PEDAGOGICAL CONSTRAINTS IN THE LEARNING OF UPPER PRIMARY CHILDREN WITH EMOTIONAL AND BEHAVIORAL DISORDERS IN CENTRAL PROVINCE REHABILITATION SCHOOLS, KENYA.

Abstract

Emotional and behavioral disorders have been recognized as a problem in special education globally. In spite of this fact, a study conducted by UNESCO 1985 indicated that in Eastern and Southern African countries only Kenya and Zimbabwe have educational programmes for these children. The most utilized system in Kenya is Rehabilitation Schools as stipulated by Children’s Act [CAP 586] of the laws of Kenya. These Rehabilitation Schools take a few of these children who have been regarded by schools as too difficult to teach, and have also violated legal codes, have been caught and adjudicated, a transient solution since these schools do not offer them enough in terms of special education necessary for children with special needs. Hence, the main objective of this study was to look at the pedagogical preparation of teachers and to make recommendations for improvement of learning in these schools. Twelve different questionnaires were administered to 4 Head teachers, 12 Teachers and 90 Children. Findings revealed in part were that there was inadequate pedagogical preparation of teachers in Rehabilitation Schools. The study therefore proposed that teachers should be adequately trained and in-serviced in special needs education so as to improve learning in these schools.

Introduction

Children who are emotionally disturbed have problems that could lead to delinquent behavior, including aggression, destructiveness and crime. They cause trouble to their parents, brothers, sisters, peers and teachers. Many of the children now identified for special education because
of their emotional and behavioral disorders are children who require intensive, sustained help from well-trained and continuously available personnel (Kirk, Gallagher and Anastasiow, 2003). The advent of American public law 94-142, of 1975, which is, Education Act for all handicapped children is the forerunner of greater flexibility in, and focus on, quality education for all handicapped children (Reinert, 1986). However, in Kenya, like in many parts of Africa, special education and particularly provision of quality instruction and related services for children with emotional and behavioral disorders has not been adequately emphasized. This is by the government, non-governmental organizations, religious bodies and other stakeholders concerned with the education of children with special needs (MOEST, 2001) and this necessitated the need for this study.

In Kenya the education offered to these children is in Rehabilitation Schools. These Rehabilitation Schools in Kenya cater for two categories of children. The first are those who have committed crimes. They are committed for three years however serious the crime is under section 47 of the Children’s Act [CAP 586] of the laws of Kenya. They are referred to as children in need of discipline and protection. The second group of children is the abandoned and neglected, orphans and destitute, battered children and other children in need of special protection and care under section 119 of the same Act. They are referred to as children in need of protection and care. They are committed until they attain the age of 18 years or a shorter time as the court may decide (Children’s Act [CAP 586]) (Kenya Gazette Supplement, 2001). The children in need of protection and care and those convicted of crimes learn together.

It is the delinquency and crime, resulting from the emotional state of these children that make them to be removed from their homes and local schools for residential treatment. Their behavior is considered morally wrong in the eyes of the law (Kauffman, 1981). Rehabilitation Schools should therefore cross boundaries into specialist’s strategies. When established in Kenya, the Institutions were expected to resocialize young offenders, build their self-esteem, and fit them back to society, but they turned out to be prisons for young offenders (Ndunya, 1978). It was for this reason that the researcher needed to find out if effective learning especially by use of trained teachers and use of specialist learning strategies appropriate for these children was taking place in these Rehabilitation schools.

In order to uplift the education of children with emotional and behavioral disorders Koech (1999) recommended that, Approved Schools and Juvenile Remand Probation Centers do away with the image of jail term schools and embrace special education approach. He proposed institutions discard terms like approved, probation, and juvenile to Rehabilitation Schools. This was implemented in 1st March 2002 at the time of Children’s Act implementation. Unfortunately this has not been achieved since probation is still used and so is remand and the education of children with emotional and behavioral disorders still face problems such as inadequate preparation of teachers especially in special needs education, lack of in-service training for these teachers and this therefore leads to lack of teachers’ use of learning strategies appropriate for these children. It is against this background that this study was conducted to find out the pedagogical preparation of teachers in Rehabilitation Schools in facilitating the learning of these children.
Statement of the Problem

Emotional and behavioral disorders are one of the worldwide phenomena faced by educators and scholars. Cases of emotional and behavioral disorders are on the increase in the world, Kenya being no exemption especially when we consider the increase of strikes, drug abuse to mention but a few in Rehabilitation Schools and also in public schools. To assist and help these children, Kenya established Rehabilitation Schools under section 47 of the Children’s Act CAP 587 of the laws of Kenya. Unfortunately there is a feeling that these schools are not doing enough. Improvement is needed for maximum dissemination of services. This is to say, special education offered especially in terms of well trained and in-serviced teachers are not to the anticipated standards. Hence the main problem of the study is that the critical factors in the learning of children with emotional and behavioral disorders in Rehabilitation Schools in Kenya had not been well conceptualized and documented.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study was to find out pedagogical preparation of teachers in the learning of children with emotional and behavioral disorders in Rehabilitation Schools and also to make recommendations on improvement of teaching in these schools.

Objective of the study

The study sought to
1. Find out pedagogical preparation of teachers in Rehabilitation Schools.
2. Find out instructional strategies used by teachers in Rehabilitation Schools.

Theoretical Framework

This study was based on two theories. Maslow’s theory of human needs and a social learning theory advanced by Bandura. Maslow asserts that, there is a hierarchical structure of human needs. He further stipulated that one level of needs leads to another and that satisfaction of one need triggers the need to satisfy the next need. Due to their circumstances children with emotional and behavioral disorders may not be able to satisfy even the basic needs of food, shelter, clothing among others and this can greatly interfere with their need to learn. Maslow’s theory therefore encouraged a careful study of all situations that foster and fulfill satisfaction of our basic needs and which can help children learn, among them are positive education settings like trained teachers, appropriate learning strategies and good classroom atmosphere among others. Bandura further supported Maslow and suggested that teachers dealing with children should foster positive reinforcement so as to promote high achievements in their academic work. This can only be achieved if teachers are adequately trained and in-serviced.

Literature Reviewed

Training of Teachers for Children with Emotional and Behavioral Disorders

Children with emotional and behavioral disorders need to be given the right professional assistance so as to learn, as was the assumption of this study. Useful work with these children depends largely on the expertise of the teacher. Therefore, teachers should be professionally
trained and certified. While in training the basic courses for the teachers ought to cover these areas: special education, elementary education, child psychology, sociology, guidance and counseling, and Practicum (Molloy, 1972). It was therefore important to find out if similar training of teachers existed in Rehabilitation Schools.

Galloway et al (1982) says that in identifying and teaching children with behavioral disorders the teacher should receive in-service training in special needs education to enable them to look at patterns that indicate that all is not well with a pupil.

In-service and sandwich refresher courses, workshops and conferences can play a useful role both in keeping teachers up to date with developments and also inspiring a sense of continuing purpose and community among the profession (Reinert, 1986).

Lee (1990) suggests that, a teacher has the responsibility for providing a classroom environment that will encourage children to learn. She must create a happy working atmosphere within her classroom. The teacher should then help each child acquire skills which will enable him or her learn to read, write, use figures and symbols. The child should also be taught to express ideas in lucid and articulate speech. It was therefore important to find out if similar results could be found in these schools.

Lee (1990) further says that, for learning to occur, the teacher should encourage the child's natural curiosity. He should encourage the child to make use of materials, which he finds in the way, perhaps forging new tools of his own. A teacher must also be flexible, adaptable and willing to keep abreast of new developments in her\his work as well as to improve their own skills (Ndurum, 1993). The study intended to find out if and to what extent teachers in Rehabilitation Schools attended in-service course programmes in special needs education.

Instructional Strategies Used to Teach Learners with Behavioral Disorders

Gallager (1979) has developed specific ways of providing instruction for the emotional and behavioral disordered children in a classroom setting: Initial instruction should focus upon the individual child. This can only be achieved by use of an Individualized Educational Programme (IEP). In deciding what to teach, the teacher should identify the learner's strengths and challenges (Moore, 1998). It was therefore important to find out if and to what extent this was being practiced in the Rehabilitation Schools to enhance the learning of these children.

After identifying the strengths and challenges of individual learners in the classroom, the teacher should use Task analysis. This is the process of breaking down a task to be learnt into smaller steps. It is then presented to the pupils in sequence, from the easiest to the hardest. Learning the whole task in a single lesson can be overwhelming especially for learners with emotional and behavior disorders. The task to be learnt must be described in observable and measurable terms. This will help the teacher know whether learning has taken place or not (Otiato and Kathenya, 1994).
The use of direct instruction has been found effective in teaching and mastering of content for learners with special needs in education. The teacher should begin the lesson by identifying its objectives, and then provide a quick review of previously learnt skills. Specific teaching points should then be presented to learners in a sequential manner. Key points should be explained to learners using clear and explicit statements accompanied by relevant example to help make abstract information concrete (Reinert, 1986). This would facilitate learning, as was the assumption of this study.

After presenting each new point, a teacher should check for the learner's understanding. This can be done by asking questions and be followed by either supportive or corrective feedback at all times. A teacher should offer time for seatwork activities. This should be directly related to the content taught. At the end of the lesson there should be summary of the main points and the evaluation of learner's mastery of content (Reinert, 1986).

Co-operative learning approach is a method of organizing learning in such a way that, learners work with their peers towards a shared academic goal rather than working separately from their peers. Small groups of learners usually fewer than six work together on an instructional task (Moore, 1998).

Group teaching is also an important technique in meeting the needs of learners exhibiting diversity in behavior. The researcher assumed that this was being practiced in the Rehabilitation Schools. An ideal group should consist of at least five learners but not more than eight. Achievement grouping, interest grouping and partner grouping are some types of group teaching that have been found effective in promoting learning. The researcher intended to find out if and to what extent these teaching techniques were being carried out in the Rehabilitation Schools.

Mediated learning experience (MLE) is an effective way of teaching learners with special needs. Through question and answer techniques, the learner is encouraged to actively participate in learning. The teacher guides the children step by step by matching the learner's needs, interests, abilities and experiences to the task to be learnt. This is done until the child gains confidence in the work being taught (Otiato and Kathenya, 1994).

In order for learning to take place effectively, a teacher should limit assignments. Work should be presented in assignment formats that the child can tolerate. Children in conflict often have a tendency to give up too easily when assignments appear so overwhelming that failure is certain (Gallager, 1979). It was therefore important to establish the nature and extent to which teachers in the Rehabilitation Schools used appropriate instructional strategies to facilitate the learning of these children.

Research methodology

The descriptive survey design was adopted for this study. It was aimed at finding out the pedagogical preparation of teachers in Rehabilitation Schools. Purposive sampling method was used to select all the schools in central province. A total of 4 Schools were selected where
one was for girls while the other three were for boys since at the time of the study it was the only girls Rehabilitation school in Kenya. Four Headteachers and 12 class teachers were also purposively sampled. Ninety children were randomly sampled using the raffle method of design. In order to achieve the objectives of the study, primary data was collected through questionnaires and an observation schedule prepared to be used during classroom instruction.

**Procedure**

The questionnaires were administered to the respondents by the help of the class teachers of the respective classes under study. Time was also made for observation of the actual teaching taking place in the Rehabilitation Schools.

**Data Analysis**

Data collected in this study was both qualitative and quantitative in nature. Descriptive statistics such as percentages, frequencies were used to analyze data in order to determine the pedagogical preparation of teachers in rehabilitation schools. After the data had been analyzed they were presented in form of tables, frequencies, percentages and means.

**Results**

**Professional Preparation of Teachers and Head Teachers in Rehabilitation Schools**

In order to find out whether teachers’ professional qualification was a constraint in the learning of children in Rehabilitation Schools, data was collected on whether teachers and Head teachers had received any professional training. The results are presented in Table 1 below.

**Table 1: Teachers and Head teachers’ Professional qualification**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professional Qualification</th>
<th>Teachers (n=12)</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
<th>Head teachers (n=4)</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B.ED</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Untrained form fours</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 1 shows that, the sampled teachers were all qualified at different levels. Out of the 12 teachers, 1 (8.3%) was a P4 teacher, 1 (8.3%) was a P3, 3 (25%) were P1, 2 (12.2) S1 and 1 (8.3%) had a Bachelor's degree. Out of the 4 Head teachers, 2 (50%) had a diploma in education, while the other 2 (50%) were trained graduates. However, there was a group of untrained teachers. For example out of the 12 teachers, 2 (16.7%) were untrained form 4 leavers while 3 (25 %) had only a certificate in education. The inference here is that, these teachers were not qualified enough to teach children in Rehabilitation schools. Presence of teachers who are not professionally trained and also some who do not have enough professional training could be a constraint in the learning of children in Rehabilitation Schools. As Molloy (1972) said, teachers of children with emotional and behavioral disorders should be professionally trained and certified. He further pointed out that, professional preparation of teachers influence the learning of children. The Head teachers were found to be all professionally trained therefore their training was not a constraint in the learning of these children in Rehabilitation Schools.

A further investigation by the researcher after classroom observation as to the reason why P1 and untrained form four teachers were teaching in the Rehabilitation Schools revealed that, some of these teachers were not employed by the TSC but they were volunteer workers teaching specialized subjects for example, Mathematics, English, and GHC among others in Rehabilitation Schools. These teachers are therefore not conversant with instructional strategies for children with special needs, which could therefore be a constraint in the learning of children in Rehabilitation Schools.

### Training of Teachers and Head teachers of Rehabilitation Schools in Special Needs Education

The researcher needed to find out if teachers and Head teachers in Rehabilitation Schools had received any training in special needs education. The results are presented in Table 2 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Special Training</th>
<th>Teachers (n=12)</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
<th>Head teachers (n=4)</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Specially Trained</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Specially Trained</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>77.8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>90.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 shows that, 9 (77.8%) out of the 12 teachers and 3 (90.8%) out of the 4 Head teachers, were not trained in special needs education and 3 (22.2 %) teachers and 1(8.2%) Head teacher were trained. This implied that since a large number of teachers and Head teachers were not trained in special needs education, they are not conversant with instructional strategies for children with special needs and therefore this could be a constraint in the learning of children in Rehabilitation Schools. This contradicts Molloy's (1972) assertion that, teachers of children
with emotional and behavioral disorders should not only be professionally trained, but their training ought to cover the following areas: Special education, elementary education, child psychology, sociology, guidance and counseling and practicum. He further pointed out that, these qualifications inculcates in the teachers knowledge and relevant skills in handling and teaching children with special needs and therefore very essential for teachers’ effectiveness and the children’s learning.

**In-service Training of Teachers in Rehabilitation Schools**

In order to obtain the needed data on in-service training, teachers were asked to indicate whether they had attended an in-service course. The results are presented in Table 3 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency of Attendance</th>
<th>Number (n=12)</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not attended any course</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attended between 1-2 times</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attended over 3 times</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 shows that, out of the 12 teachers 9 (70 %) never attended any in service course on children with emotional and behavioral disorders as compared to a small number (2) who had attended it between 1 to 2 times and an even smaller number (1) who had attended it more than 3 times. This meant that, since a high number (9) of the 12 teachers sampled taught without necessarily attending an in service course, it could therefore be a constraint in the learning of children with emotional and behavioral disorders in Rehabilitation Schools. This finding is contradictory to the emphasis Galloway et al (1982) placed on in-service training. They said that, in identifying and teaching children with emotional and behavioral disorders the teacher should receive in-service training in special needs education to enable him/her to teach and also look at patterns that indicate that all is not well with a child. Even though MOEST (2001) claimed that, in-service training was designed by the government of Kenya in order to equip teachers in the field with the latest methods of teaching since in-service courses are instrumental to the success of teachers in the teaching profession, majority of the teachers studied have not benefited from such initiative.

**Instructional Strategies Employed by Teachers in Rehabilitation Schools**

With regard to instructional strategies used by teachers, data was collected and the teachers’ and children’s responses were explained. The most commonly used strategy in teaching was lecture as indicated by the teachers and also by the children followed by class discussion.
Question and answer strategy closely followed the above mentioned. Practical demonstration and group teaching took the fourth position. Individualized attention strategy was the least used as indicated by the teachers. However, the children did not indicate the use of individualized attention by their teachers. This showed a low level of commitment by teachers to the use of a variety of instructional strategies in teaching, especially, those that are appropriate for children with special needs. For example, out of the 12 teachers, 2 used group teaching and another 2 used demonstration, while 1 used individualized attention. This could be a pedagogical constraint in the learning of children in Rehabilitation Schools. This finding is not in line with Otito’s and Kathenya’s (1994) assertion. They pointed out that, for children with emotional and behavioral disorders who perceive education to be hard, a variety of instructional strategies should be used in their learning.

Discussion of findings

The study has established that there is inadequate pedagogical preparation of teachers in Rehabilitation Schools. Majority of the teachers were neither trained in special needs education nor attended in service course programmes for children with special needs. This greatly interfered with their effectiveness in delivering instruction and teaching these children. This was reflected further by teachers’ use of instructional strategies. Those mostly used were the common conventional methods like lecture and discussion which are not appropriate for children with special needs. The implication of these findings are that by knowledge of these factors those concerned with the learning of these children can look into them to help facilitate proper preparation and in-servicing of these children so that learning in Rehabilitation Schools can be improved.

Conclusions

From the foregoing findings of the study it was identified that there was lack of adequate pedagogical preparation of teachers in Rehabilitation Schools. A good number of the teachers lacked adequate professional training and also training in special needs education. Rehabilitation Schools also had teachers who had received no training at all, for example untrained form four leavers who were there as volunteer teachers. There is also no provision for in-service training for teachers especially in special needs education. This led to failure by a large percentage of teachers in using appropriate instructional strategies relevant in teaching children with special needs.

General recommendations

Based on the findings above, it is recommended that:

1. The Ministry of Education Science and Technology should ensure that all teachers are in-serviced. The in-service training should be in special needs education to enable them teach children with special needs for example, children with emotional and behavioral disorders. For this to be effective the Government should develop a special education department in all teacher-training colleges in the various areas of special education.
2. Education of children with emotional and behavioral disorders will only be possible if the Government enact a special education policy so that it can be used as a guide to all activities in special education including the in-service training of both regular and specialist teachers in Rehabilitation Schools which will update them on the new approaches to teaching methods.

3. Teacher educators, inspectors of schools and other stakeholders in teacher education should emphasize to teachers of children with emotional and behavioral disorders the need to employ appropriate methods in teaching. For example learner-centered teaching strategies (such as group discussions, individualized attention) as opposed to teacher centered approaches (such as lecture and discussion) which teachers find more appropriate for faster completion of syllabus.

4. The Government should provide a guidance and counseling programme in Rehabilitation Schools. The personnel in the guidance and counseling department should be B.ED graduates or diploma graduates who have knowledge of different categories of children with special needs and strategies, which could be effective in handling these children. The person should have professional training with exposure to various courses, for example, human development and personality, psychology of exceptional child, counseling techniques, data interpretation and children’s record maintenance. This will help the children in Rehabilitation Schools to understand and accept themselves and make plans to develop educationally, vocationally and socially.

5. There should be collaboration between the ministry of Education Science and Technology and the ministry of Home Affairs National Heritage in providing funds, resources, trained teachers among others inorder to ensure that education of children in Rehabilitation Schools is effectively carried on.

References


