

Teacher Pedagogic Competences: A Curriculum Catalyst for the Development of Higher Order Thinking Skills in Primary Schools

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated “how teachers’ pedagogic competences can influence the development of higher order thinking skills among primary school pupils in Cameroon”. The inadequacy of basic competences acquired by learners in primary schools upon graduation motivated the researcher to carry out this study. Related literature based on teachers’ pedagogic competences and the development of higher order thinking skills was reviewed. The theory of instruction by Jerome Bruner, the social development theory by Lev Vygotsky and the theory of cognitive development by Jean Piaget were used to give meaning to the problem of study. The qualitative approach was applied to carry out the study. Structured observation and Interview research methods were used. Data was collected using observation and interview guides respectively. The population of the study was made up of teachers of Central Government English Primary School Yaoundé. From this population, five teachers from class one (1) to five (5) were selected for the study through non probability sampling technique. The data collected was analysed thematically following the objectives of the study. The findings of the study revealed that teachers’ pedagogic competences influence the development of higher order thinking skills among primary school pupils. The study offer new evidence that skills in teaching practices such as lesson planning, language, lesson presentation and assessments can play an important role in the development of higher order thinking skills in pupils.

KEYWORDS: *Pedagogic competence, thinking skills, planning skills, delivery skills, assessment skills*

INTRODUCTION

In recent times, the importance of primary education in the future development of human capital has caught the attention of peoples, governments, national and international organizations all over the world. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the Sustainable Development Goals, governments across the world have recognized the importance of providing quality education to children. For example, one of the goals of the MDGs was to provide free universal primary education. Children are the leaders and architects of the future. The learning experiences they acquire at a younger age determine the future labour force, teachers, medical doctors engineers just to mention a few. The government of Cameroon attaches a lot of importance to the education of its children. Today, formal education in Cameroon is offered at four different levels ranging from nursery education, primary education, secondary education and tertiary education. The main languages of instruction in schools include English Language and French Language since Cameroon is a bilingual country (Ministry of National Education, 2000). The country runs two systems of education; the French sub-system of Education and the English sub-system of education respecting its dual heritage (Ministry of National Education, 1995). Primary education in Cameroon is for children aged six (6) to eleven (11) years. These are children in the concrete stage of cognitive development as defined by Jean Piaget. To Piaget, children begin to develop abstract thought

and abilities to make rational judgments at this stage (Ginsberg and Opper, 1988). The government has made significant efforts to provide free primary education for all. Nevertheless, there is still a growing need to improve the quantity and most especially the quality of basic education all over the country.

The researcher strongly believes that quality assurance in primary education will determine the expectations and successes to be recorded in the other levels of education. It guarantees an increase in the economic growth of the country and better standards of living. For the country to emerge and sustain growth there is a persistent need to review its education particularly basic and secondary education. The outcome of education is determined by the quality of teachers in the system. Teachers are the key to quality education. Despite the improvements recorded in terms of access to basic education, provision of teachers and pedagogic resources, much is still not known about teacher pedagogic competences and the development of higher order thinking skills in pupils. It was on this premise that this study sought to investigate ‘how teachers’ pedagogic competences can influence the development of higher order thinking skills among primary school pupils in Cameroon.

The problem envisaged by this study is how to enhance the development of higher order thinking skills among primary

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school pupils by helping teachers to adopt effective and efficient pedagogic competences. The inadequacy of basic skills acquired by learners in primary schools motivated the researcher to carry out this study. World Bank (2018) point out clearly that the learning outcomes in most countries especially in Africa are poor; low levels despite recent expansions in access to education by historical standards. Also, for pupils to learn, teachers have to teach effectively, but many education systems pay little attention to what goes on in the classroom (World Bank (2018)).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Historical and Conceptual Framework

Primary education in Cameroon has evolved over the years following the historical, political and educational developments of the country. According to Shu (2000) and Ihims (2003), the Baptist Missionary Society (BMS) were the ones who started formal education in Cameroon. Also, Rudin (1968) and Tamanji (2011) pointed out that the Reverend Joseph Merrick of the Jamaican-backed London Baptist Missionary Society opened the first primary school in 1844 in Bimbia. Fonkeng (2007) states that Reverend Joseph Merrick, was followed by Alfred Saker in 1845 who started building schools and churches in Douala. The Missionaries focused on primary education. Since then, Primary education has increased steadily all over the country into a complicated network managed by the government, denominational organisations and private individuals. Today, every village in Cameroon has at least one primary school.

In the school, several elements can be used to characterize a class, for example, the number of learners, the composition of learners found in the same class, etc. Based on these elements, classes in Cameroon can be categorised under: ordinary classes and complex classes. An ordinary class refers to a group of learners having approximately the same age and enrolment of 60 pupils in the classroom while a complex class is one which does not respect the norms of the ordinary class, for example a large class size, a multigrade class (learners of different grades or levels put together in one classroom), single class school (learners of all the levels are in the same class, usually with a single teacher). The pedagogical management of the class depends on the type of class. The concept of pedagogical management refers to the mode of planning, implementation and evaluation of teaching and learning activities in a classroom. These include, among others: time tabling, construction and use of teaching and learning resources, spatial organisation of the class, defining individual needs etc. The Curriculum for Nursery and Primary schools in Cameroon envisages school leavers who can combine knowledge, skills and attitudes to carry out simple tasks or resolve basic problems in their communities.

The main concepts that form the basis of the theoretical framework of this study include teacher pedagogic competence and higher order thinking skills in primary schools. Teacher pedagogic competence in the work refers to teacher's lesson planning skills, lesson delivery or presentation skills, mastery of language of instruction and assessment or evaluation skills. Higher order thinking skills refers to children's ability to demonstrate their competences in terms of problem solving; analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. Lesson planning skills in the study refers to teaching practices which have as premise that teaching is an

activity that is organized. For kids to construct their knowledge, skills and competences, teaching has to be planned. The role of the teacher is to carry out a need assessment of the pupils, identify and define the competences to be developed, the methods and techniques to be applied and the resources to be used. These activities are clearly presented in the teachers' lesson plan.

Lesson planning is seen from the teacher's ability to produce blue prints or curriculum plans such as monthly schemes of work, weekly and daily lesson plans as well as abilities to source teaching and learning resources for effective teaching in class. This is a compulsory activity for the teacher that precedes implementation or lesson delivery in the classroom. Adequate planning requires instructional design principles such as progression, adaptation, concretisation, contextualisation, exactitude, alternation and threshold of fatigue:

Progression: The principle of progression also known as sequence is the logical arrangement of learning content in a hierarchy of occurrence usually from simple to complex, from known to unknown, concrete to abstract, near-to-far and familiar to non-familiar examples. Non-mastery of content by the teachers will result to poor self-esteem and inferiority complex in teaching related issues in the classroom. Thus it is important for the teacher to carry out adequate long term and short term material preparation of the lesson. This will have significant benefits for both the teacher and the learner during lesson delivery.

Continuity: The crucial elements or learning tasks are repeated (spirally) until the learner grasped them fully. Continuity is an aspect of vertical relationship in learning.

Integration: it refers to the utilization of curriculum elements from one subject area to other subject areas of the curriculum so that they buttress one another. Related subjects are merged together or fused into one (broad field). **Scope:** When designing the entire curriculum at the macro level, scope means all the subjects that comprise the curriculum, i.e. the content of the whole curriculum. When designing a syllabus for one subject at the micro level, scope would mean the content of that subject or syllabus ie objectives, subject matter, topics, topics, learning activities, teaching materials, methods and assessment strategies.

Adaptation: This entails personalizing the learning task and making it more relevant to the learners with consideration to their ages and specific needs. The principle of adaptation will require that the teacher use language that is simple to understand for effective communication with learners.

Contextualization: Concretisation is making teaching and learning meaningful. This implies ensuring that the learning content, learning experiences, methods, techniques and materials associated with it are relevant and useful both to the environment and the learner. The teachers should improvise teaching and learning resources in environments where they are scarce or difficult to get.

Exactitude: This principle has to do with quantities and measurements and the way they are presented. Measurements should be correct and verifiable in scientific terms. Solutions to problems should be objective and

correct. Approximations should be based on scientific procedures and processes.

Alternation and fatigue: The curriculum has many subjects that are taught different times of the day. Mathematics for example is taught during the morning periods in Cameroon because it requires deep cognitive processes during learning.

Language skills in the work refers to teaching practices which are based on the premise that teaching consists of communication of information, instructions and sharing of ideas which can define effective teaching and learning. Teachers use their language skills to inform and share knowledge with the learners clearly. The aspects studied include speaking, listening and writing abilities of the teachers in the classroom. Little (1982) in Glickman (1985) point out that Judith Little, found that teachers in successful schools used precise, technical language in discussing instructional concerns. Teachers in effective schools do continue to think and are challenged to extend the use of their mental abilities. Presentation skills or lesson delivery skills in the study denotes teaching practices which are based on the belief that teaching consists of methods and techniques which facilitate interactions between the teacher, the student and the content. The delivery skills of the teacher can define the didactics of that teacher. The lesson delivery methods studied include the communicative method, immersion method and task-based learning method.

Assessment skills or evaluation skills denotes those teaching practices in the classroom which are based on the principle that teaching consists of processes and procedures aimed at verifying actual teaching and learning. The assessment skills of the teacher can determine the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process. The evaluation practices studied include oral assessment, written assessment and practical assessment.

Theoretical framework

Theory of Instruction by Jerome Bruner

Jerome Bruner's cognitive theory of instruction can be applied in the development of higher order thinking skills. In the same light, Crook (2001) pointed out that cognitive theories are shaping modern accounts of learning. Bruner (1956) cited in Santrock (2004) emphasized the concept of discovery learning by encouraging teachers to give pupils more opportunities to learn on their own. In Bruner's view, discovery learning encourages learners to think for themselves and discover how knowledge is constructed. Teachers can facilitate discovery learning by providing pupils with, well-structured plans, rich content, stimulating activities that motivates and activate their natural curiosity. Santrock (2004) asserts that discovery learning converges with the ideas of Piaget, who once commented that every time you teach a child something, you keep the child from learning. However, working completely on their own does not benefit many pupils. Mosston and Ashworth (1990) postulate that guided discovery teaching style indicates a continuous and reciprocal relationship between the teacher and the learner. Children can also get help from their peers and mentors in the community.

The social development theory by Lev Vygotsky

The social development theory by Lev Vygotsky is relevant to teachers' pedagogic competence and the development of

higher order thinking skills. Diessner (2008) points out that Lev Vygotsky is generally considered the greatest Russian developmental Psychologist. In the same light, Santrock (2004) assert that, like Piaget, Vygotsky (1896–1934) "believed that children actively construct their knowledge". What this means in practice is that teachers should actively assist children who are engaged in learning task. Vygotsky suggests that teaching and learning are "social activities that take place between social actors in socially constructed situations" (Moore, 2000). Tu (2000) pointed out that Vygotsky is valued for his zone of proximal (or potential) development. To Vygotsky children are working within their zone of proximal development (ZPD) and teachers provide the assistance to enable them move through the ZPD. The ZPD is the difference between what a child can understand alone and what she can potentially understand through interactions with others or learning support. Jarvis and Gorman (2004) reiterate that there is a lot of research showing that children working with assistance, in the form of adult tutoring, cooperative group work or peer tutoring learn more than those engaged in individual discovery learning or chalk-and-talk teaching. A lot of research has been carried out on the potentials of teaching methods and academic performance of pupil in primary school. Notwithstanding, a lot still need to be known about teachers' pedagogic competences and the development of higher order thinking skills among primary school pupils in Cameroon. The following research questions were formulated to guide the investigation.

General Research Question

To what extent can teachers' pedagogic competences influence the development of higher order thinking skills among primary school pupils in Cameroon?

Specific Research Questions

How does lesson planning skills influences the development of higher order thinking skills among primary school pupils?
How can language skills contribute to the development of higher order thinking skills among primary school pupils?
How can lesson presentation skills stimulate the development of higher order thinking skills among primary school pupils?

How does assessments skills influences the development of higher order thinking skills among primary school pupils?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study was carried out in Central Government English Primary School Yaounde. The school is found in Yaounde III sub-division of the Mfoundi Division, Centre Region of Cameroon. It is situated at the heart of the administrative structure of the city specifically around the old prison yard. The school is found on the outlet of the municipal lake, directly opposite the National School of Administration and Magistracy (ENAM), adjacent to the national printing press behind the Ministry of Territorial Administration. Cameroon is made up of ten (10) regions. Of the ten (10) regions, two (2) are English Speaking Regions and eight (8) French Speaking Regions. The Centre Region of Cameroon is a predominantly French Speaking Region. Most of the establishments in this region use the French Language as the main Language of instruction. The Central Government English Primary School Yaounde was created to meet up with the school needs of English speaking Cameroonians

who were based in Yaounde. It started with the nursery school which was opened in 1980 and later the primary school section was opened. The school is divided into four groups with each having a head teacher. Each group has six classrooms from class one to class six. There are averagely, 60 pupils in a class per teacher. The total population of pupils in the school is about 1080 pupils. The school has 36 teachers. Each group has a French Language teacher who teaches the pupils French as a discipline.

The choice of Central Government English Primary School

Yaoundé was based on the characteristics possessed by this institution which suit the problem under study. The school was also chosen for proximity reasons. It was beside the researchers' place of work. The teacher of class two Francisca Ayuk Ako served as the main focal point of our project. She assisted the researcher in the data collection process. The population of the study was made up of all the teachers of the school. The sample was constituted of five (5) teachers drawn from classe one (1) to five (5) using purposive sampling technique. Table 1 presents the socio-demographic profiles of the participants.

Table 1: Socio-demographic information of Participants:

Participants	Class	Genre	Age	Qualification	Experience
Teacher One	One	Female	34 years	CAPIEMP	7 years
Teacher Two	Two	Female	22 years	CAPIEMP	2 years
Teacher Three	Three	Female	53 years	CAPIEMP	30 years
Teacher four	Four	Male	50 years	CAPIEMP	16 years
Teacher five	Five	Female	39 years	CAPIEMP	15 years

According to table 1 five teachers took part in the study. They were named Teacher one, Teacher two, Teacher three, Teacher four and Teacher five. Of the five (5) teachers, four (4) were female teachers and one (1) male teacher. Their ages ranged from 22years to 53 years. Teacher one was 34 years old, Teacher two 22 years old, Teacher three 53 years old, Teacher four 50 years old and Teacher five 39 years old. In line with their professional qualification, they all have the Teachers Grade I Certificate (CAPIEMP). Their teaching experiences vary from 2 to 30 years.

The methods used for data collection were observation and interview. A semi structured observation guide and semi structured interview guide were constructed following the objectives of the study and applied respectively to collect data. The instruments were designed to assess how teachers carry out lesson planning, presentation and evaluation in their respective classrooms taking into consideration the development of higher order thinking skills in pupils. The observation guide was adapted from Ned A. Flanders (1985) in Reed and Bergemann (1995). Observation was meant to translate attributes into quantities that can easily be analysed. It gave the researcher an objective view of reality in the classrooms. In order to collect data for this study, the researchers obtained permission from the head teacher and proceeded to the various classrooms. Each observation took duration of 30 minutes. That is the duration of the lesson. Interview was a follow up to observation. After the observation phase, the interviews were conducted in the different classrooms with the teachers. Each interview took a maximum of 30 minutes. The data collection process took place in January, 2017. Each interview was transcribed. The transcribed interviews were printed out and read as many times as possible to crosscheck if any useful information was left out. The data was categorized into three subthemes that came up from the research questions.

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

Table 2 presents the overall analysis of observation on teacher pedagogic competences and pupils cognitive development in Cameroon primary schools.

Themes	Activity Observed	Participants					Total Frequency	Percentage (%)	Total per theme
		T1	T2	T3	T4	T5			
Lesson planning skills	Need Assessment of Pupils	3.00	4.00	4.00	3.00	4.00	18.00	10.34	28.16
	Identification/definition of competences, methods and techniques	2.00	4.00	3.00	2.00	4.00	15.00	8.62	
	Analysis of Resources	4.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	16.00	9.20	
Language Skills	Speaking	4.00	3.00	4.00	3.00	4.00	18.00	10.34	29.88
	Listening	2.00	3.00	4.00	3.00	4.00	16.00	9.20	
	Writing	4.00	4.00	3.00	3.00	4.00	18.00	10.34	
Skills in lesson presentation	Communicative method	2.00	3.00	2.00	2.00	3.00	12.00	6.90	21.84
	Immersion method	3.00	3.00	2.00	2.00	3.00	13.00	7.47	
	Task based Learning	2.00	2.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	13.00	7.47	
Assessment	Oral	2.00	1.00	2.00	2.00	3.00	10.00	5.75	20.12
	Written	1.00	1.00	3.00	4.00	4.00	13.00	7.47	
	Practical	1.00	1.00	3.00	3.00	4.00	12.00	6.90	
Total		30.00	32.00	36.00	33.00	43.00	174.00	100	
Total Percentage		17.24	18.39	20.69	18.96	24.71	100		

The general analysis of observation on teacher pedagogic competence and pupils' cognitive development in primary schools revealed interesting results. Findings as can be seen on table 2 and the pie chart below shows that the mastery of language of instruction had the highest score (30%). This was closely followed by lesson planning skills with a score of (28%). Lesson presentation skills scored (22%) while Evaluation skills had the least score of (20%).

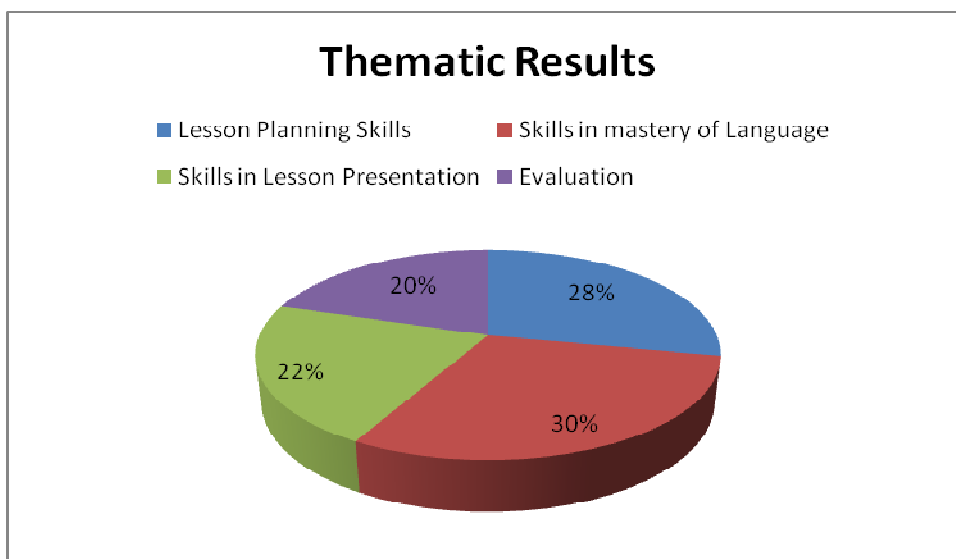


Figure 1: Thematic Results

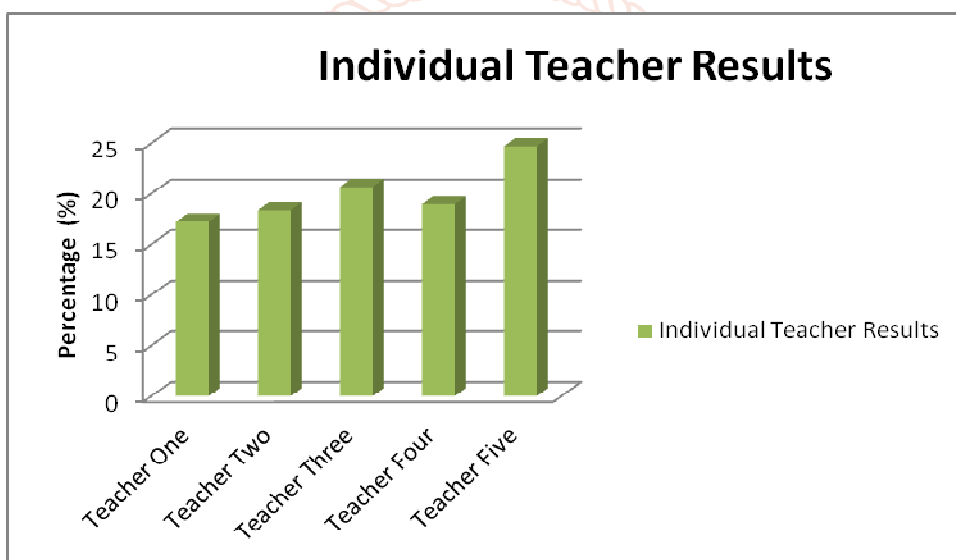


Figure 2: Individual Teacher Results

Presentation of Interview Results

Concerning lesson planning skills, out of the five (5) teachers interviewed, *Teacher I, Teacher II, Teacher III and Teacher IV*, affirmed that they always identify and define the competences to be developed, methods and techniques to be used that can help pupils think in their lessons. *Teacher V* admitted that she does not only identify the competences, methods and techniques but goes as far as analyzing them with respect to the ability level of the pupils. As for Mastery of Language, the five participants presented varied views. *Teacher I and Teacher III* had converging opinions on the aspect of language skills. According to them, speaking and writing skills are the most essential language skills to be mastered and used by teachers in teaching at the primary school. *Teacher II* stated that writing skills are the most important abilities that should be understood and possessed by primary school teachers. *Teacher IV and Teacher V* acknowledged that language skills such as speaking, writing and listening skills are important abilities to be mastered and used for instruction in the primary school.

On the aspect of lesson presentation skills or delivery, *Teacher I, III, IV and V* had similar views. They all agreed that the communicative method, immersion method and task based learning are the most suitable delivery techniques for developing cognitive skills in the primary school. *Teacher II* pointed out that the task based learning and communicative methods are the best presentation techniques for instruction in the primary school. Concerning evaluation skills, *Teacher I, II and III* had divergent views. *Teacher I* claimed that oral and written assessments are the best methods of evaluation in the primary school. *Teacher II and teacher III* stressed the importance of practical and oral assessments methods for primary school pupils. According to *teacher II*, “practical and oral assessment methods help the teacher to understand the real abilities of the children”. *Teacher III* admitted that “Practical and oral assessments methods can help the teacher to master the cognitive as well as the affective characteristics of the pupils.” *Teacher IV and Teacher V* had similar understanding. They all agreed that Oral, written and practical assessments methods are all suitable for teaching and learning in the primary school.

DISCUSSION

Lesson Planning Skills

The inquiry on lesson planning skills in the study was based on teacher's abilities in carrying out a need assessment of pupils, identification and definition of competences, methods and techniques of teaching and analysis of instructional resources. The findings obtained from both observation and interview revealed that lesson planning skills has an influence on the development of higher order thinking skills in primary school. Lesson planning skills with respect to the development of higher order thinking skills, following the results of the observation had a high tally scoring (28%). This was later buttressed by the results of the interview. The responses obtained on the question of lesson planning showed that teachers have a good understanding of the importance of lesson preparation in the development of higher order thinking skills in primary school. All the participants affirmed that need assessment of pupils, identification and definition of competences, methods, techniques and analysis of resources are important considerations for effective teaching and learning in primary school.

However, the teacher has the duty to help the pupils understand the expectations of the lesson with respect to their ability level and needs, the methodology to be applied and what it takes to develop the competences. In preparing the lesson, the teacher has to ensure that there is clarity of focus. The teaching objectives have to be clear and simple, measurable, attainable, feasible, time bound and developmental. Also, problem identification and analysis is an important starting point for both the teacher and the learner. There is also need for analysis of strategies, methods and techniques for building up trust. Above all, a relationship that is based on trust must be established between the children and the teacher. This trust can be extended to the objectives of the class which have to be agreed and realized by both the teacher and the pupils. The teacher has as duty to provide conditions that can help all the children to learn without fear. Therefore the teacher has the responsibility to make the atmosphere in the classroom psychologically safe for all the kids.

The wish of every good teacher is to help the learner learn something and become useful. In order to succeed in a lesson following the Competence Based Approach, the teacher need to first of all define the theoretical underpinnings of the problem which gives a justification of the lesson, state the objectives and questions aimed at verifying the level of the learner, analyse and synthesise content from different fields of knowledge to better understand the problem and how to resolve it, define a blue print that presents the strategies and methods to solve the problem, define a plan for presentation of results and evaluation of how much leaning has occurred, a review which examines the challenges faced, revision and adjustments.

Language Skills

The investigation on language skills was delimited to speaking, listening and writing. The researcher sought to find out which of the language skills contribute to the development of higher order thinking skills in pupils. The results on mastery of language revealed that language skills influence the development of higher order thinking skills in children. The findings on language mastery from observation presented the highest tally scoring (30%). This was later

buttressed by results of the interview where all the five (5) teachers who took part in the study were of the opinion that the teacher's mastery of the language of instruction contributes to the development of higher order thinking skills in primary school learners. At the core of instruction is communication. The teacher has as duty to help the learners understand the lesson. The language that is used by the teacher determines the effectiveness of the instructional process. This has a direct link with the way children learn. Language skills are particularly useful for explanation, illustration, demonstration, instructions, and instilling discipline in the classroom. The teacher is expected to vary the use of the different types of communication or language skills in the lesson to create an atmosphere of trust, so that the students can become motivated to participate in learning. The manner in which the teacher uses a particular language can facilitate learning. Internally learners accept the teacher as someone who can be reliable and trusted. Teaching becomes easier when the teacher gains trust and confidence of the learners. Thus language empowers the learners to develop a positive self-esteem and self-awareness to change, problem-solving and critical thinking.

Lesson Presentation skills

As for lesson presentation skills, the researcher sought to find out the lesson delivery methods used by teachers during their instruction in class and how they relate with their learners. This was delimited to three methods (communicative method, immersion method and task based learning). The findings obtained from both observation and interview revealed that lesson presentation skills have an influence on the development of higher order thinking skills in pupils. Lesson presentation skills with respect to the development of higher order thinking skills following the results of the observation had a good tally scoring (22%). This result was later supported by findings obtained from interview where all the five (5) teachers had a positive response on the question of language presentation skills and the development of higher order thinking skills in pupils. From the different discussions, the teachers pointed out clearly that the lesson delivery method used by the teacher determines the level of interaction and participation during the lesson. One of the main concerns of the teacher during the teaching process is learner participation in the lesson. The teacher feels comfortable when learners ask and answer questions on specific issues related to the lesson. Teachers have as duty to understand the diversity in the classroom, socio-demographic characteristics of the learners and learning styles. The use of a variety of methods and techniques help to keep the lesson interesting and interactive.

Assessment Skills

The inquiry on assessment skills was delimited to three types of assessments (oral, written and practical assessments). The findings obtained from both observation and interview revealed that assessment skills had the least influence on the development of higher order thinking skills in pupils. Assessment skills following the results of the observation had the lowest tally scoring (20%). The results obtained from observation were letter reinforced by the results of interview where all the teachers demonstrated a good mastery on the question of assessment in primary school and the development of higher order thinking skills in learners.

In addition, teachers should carry out self-assessment of their lessons in class in order to identify their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT). This will help them to set up remedial plans for improvements on subsequent lessons. Teachers should also carry out proper planning of teaching and learning resources, participate in continuous professional training programmes, and reactivate independent study activities with the use of innovative technologies like the internet.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In conclusion, findings of this study have revealed that teachers' pedagogic competences influence the development of higher order thinking skills among primary school pupils in Cameroon. The results have shown that lesson planning skills, language skills, presentation skills and assessment skills contributes to the development of higher order thinking skills among primary school pupils with differing scores. Results have also shown that teachers pay more attention to mastery of language and lesson planning skills. Findings showed that lesson presentation and evaluation had the least scores. The study offers new proof as well that teaching practices are carried out in our primary schools to help children develop their thinking skills. Based on the findings of this study and given that the country has adopted the competence based approach, recommendations are made to teachers to improve their teaching practices in the classroom in order to help all the children develop the necessary competences. Teachers should be trained on the competence-based approach to teaching so that they can carry out their responsibilities in the classrooms effectively. From the results, teachers should make an effort to improve on their lesson delivery and evaluation practices. Schools should be equipped with adequate and relevant instructional resources such as visual devices, audio devices to facilitate the job of the teacher. In-service training programs on classroom teaching practices should be organized regularly for all the teachers.

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