean of 2.28. other striking information is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: A descriptive mean ratings of music teachers responses on motivational skills required for special needs children (n=55)

S/N	Items on motivational skills	\bar{X}	SD
1.	A general conducive classroom atmosphere is provided to the special needs children with others in music.	3.55	.73
2.	Variety of methods and techniques in music are used to keep the special needs children interested in the lesson	3.26	.71
3.	Television is used at all times to teach music to special needs	3.15	.76
4.	There are enough musical instruments to attract the special need children to pay attention to lessons	2.28	.85
5.	Increase instructional time by the use of lengthened school day to the special need children in music	1.55	.73

This result indicates that music teachers are exposed to the required motivational skills needed for teaching special needs children such as general conducive classroom atmosphere, variety of teaching methods and techniques and television to bring about motivation in learning as converged with Curzon (1980), Mogan and Robinson (1979) findings.

However, findings also revealed that instruments for teaching as well as time allocated are not sufficient for teaching special needs children in Anambra State. This becomes something of almost concern because, teachers could be knowledgeable on the usage of a variety of instruments and methods, but if the musical instruments are lacking or not sufficient to teach physically challenged children, there could be chaos in the classroom. Even if the classroom is conducive, this could influence their mood of learning as well as interest in the subject. Motivation could be bridged in contrary to earlier findings mentioned.

Results in Table 2 shows that item 1 to 5 in the tables agrees that training skills through workshops and seminars with a mean of 3.46; in-service and scholarship with a mean of 3.17; strategic planning and ICT is required for special needs children in Music (see table 2).

Table 2: A descriptive mean response of teachers on training skills required for special needs children in music (n=55).

S/N	ITEMS	\bar{X}	SD
1.	Government designs music workshops and seminars for music teachers training	3.46	0.76
2.	Some philanthropic organizations initiates in-service and scholarship training schemes along with musicological research project	3.17	0.87
3.	Learning opportunities is designed to help special needs children to grow in music during training	2.96	.78
4.	New strategic communication with the government is formed during the training.	2.90	1.06
5.	Acquisition and use of ICT skills for teaching special needs children is encouraged in training	2.55	1.06

This result indicates that teachers possess most of the training skills required for the teaching of special needs children in Anambra state. These trainings are gotten from workshops, seminars, in-service training and scholarships, usually organized by the Government and philanthropic organizations. These teachers also, have good communication links with the government during these trainings. This has enabled teachers to give special needs learners' opportunities to grow in music which converges with Blair (2005) findings that training skills bring great impact in communication between learners and instructors. And also with Ihebereme (2010), on ICT usage for success in school subject but emphasis was at the tertiary level. However, these inferences were made in relation to general situation in the curriculum and at tertiary levels while this study narrowly focused on a specific subject (music) at the secondary school level, for the purpose of transformation for teaching special needs children. Despite the assumed training, teachers still face other challenges as mentioned earlier on, which is on insufficient teaching time and musical instruments.

Results in Table 3 on development skills required for special needs children in music, items 1, 2, and 3 shows that development skills are required for teachers of music. Items 4 and 5 gave a low mean score below 2.50, which disagrees that four year strategic development plan be developed for music teachers and also, that programmes like sewing, hair dressing, shoe making and other development skills should not be in place.

Table 3: A descriptive mean response of teachers on developmental skills required for special needs children in music (n=55).

S/N	ITEMS	\bar{X}	SD
1.	The Government provides facilities that will suit special needs in the school like rams, elevator to move upstairs especially for wheel chair users	3.28	0.69
2.	Design and carry out training programmes for special needs in their new job.	3.17	.87
3.	Have the ability to construct new instrument like Oja, Maracas, ekwe etc for teaching	2.55	1.05
4.	Four year strategic plan for the development of music for the special needs children is in place	2.28	.85
5.	Programmes like sewing, hair dressing, shoe making and others are developed for the special needs children	2.19	.99

This result indicates that government provides the major facilities suitable for special needs children such as wheel chairs, rams, elevators and also train teachers. However, most vital school programmes required for the special needs such as sewing, hair dressing, shoe making and others are not developed effectively for the utilization of special needs children. This is the area where sustainable development lies. Although, teachers do construct new instrument like Oja, Maracas, ekwe and others for teaching special needs children which could be attributed to insufficiency of the instruments. These developments tend to keep learners busy, less aggressive and noisy in convergence with Luciana and Regina (2004) findings that skills developed enable pupils to locate and collect relevant information to sort, contrast and analyze part/whole relationships, in order to help them assimilate and articulate musical information.

IV. Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it is believed that music teachers have training skills but require more time and sufficient instruments to make teaching interesting and motivating for special needs children.

Although, government has provided enough development for training of teachers and other facilities for the special needs, strategic plans need to be put in place towards transforming music curriculum at the junior and senior secondary levels as contained in the National Policy on Education (F.R.N., 2004) in Anambra State. This would provide a medium through which minds of students are cultivated and developed to appreciate their cultural and social heritage.

V. Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study the following recommendations are made:

- Government need to provide alternate routes for the need to restructure teacher education and programme in secondary schools in Anambra State.

- Enough musical instruments and equipments should be provided to special needs children like wheel chairs, pianos, and band, to keep them happy.
- More time should be allocated into music curriculum of the special need children in order to enable them get a grasp of the teaching since most of them are very slow learners.
- Video studio, good auditorium for music opera, and good (V.C.D) Video Compact Disk should be provided for special needs children for according to Nye and Nye (1974) music is the most intensively emotional of all the arts, a refuge in time of trouble, a springing fountain in a thirsty land and a moulder of good character and good citizenship.

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