ADVANCED DIPLOMA IN EDUCATION
EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION (ECE)

ECE 101: FOUNDATIONS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

FOUNDATIONS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

AN OVERVIEW

In ECE 101 there are six distinct units. Each unit has its objectives clearly spelt out. Use the following instructions as your study guide. They will help you to have a grip of the topics.

GUIDES ON HOW TO STUDY THE UNITS

1. Read through the units and write down those words and phrases that are not clear to you.
2. Use a standard dictionary to check out the meaning of the difficult words and phrases you have identified in the passage.
3. Consult the relevant materials listed at the end of the unit. Use other relevant materials that you can lay your hands on.
4. Do the assignments given at the end of the unit. If possible grade yourself.
5. If your score is low, read through the units again and reflect on what you have read.

UNIT ONE: MEANING, ROLES OF THE SCHOOL AND CHARACTERISTICS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

SECTION 1: MEANING, CONCEPTION OF EARLY CHILDHOOD (*AN INTRODUCTION*)

OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit you should be able to:

1. Explain and define Early Childhood Education.
2. List and explain the roles of the school in early childhood education.
3. List the characteristics of early childhood.

(a) **Meaning of Early Childhood**

Early childhood is a time of bridge building. It is a time in a child's life when bridges are built between the shelter of home and the demands of the school; between play with a few neighbourhood friends and relationship with many children. According to Cerso (1984) early childhood is a period in human development, falling between infancy and adulthood. It is that period of human development which falls between ages 3 to 5 years. It is a period marked with significant changes and reorganizations in the child's behaviours. At this period a lot of changes and progress are made in terms of learning, reasoning and in his/her social relations with others. It is indeed the period the child gains a sense of self-worth, or lack of it, and confidence, or lack of confidence, as he experiences success or failure in everyday contacts.

(b) **The Role of the School**

The school needs to see this period in the child's life as transitional. The school must help the child to gain the experiences that will land him or her on solid ground, and in the right direction.

Experiences provided by the school must help the child to have good listening skills, work habits, attitudes and feelings that must keep him moving forward and looking forward. The methods employed must be appropriate and designed to meet the needs of the child.

(c) **Characteristics of Early Childhood**

We shall examine the characteristics of pre-school childhood. This will help you understand who the pre-school child is. Children at this period of development seem to have a lot of energy. The younger the child is at this stage, the shorter the attention span or capacity to concentrate efforts on one object.

UNIT 2: EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION: *PHILOSOPHY, AIMS AND OBJECTIVES*

OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit you should be able to:

1. Explain and define Early Childhood Education.
2. List and explain the roles of the school in early childhood education.
3. List the characteristics of early childhood.

SECTION 1: PHILOSOPHY OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

The philosophy of early childhood education is generally tied to the concept of "good life" or the best life which every society wants for its citizens.

However, the conception of "good life" according to Meller (1966) may differ from one individual to another and from one society to another. Generally, "good life means helping children to appreciate and strive towards that which is good, honest and beautiful – "a striving that brings joy that is more profound and lasting than happiness". Good life also means tolerance, love, services and the ability to give and to take. It means courage, and endurance and a sense of humour, the ability to enjoy solitude, to share in the simple pleasures of the people around and to be sensitive to the feelings of others. It means a delight in creating and in honest craftsmanship, and recognition of the beauty inherent in the rightness of things for their purpose. Good life means children's sensitiveness to the wonder and beauty of nature. It means an appreciation of the past and present and a looking forward to the future with courage; a singleness of mind and a pure heart that alone unify children's thoughts and actions and lead them towards ultimate fulfillment of self-actualization.

If these are the conception of "good life" then the philosophy of early childhood education means much more than just teaching them certain skills and facts. The philosophy of early childhood education should be the type that strives for total development of the child. It entails the child's physical, mental and spiritual growth; his feelings, attitudes and relationships with others; his character and personality. It is also concerned with the child as an individual possessing certain innate tendencies, or activity. At this stage male children are actively interested in climbing steps, ladders and they enjoy activities involving throwing and catching. They are more interested in exploratory activities, mechanics, and in adventure than their female counterparts. Female children on the other hand engage more in hopping, skipping and seem to be more innovative, imaginative and creative than other children.

The chart at the end of this section shows the motor development of children from 3 to 5 years. It is important to note that over 50 percent or more of the children in this early childhood have been observed to be able to perform the activities listed against their age. Children differ in the speed with which they progress through sequence of behaviour pattern, and also differ in power and the accuracy with which they use their muscular coordination. It is therefore important for us to know that the chart is not exhaustive and it is not a description of every child's developmental characteristics. However, growth during the pre-school years

is not as rapid as noted in infancy. On the average, boys appear to be slightly heavier and taller than girls.

During early childhood stage of development, the child progresses towards s more complex thinking pattern. At this stage the child's capacity to think increases. The child is able to internalize external events and actions to some extent. However children at this age do not see the need to justify or explain how they arrive at certain conclusions. They also ignore what adults say when they are talking.

Children's thought processes at this stage is also tied to physical objectives which are governed more by perception rather than reasoning. They are influenced more by what they see, hear and touch. They pay less attention to transformations or changes from one state to another.

Reasoning among pre-school children is also from particular to particular and not from general to particular. They are also egocentric or self-centered and do not understand situations from any other point of view except their own.

Children at this stage of development also love to play, which may be self-initiated or adult-prescribed.

MOTOR DEVELOPMENT

Age Two	Age Three	Age Four	Age Five
(1) Puts on simple articles of clothing	(1) Puts shoes on unbuttons	(1) Can use scissors to cut line	(1) Throws well
(2) Can turn the page of a book at flip	(2) Catches a ball with arms straight	(2) Dresses self	(2) Catches small ball with elbows at sides
(3) Holds glass with one hand	(3) Copies circle 3 and draws a straight line	(3) Catches ball with elbows in front of body	(3) Fastens buttons he can see
(4) Can draw rough circles	(4) Pours from pitcher		(4) Copies square
(5) Builds block tower of 5 to 8 blocks	(5) Builds towers 9 or 10 blocks high		(5) Copies designs, letters, numbers
			(6) Folds paper into double triangle

LOCOMOTION

(1) Wide stance, walks well	(1) Walks tip toe	(1) Descends steps – alternate feet	(1) Narrow stance
(2) Walks up and down the stairs one step at a time	(2) Stands on one foot	(2) Does stunts on tricycle	(2) Skips
(3) Push large cartons	(3) Jumps from bottom stair	(3) Gallops	(3) Hops on one foot, 10 or more steps
(4) Propels self forward when riding alone on walkers	(4) Hops, both feet		(4) Walks straight line
(5) Kicks ball	(5) Rides tricycle		(5) Descends large ladder, alternating feet easily
	(6) Propels wagon, one foot		(6) Handedness established

ACTIVITY I

1. What do you understand by the term Early Childhood?
2. What is the role of the school in the child's life?
3. What are the characteristics of Early Childhood? Mention few of them.

SECTION 2: EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION – TYPES AND FEATURES

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Early childhood education is also referred to as "Nursery" or "Pre-school Education". It is an educational programme meant for children of ages 3 to 5 (Heffernan, 1960). It is an educational programme designed for pre-school children and aimed at training them for operation and mutually helpful living, and to foster in them consciousness of interdependence. Early childhood education covers Nursery school education and Kindergarten education. Such an educational programme may be home-based or centre-based.

OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit you should be able to:

(1) Understand the concept, Early Childhood Education.

(2) Mention and explain the types of Early Childhood Education.

TYPES OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Available literature on early childhood education reveals that there are three types of early childhood education. These are:

(a) Day Care education

(b) Nursery School education

(c) Kindergarten education.

We will now carefully examine these types of early child hood education.

Day Care Education

Day Care Education is an early childhood educational programme for children of ages 2 years and below given in day care centres and homes. Traditionally, day care centres and homes are places where children of age 2 years and below are kept and looked after by nannies. They are centres or homes where children of working class mothers are looked after while their mothers are at work. The children are normally dropped in the morning by their mothers on their way to work, and picked later in the day or after office hours. The children are taken to the center along with their daily feeds and clothing.

Most day care centres or homes operate half-day programmes. Because of the age of the children who attend day care centres and homes no emphasis is placed on formal teaching and learning.. The major activity that goes on in such centres and homes revolve around meeting the physical needs of the children. Thus, most staff of day care centres and homes are untrained nannies. Their major work includes feeding the children when hungry,

changing their nappies, putting them to bed and other activities that centres around the physical and emotional needs of the child in the absence of the mother.

Evans (1975) however observed that times are changing in the traditional function of day care centres and homes. Many countries and especially in the United States is gradually giving way for a broad services approach. According to Evans, it is now very common, especially in the United States to hear people talk of Developmental Day Care Centres instead of just "Day Care Centres".

In Nigeria for instance, day care centres and homes have gone one step forward by bringing some basic educational services to their traditional function of meeting the physical and emotional needs of children in their custody. The educational activities however centre around simple language development. If you visit some of the day care centres for example, you are likely to hear Nannies teaching the children simple things like the names of objects, words like food, water, come, sit down, stand up, mummy, daddy and so on. As a result of this development many day care centres now employ semi-literate Nannies. Presently in Nigeria most of the day care centres and homes are operated by private individuals and they are therefore profit oriented.

ACTIVITY II

(1) Explain what you understand by the term Early Childhood Education.

(2) Briefly explain the major functions of a Day Care Centre.

(3) Visit a Day Care Centre in your locality and list all the activities that take place in the centre. Suggest possible solutions to some of the problems you probably have identified.

(4) List some of the social and intellectual activities Day Care children are engaged in. How do these activities help them in their development?

(5) List five objectives of Kindergarten Education.

(a) **Nursery School Education**

Nursery education is an early childhood educational programme offered to children of ages three-to-five years. In Nursery school, individual children are provided with a variety of learning activities, materials and experiences suitable to their level of development and developmental needs.

Nursery school education is probably the most prevalent form of early childhood education dating back to the early part of this century (Lefrancois, 1980).

In Britain, the first Nursery school was established in London in 1912 by Margaret McMillan (Onwake, 1963). In the U.S., public nursery schools were first established in 1919 (Mayer, 1960). In Nigeria Nursery Education can be traced back to the colonial days when pre-school education was the exclusive preserve of the colonial officials. Today, Nursery schools are found all over the place. Such schools are

found on the campuses of our colleges and universities, in churches, mosques and homes. Some are commercially operated while others are non-profit.

In Nigeria, however, a greater percentage of nursery schools are operated by private individuals and organizations and therefore profit-oriented. Some nursery schools admit three to four or to five-year-old children; others admit only four year old children. Thus in some nursery schools, children spend up to three years before going to primary school while in others, children spend only two years before going to primary school. Some operate full day programmes, but most of them operate half-day programmes for five days in a week. In essence, variation in the operation of the programme is a rule rather than the exception. In theory, the objectives of all the nursery schools existing in Nigeria are not grossly different. On the other hand, the actual procedures of running the schools are not uniform.

In spite of the differences in the operational procedures of the so many nursery schools most operators of nursery education recognise and keep to the importance of basic socialization, and the child's physical health needs. In most of these schools, emphasis is placed on fantasy-play to promote sensory-motor and emotional development. Nursery school educators have long realized that it is only through organized and free play that a child learns to know himself and his capabilities, and the realities of his social existence (Evans, 1975). Play also provides children the medium through which aesthetics and self-expression activities may be expressed.

Apart from the responsibility nursery schools assume for the physical well-being of children, they are also concerned with their social and intellectual development. Consequently the curriculum of most nursery schools consists of group activities such as games, dances, singing, listening to stories, colouring, cutting, and other activities that the teacher may initiate (Lefrancois, 1980). This means that there should be good rapport between the teacher and each child to foster self-confidence, and be comfortable with self. This will help the child to feel secured. Therefore the teacher-child relationship is a critical factor in nursery schools (Farwell, 1958).

However, a visit to most nursery schools around the country will reveal that classes are over crowded and with very few teachers. Such conditions are not healthy for children's development. It was suggested that nursery groups should not exceed twenty (20) children, for four-year old and not more than fifteen (15) children per group, in a room for two and three-year-olds. This assumes further that at least two teachers should be available for constant supervision within such groups.

Apart from preparing the children for formal primary education, nursery school education is of immense benefit to them in the area of social development. Walsh (1931) observed that nursery education helps beneficiaries to become more confident of themselves, more spontaneous, less inhibited, more independent, more self-reliant and more interested in their environment compared to pre-school children who did not receive nursery education.

(b) **Kindergarten Education**

The word "Kindergarten" is a German word for "garden of children" and thus portrays the original analogy of children as garden plants to be nurtured carefully.

The idea of Kindergarten can be traced back to the philosophy of Frederick Froebel (1782– 1852). Froebel's interest in the education of the pre-school child and the training of young, single women to teach young children were contributions of lasting importance to the concept of Kindergarten (Evans, 1975). Froebel established his first school for young children in Germany in 1837 (Heffernan, 1960). The school was child-centred. Froebel's child-centered orientation greatly influenced his successors and provided, at least in theory, the backbone of modern nursery and kindergarten education (Evans, 1980). The concept of kindergarten as a matter of regular public school experience however, was not formalized until several years after Froebel's death.

In the United States, the first Kindergarten school was established in Water town, Wisconsin in 1855 (Omwake, 1963). In Nigeria Kindergarten education is an integral part of Nursery education and its history can be traced to the colonial days. Kindergarten education was generally restricted to five-year old children, and they spend one year in activities in readiness for formal primary school education. According to Evans (1980) most Kindergartens operate half-day sessions. Like in the Nursery schools, the teacher-children ratio is very important. Class groups of over twenty five children are directly antithetical to the principle of individual differentiation, which is very basic to the general philosophy of Kindergarten education.

Although the objectives of Kindergarten education may vary in their specific terminology from school to school, there are certain general growth objectives that are common to all. These include sociability, aesthetics, sensory-motor development, and achievement motivation. Headley (1965) also suggested that some of the functions of Kindergarten education are to assist children achieve the followings:

(i) Friendliness and helpfulness in relationships with other children.

(ii) Greater power to solve problems based on individual activities and group relationships.

(iii) Respect for the rights, property, and contributions of other children.

(iv) Responsiveness to intellectual challenge.

(v) Achievement of good sensory-motor coordination.

(vi) Understanding of concepts necessary for the continued pursuit of learning.

(vii) Responsiveness to beauty in all forms.

(viii) Realization of individuality and creative propensities.

While the breadth and abstractness of these goals have created room for great programme variations among Kindergarten schools, a common unifying aspect of the programme among

all the personnel of Kindergarten programmes is their commitment to the positive and total growth of children. Also while the general activities prescribed by Kindergarten curricula may be similar across all such schools, their emphasis to pre-academic training varies. Headley (1965) observed that 50 percent of a typical Kindergarten day is devoted to specific creative activities (art work, model building etc), music (singing, listening and rhythmic activities), and language based activities (story telling and listening, poetry, "group discussion" such as show and tell, and question-answer activities). The remaining 50 percent of the time is shared among activities such as self-care, free play and rest. The flexibility of Kindergarten curriculum thus enables a resourceful teacher to infuse daily activities with ample doses of basic language, mathematics, science and social studies concepts.

ACTIVITY III

(1) What are the social and intellectual activities of nursery school children?

(2) How do these activities help in the development of the child?

FEATURES OF EARLY CHILDHOOD INSTITUTIONS AND CURRICULA IMPLICATIONS OF THE THEORY TO EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

The efficient organization and management of available space in an early childhood institution and the provision of suitable equipment are very important if such institutions are to effectively achieve the objectives for which they are established. At present most early childhood institutions in Nigeria are located either in private residential buildings or in Churches and Mosques. There are some also that are operated within the premises of primary schools. Thus most of the buildings housing early childhood institutions in Nigeria are not originally built for that purpose. Because of this obvious limitation a number of early childhood institutions do not have adequate space for all its activities and therefore lack the basic features.

According to Durojaiye (1977) an ideal early childhood institution should have the following features:

1. A Large Building
2. A Display Area
3. A Reading Area
4. Writing and Drawing Area
5. Experiment and Discovery Area
6. Water, Sand and Clay Area
7. Construction Area
8. Art and Craft Area
9. Dramatic Play Area
10. Music Area

11. Withdrawing Area
12. Outdoor Area

Large Building

An ideal early childhood institution should have a large building that has enough space and is well ventilated. Such a building should also have good toilet and washing facilities. The building should be large enough to accommodate all the equipment and allow for the creation of cubicles for all the units or areas required.

Display Area

This area is used for displaying children's work. Normally two display areas are created for children's work. One area is used for displaying children's work in the area of painting and drawing, while the other is for displaying three dimensional work like clay models and constructions.

Reading Area

This area is used by the children for reading purposes. The area is usually well ventilated and well lighted. Basic furniture found in the reading area include book-holders, maters, cushions, and stools. The area is normally made very attractive with children's paintings. Reading materials found in the reading area are children's books, teacher's collection of material and children's work.

Writing and Drawing Area

The writing and drawing area is another important future of an early childhood institution. This area is normally provided with two or three tables and some chairs to enable small groups of not more than six children work at a time. Materials found in the writing and drawing area include plain drawing paper, thick wax crayon, soft pencils, and charcoal. Other materials found in this area also include bottle tops and lids, plastic containers of different shapes, large letter and number shapes and other objects of interesting shape and texture. These materials are stored in drawers or boxes for safety when not in use.

Experiment and Discovery Area

This area is created and provided with different types of simple materials to enable children make simple experiments and discoveries. Experimental and discovery materials provided include simple balance, household scale, pebbles, rocks, nuts and small quantities of assorted grains for weighing. Also found in this area is a wooden mortar and pestle for pounding clay that may be needed for experiments. Other materials include simple counting frames and geometrical shapes, lengths of string for measurement, charts, beads and seeds for threading and counting, and loops of elastic string for making different shapes and outlines. Additional materials that may be found in this area are different sizes of water containers, some quantities of artificial food colouring and soap for performing different experiments.

Magnifying glasses for monitoring plant growth and for identifying different leaf patterns may also be found in this area.

Located outside but near the experiment and discovery area may be found some earthenware plant pots, hoes and seeds of different types for planting by children.

Water, Sand and Clay Area

In most early childhood institutions in Nigeria, the water, sand and clay area are located outside the building of the school. In this area, children are provided with water, sand and clay for moulding and for experiment and discovery purposes. The materials provided in this area are stored in large pots or troughs. Also found in this area is large wooden boards or polythene sheets for covering these materials when not in use.

Construction Area

The construction area which houses different materials for construction work is located either inside or outside the building. Construction materials found in this area include wooden blocks of different sizes and shapes, large and small splinter-free planks of wood, crates and boxes and large pieces of strong cardboard. The materials found in this area are normally such that children can easily move them around without difficulty.

Art and Craft Area

According to Durojaiye (1977) this area should have at least two or more trapezoid tables, a sink or water supply, containers for water and paints, mop-up cloths and protective clothing. Also found in this area are paints of different colours and materials for different arts and crafts such as materials for weaving, powder paints or different colours for finger printing, materials for printing and painting, different seeds for seed collage, tie and dye materials and materials for sculpture and papier mache.

Dramatic Play Area

This area is used by the children for dramatic plays. Built in this area is a small house and a shop. Equipment found in the house include pots, pans, empty boxes or crates, plastic bottles and cups, stools, mats, some cushions or pillows, pieces of cloth and other typical household items.

The small shop is an extension of the house and is also used for dramatic play. In the shop are found different items that depict a shop scene. The items include mats, small containers or baskets for selling fruits, a simple shelf with a display of empty tins of different canned foods and beverages. Other materials to be found on display in the small shop include empty match boxes, sugar packets, soap cartons etc.

Music Area

The music area is created for children to play music and to dramatise activities or plays involving music. Instruments found in the music area include simple drums, rattles, bells, a

xylophone, thumb piano, local stringed instruments and other instruments that can produce music sound and which can be easily handled by children.

Withdrawing Area

This area is normally quiet and screened off from the rest of the room. It is an area where children who feel tied or wants to be left alone, retreat to. It is a resting area for children. Items found in the area include mats and a few cushions or pillows.

Outdoor Area

The outdoor area is another important feature of an early childhood institution. The area is used for developing children's gross motor skills. Equipment found in the outdoor area includes swings of different types, climbing frames, wide concrete pipes, slides and see-saws.

At this point, I want you to know that the availability of materials and equipment mentioned under each activity area in this section depends on the financial position of individual running early childhood institutions. You should also know that the materials and equipment mentioned under each activity area may either be bought in the market from manufacturers or may be sourced locally.

ACTIVITY IV

(1) Briefly explain Froebel's Philosophy and Theory of Education.

(2) What are the features of Early Childhood Education?

(3) Why is the outdoor area an important feature of an early childhood institution?

CURRICULA IMPLICATIONS OF THE THEORY TO EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

As is frequently evident in his writings, Froebel saw the problems of education from a sociological point of view. In a letter of 1834 as cited by Curtis and Boultwood, (1977: p.378) Froebel said: "no community can progress in its development while the individual who is a member of it, remains behind; the individual, who is a member of the whole body, cannot progress in his development while the community remains behind". Froebel saw the school and kindergarten as socially significant institutions, fostering the emergence of individuality through the experience of group relationships and activities. Just like Pestalozzi, he believed in the importance of family education and in the need for a firm link between the home and school. Like Camenius, he also believed that parents should be involved in the education of their children.

He did not approve of the vocational and authoritarian education favoured by some people. He saw the school as a nursery of future citizens, group members, prepared to put in their special abilities to the best service of the community. His central idea for all stages of child

education is expressed in the term "Darstellung", a wide concept of expression and expressive activities, hardly realised in its totality.

SUMMARY

- This unit examined the meaning of early childhood education. An attempt was made to explain the meaning of early childhood education; we also explained the meaning of early childhood, characteristics of early childhood, types of early childhood education, and features of early childhood institution. The pedagogic and curricula implications of the theory in relation to early childhood education were also discussed.

ASSIGNMENT

1. (a) Explain the concept of early childhood.

   (b) List five characteristics of early childhood.

2. Explain the meaning of early childhood education.

3. List and briefly explain the types of early childhood education you have learnt in this unit.

4. (a) List all the features of an early childhood institution.

   (b) Why is the outdoor area an important feature of an early childhood institution?

REFERENCES

Evans, E.D. (1975) Contemporary Influences in Early Childhood Education, 2nd ed. New York, Hold, Rinehart and Winston, Inc.

Durojaiye, S.M. (1977) Practical Methods for Nursery Schools. Ibadan, Oxford University Press.

UNIT THREE: PHILOSOPHY, AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION: NATIONAL POLICY ON EDUCATION AND UBE

INTRODUCTION

In this unit, we will examine the general philosophy, aims and objectives of early childhood education. We will also examine specifically the objectives of early childhood education expressed in the National Policy on Education (1977) and the Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme.

OBJECTIVES

The general objectives of these units are to enable you:

1. explain the philosophy of early childhood education
2. list and explain the general aims and objectives of early childhood education.
3. list and explain the objectives of early childhood education as contained in the National Policy on Education and UBE.
4. list the objectives of the UBE programme.

HOW TO STUDY THIS UNIT

1. Follow the guidelines provided in unit 1.

SECTION 1

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

In this section, we will examine the general aims and objectives of early childhood education from the point of view of the great educators and philosophers.

The aims of early childhood education is better understood from the point of view of the great educators of the past (Comenius, Rousseau, Froebel, Pestalozzi, Dewey, Montessori etc) who were concerned with the young child and his education. These great people have influenced early childhood education in the past and present. These pioneers of early childhood education gave considerable thought to determine the aims and objectives of education for the child. Although the aims of early childhood education identified by these educators reflected their spiritual values, religious beliefs and the social life of their time. Meller (1966) argued that the aims of contemporary early childhood education are not much different from those aims identified by them.

Comenius (1591 – 1670), in his book titled *"The School of Infancy"* and cited by Meller (1966) wrote that the aim of education are:

(a) Faith and piety;

(b) Uprightness in respect of morals;

(c) Knowledge of language and arts.

Comenius, being a bishop of the Moravian Church was concerned about the quality of life of his generation. He believed that education can bring about improvement in the quality of life. He therefore, advocated for the education of all children, irrespective of their sex, and social status.

Pestalozzi (1746 – 1827), had in his theory expressed strong belief in the child's capacity to learn for himself through living according to Nature. He strongly believed that "life educates", and this he practicalised in the Swiss Orphanages and schools where he worked. In one of his letters, written in 1818 as cited by Meller (1966), Pestalozzi said:

> *We must bear in mind that the ultimate end of education is not perfection in the accomplishments of the school, but fitness for life; not the acquirement of habits of blind obedience and of prescribed diligence, but a preparation for independent action…… Thus, education, instead of merely considering what is to be imparted to children, ought to consider first what they may be said already to possess, if not as developed, at least as an innate faculty capable of development.*

Froebel's writings on the aims of early childhood education were greatly influenced by his strong religious beliefs. He based his theory on his own childhood experiences and on what he learnt from working with children. Many parents and teachers who accepted Froebel's principles of early childhood education have been greatly inspired in their work with children. In his book "*the Education of Man"*, written in 1826, Froebel wrote that the aim of education is to teach man to become an intelligent and thinking being, growing into pure and unsullied self-consciousness and a free representation of inner law of divine unity. In his autobiography, he also wrote that the fundamental aim of his educational work is to stir up, to animate, to awaken and to strengthen the pleasure and power of the human being to labour uninterruptedly in his own education.

Dewey (1859 – 1952) applied scientific approach to the concept of education. He studied the behaviour of the children in his school, and using scientific approach, tried to determine the best way to make provision for their education. Like Pestalozzi, Dewey was concerned with the child and the type of knowledge and experience, which adults expect the child to acquire (Meller, 1966). Through his work with children, Dewey discovered that learning in early childhood takes place better if practicalised. He therefore advocated that the project method of learning should precede the study of separate subjects in early children education. However, unlike the other educators, Dewey was not specific in his formulation of the aims of education.

From the works of these great educators we can deduce that the general aims of early childhood education are geared towards:

(a) the preparation of the child for life.

(b) the spiritual and moral development of the child,

(c) helping the child to live fully at each stage of development, so that there will be self-fulfillment of each stage leading to full preparation for the life of maturity.

(d) providing for the full growth and development of the child at his own pace and interest and introducing him to the store of knowledge which will enrich his adult life.

(e) providing a free and stimulating learning environment that would enable the child to develop his potential to the maximum.

SECTION 2

OBJECTIVES OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

In this section, we will examine the general objectives of early childhood education as discussed by early childhood educators.

The general objectives of early childhood education can be classified into two, long term objectives and short term or immediate objectives. Evans (1975) observed that long term objectives are general and abstract in nature, while short term objectives are usually more specific in nature. However the inter-relationships between short term and long term objectives are very obscure. This has led to some differing views among early childhood educators as to what should constitute the objectives of early childhood education. Kohlberg and Mayer (1972) for example see the objectives of early childhood education as developmental in nature and should therefore be conceptualized in terms of intellectual and moral development. They therefore suggested that Dewey's (1916) cognitive-development and progressivism should serve as the major source of educational objectives for early childhood education. Havighurst (1972) on his own part argued that the objectives of early childhood education should be based on "developmental tasks". His position seems to be a middle of the road approach between "the theory of freedom", which allows the child to develop at his own pace and "the theory of constraint", which depends on social restraint that enables the child to conform to a "responsible" adult role. Kagan (1972) on the other hand sees "adaptability" as the main objective of early childhood education. From his point of view, adaptability emphasizes autonomy, self-reliance and the development of the child's "reading competence, quantitative skills, ability to write coherently and skill in discriminating effective from ineffective arguments". Kagan emphasized that early childhood education should cultivate in children "basic motivational characteristics such as a wish to be intellectually competent, a positive expectancy for achieving intellectual competence and a strong personal identity.

Inspite of the differences in opinion among early childhood educators on the objectives of early childhood education, Evans (1975) observed that there is more agreement among early childhood educators than disagreement on the general long term objectives. The long term general objectives of early childhood education are tailored to help the child:

(a) dvelop his potential to the maximum,

(b) develop independence in judgment,

(c) develop critical thinking ability,

(d) develop personal initiative and responsibility,

(e) develop respect for the rights and properties of others.

From the foregoing, it seems that early childhood educators have not come to agreement on what should constitute a universally acceptable short term and long term objectives of early childhood education. It therefore does appear that the objectives of early childhood education will be better defined within the context of the objectives of education of specific countries than within a universal or global context.

ACTIVITY I

1. List the long term general objectives of early childhood education as identified by Evans (1975).

2. What according to Kagan (1975) constitute the main objectives of early childhood education?

SECTION 3

OBJECTIVES OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AS EXPRESSED IN THE NATIONAL POLICY ON EDUCATION AND THE UBE

In this section, we will examine the objectives of early childhood education as expressed in the National Policy on Education (1972) and the Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme.

Compared to the United States, Britain, Germany and France (to mention a few) the history of early childhood education in Africa and particularly Nigeria is very recent. The history of early childhood education can be traced to Christian missionaries who were said to have pioneered pre-school education. It was however not until the early 1970's that the Nigerian government realized the importance of early childhood education and included it in its National Policy on Education published in 1977.

In the National Policy on Education, government defined early childhood education or pre-primary as …… "the education given in an educational institution to children aged 3 to 5+, prior to their entering the primary school" (NPE, 1977, p.6).

The objectives of early childhood education or pre-primary education listed in the National Policy on Education directly reflect Nigeria's philosophy of education which is "based on the integration of the individual into a sound and effective citizen and equal educational opportunities for all citizens of the nation"…. (NPE 1981 revised). The objectives of early childhood education in Nigeria are:

(a) effecting a smooth transition from the home to the school;

(b) preparing the child fro the primary level of education;

(c) providing adequate care and supervision for the child while their parents are at work (on the farms, in the market, offices etc.);

(d) inculcating social norms;

(e) inculcating the child the spirit of enquiry and creativity through the exploration of nature, and the local environment, playing with toys, artistic and musical activities etc;

(f) teaching co-operation and team spirit;

(g) teaching the rudiments of numbers, letters, colours, shapes, forms etc. through play; and

(h) teaching good habits, especially good health habits.

ACTIVITY II

1. Define early childhood education as expressed in the National Policy on Education.
2. What are the objectives of early childhood education in Nigeria? List them.

SECTION 4

UNIVERSAL BASIC EDUCATION AND EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

In this section, we will examine the place of early childhood education in the UBE programme.

The Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme of the Federal Republic of Nigeria was formally launched at Sokoto, on 30th September, 1999, by President Olusegun Obasanjo. The aim of the UBE programme is to achieve the following objectives:

(a) development in the entire citizenry a strong consciousness for education and a strong commitment to its vigorous promotion,

(b) the provision of free, universal basic education for every Nigerian child of school going age,

(c) reducing drastically the incident of drop-out from the formal school system (through improved relevance, quality, and efficiency),

(d) catering for young persons who, for one reason or another, have had to interrupt their schooling as well as other out-of-school children/adolescent, through appropriate

forms of complementary approaches to the provision and promotion of basic education,

(e) ensuring the acquisition of the appropriate levels of literacy, numeracy, manipulative, communicative and like skills as well as the ethical, moral and civic values needed for laying a solid foundation for life-long learning.

While the draft bill on the UBE programme was not specific about early childhood education, the document on the implementation guidelines of the programme made mention of early childhood education as one of the programmes of the Universal Basic Education (UBE). Both the draft bill and the document on the implementation guideline were however, silent on the objectives of early childhood education. It may perhaps be safe to assume that the objectives of early childhood education in the UBE programme are the same with those expressed in the National Policy on Education, that is why it was not repeated in the UBE document.

ACTIVITY III

1.	List the specific objectives of the UBE programme.

SUMMARY

- In this unit, we examined the general philosophy aims and objectives of early childhood education. We also specifically examined the objectives of early childhood education as expressed in the National Policy on Education and the UBE.

ASSIGNMENT

1. Explain the philosophy of early childhood education.
2. List the objectives of early childhood education as expressed in the National Policy on Education.
3. List the specific objectives of the UBE programme.

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UNIT FOUR: CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE PHILOSO-PHIES AND THEORIES OF COMENIUS (1591 – 1670) AND ROUSSEAU (1712 – 1778)

INTRODUCTION

In this unit, we will examine the contributions of the philosophies and theories of Comenius (1591 – 1670) and Rousseau (1712 – 1778) to the development of early childhood education.

OBJECTIVES

The specific objectives of this unit are to enable you:

1. briefly explain the philosophies and theories of Comenius and Rousseau.
2. discuss the curricula implications of each theory to early childhood education.
3. explain/discuss the Pedagogic implications of each theory to early childhood education.
4. explain/assess the contributions of each of the theory to early childhood education in Nigeria.

SECTION 1

THE HISTORY/PHILOSOPHY AND THEORY OF JOHANN AMOS COMENIUS (1591 – 1690)

(a) **History**

Johann Amos Comenius, the last bishop of the Moravian and Bohemian Brethren was one of the most influential educational philosophers and reformers of the seventeenth century. He was born on March 28, 1592, in the small Bohemian town of Uhersky Brod. When he was 12 years old, his parents and two of his four older sisters died in a plague. He started his early education in the Moravian schools. In 1608, he was sent to Prerov to attend the Straznice Latin School. In 1611, he was removed from Prerov to the Herborn Gymnasium in the German duchy of Nassau. Herborn was a reform centrer favoured by the brethren as a preparation for ministry, and at the Gymnasium Comenius was educated to enter the professional service of the church to which he was to be rooted in allegiance throughout his life.

At Herborn, Comenius developed an intimate friendship with Johann Heinrich Alsted, a brilliant young teacher and educational reformer. Through Alsted, he became acquainted with the ideas of the German educator Wolfgang Ratke and with the impressive, reforms in the schools of the Dutch Republic. After two years at Herborn, Comenius matriculated at Heidelberg. He returned to Prerov in 1614 but because he

was too young (22 years) to be ordained as a Minister, he took up teaching job at the Latin school he had attended as a boy.

ACTIVITY I

1.	Who is Comenius?

(b) **Philosophy and Theory of Comenius**

Although Comenius rarely refers to the philosophic ideas of Bacon and Descates, it may be assumed that he was acquainted with the ideas of the two men.

Comenius enjoyed Bacon's "Instauratio Magna" because it was in accordance with his own convictions that nature was a great laboratory where man can learn everything. He sees man as dwelling in the garden of nature as well as the ancients. To him, man does not need a teacher to teach him anything. Man has his senses through which he can learn everything. His conviction made him to begin work on a systematic exposition of the principles and methods of pedagogy, the "Didactica Magna" (Great Didactic, 1967), the main object of which was to seek and to find a method of instruction by which teachers may teach less, but learners may learn more; by which schools may be the scene of less noise, aversion and useless labour, but more of leisure, enjoyment and solid progress".

Comenius was also greatly influenced by the mediaeval spirit and his strong adherence to the concept of universality. He also assumes that the nature or essence of a thing is its end or purpose rather than its actuality at any given moment.

In his wider concepts – his idea of the whole system of nature – he reveals the influence not only of his religious conviction but also of mediaeval philosophy. To Comenius, nature has a purpose, being not merely man's instrument but rather the whole of which man is part. Knowledge to him is not an abstraction from reality as it is to Plato (Curtis & Boultwood, 1977) but rather the revelation of reality and of end. He therefore felt that the understanding of Nature brings out the understanding of God. He thus shared the same opinion of those philosophers who see reasoning and the power of thought only as a means of discovering the essence of Nature which is by implication perfect in itself.

Comenius probably derived a lot from the ideas of mediaevel thinkers and Bacon, shaping his methodology, especially looking at the prominent role given to Nature. Comenius admitted to extending Bacon's broad concept of universality. His pedagogy also reflects many of More's Utopian requirements, such as, teaching in the vernacular, teaching by concrete examples, and teaching through the senses.

Although Bacon's influence on Comenius was mainly in aims and curricula, there was an observation concerning methodology. In teaching method, Curtis and

Boultwood (1977) observed that Comenius was not an experimentalist; he was rather a reformer who provided ready-made methods which could be applied by any other teacher, and which would unfailingly bring better results. Comenius justified these methods, not just by providing evidence as to their results, but by giving "demonstrative proof that could give all the young with knowledge, virtue, and piety". However, as an educator, it is difficult to estimate how far Comenius appreciated or understood inductive empirical method. On the other hand, he shared Bacon's distrust of the ability of the human intellect to attain knowledge unaided, and went much further than Bacon in considering the details of various ways of collecting and disseminating knowledge, even at the lowest stages and with the humblest pupils.

Comenius applied scientific and method in his study of education along the same lines as Descartes was moving in the study of philosophy. Descartes for example strongly believed that there is the need for a method of finding out the truth… certain simple rules such that if a man observe them accurately he shall never assume what is false as true. Comenius equally believed that it is possible to find one right and efficacious method in education. While Comenius advocated the search for knowledge to ameliorate the physical condition of man, its spiritual value to him was in the progress of the individual towards God.

According to Curtis & Boultwood (1977) it is the strong and distinctive religious motive in the whole life and works of Comenius that must be considered as an all-powerful factor in the evolution of this teaching philosophy. The pre-occupation of Comenius with religion, and the task of elevating mankind nearer to God's perfection, made him lose sight of the value of certain aspects of education deemed significant today. His belief that education is concerned with the whole man and not only with the intellect is quite true. However, his emphasis that the school's function is to inculcate morality, and that the university should give vocational training for public service, has ignored individual need for creative activities and aesthetic experiences.

Comenius advocated for four equal periods of education from birth to the twenty fourth year. In the first period, **the senses were to be trained;** in the second, **the imagination and memory fostered**; in the third **the intelligence developed**; and in the fourth, **discipline should be inculcated**. In spite of the shortcomings of these periods of education, it is clear that such a plan was devised with some definite consideration of the relation between age and ability. Although Comenius' psychology of human development is crude and faulty in the light of our present knowledge, it was still a reasonable attempt to translate into practical form the generally accepted philosophical theories. It was also an attempt to introduce a system of child education at a time when harshness and arid instruction was the order of the day in most schools.

In pursuance of his ideals, Comenius, allowed little true freedom to the individual. He held fast to many of the teachings of Plato and Aristotle, and sought to inculcate in all children the habits of thought, behaviour, and activity which would later ensure the fulfillment of the duties and responsibilities of citizenship and of Christianity.

However, Comenius was entirely free from class or racial prejudices, and even accepted and advocated the extension of education for girls.

ACTIVITY II

1.	Trace the philosophy and theory of Comenius, as it relates to the education of children.

SECTION 2

IMPLICATIONS OF THE THEORY TO EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Throughout his long career, Comenius did not deviate in his belief that a "didactic art" was essential for the preparation of the individual and all mankind for the best in this life and the next (Curtis and Boultwood 1977). Comenius said, "it is our duty to study how young people may be stirred to vigour of mind and to love heavenly things". His philosophy required that education should help man to learn all things, and to achieve power over these things and to discipline himself. The analogy of education did not originate from Rousseau, for, Comenius likens man to a rich soil in which the seeds of knowledge, morality, and religion are planted by nature.

Comenius strongly believed that good "cultivation" should be given to all children, except those who have problem. Moreover, he also believed that this can be done within the space of a normal childhood and adolescence, "without blows, severity or compulsion, but most gently, and spontaneously". He believed that this can be achieved if the "natural order" for education is discovered and applied in schools. Although he felt that in his time life was too short for the learning of all things, and that specialists had not yet reduced knowledge into easily comprehensible forms, yet, had faith that it was possible for the right order of learning to be found. He also believed that the right presentation of material would "unlock the mind", and that a right way of teaching would "sharpen the understanding", thereby enabling learning to proceed "surely", easily and solidly.

A close examination of these general principles by Comenius reveals a considerable psychological insight and that a true interpretation of his precepts would not be inconsistent with modern theories of method.

Easy learning according to Comenius can be achieved by creating in children the desire to learn. He said "let the method of teaching lessen the labour of learning so that nothing can be a stumbling block to the pupil and deter them from perseverance in study".

The implication of these general principles according to Curtis and Boultwood (1977) is that children would be willing to learn if they see the immediate use or purpose of the material to be learnt; and if they are taught things that they can understand in an interesting way. The principles also imply that the learner's tasks should be graded in difficulty, and should involve learning through the senses in the first place. Lessons should be few and adjusted to

the capacities of the pupils, who should not be required to memorise more than a few very important things. The principles also implied that punishment for bad work should be avoided, because failure to learn on the part of the child should be blamed on the teacher. Children learn through all the senses and not just through the ears alone. Therefore, the teacher must use drawings, pictures, wall writing and other aids, and pupils should be encouraged to write down their own records. The school environment particularly the classroom should be well lit, clean, and pleasant and the teachers kind and encouraging. Pupils should not experience too many changes of teachers. This can be avoided if good teachers are provided. To foster a sense of security and smooth progress in learning, methods should be consistent throughout the school and constant changes in textbooks avoided.

In order to achieve the greatest possible benefit from the school course, Comedies advocated that much attention should be paid to curricula and the arrangement of syllabuses. Although he seemed to be carried away by the need for pupils to imbibe a great deal of information, he still maintained the need for a detailed plan for the school course. This is a normal part of school management today. Comenius also did not doubt the capability of a teacher to teach a very large class successfully. However, realising the problems involved, he suggested that pupils could be put into small groups of ten with each group under the supervision of a bright child capable of checking exercises. He also advocated that class lessons should be held for only half of the day. The remaining half should be left for private study in school.

Curtis and Boultwood (1977) observed that the practical suggestions given by Comedies for class teaching are not realistic especially where a teacher has a large class, with few desks in the classroom. According to them, the teacher should command attention, question skillfully, arouse the competitive spirit, and give an opportunity for pupils to ask questions. They suggested that pupils should be able to learn through the senses, and should always be pleasantly stimulated to develop interest in topic at the beginning of each lesson.

ACTIVITY III

1. Explain the curricula implication of Comenius' theory to early childhood education.
2. Explain the implications of Comenius' theory to early childhood education.

SECTION 3

THE PHILOSOPHY AND THEORY OF JEAN JACQUES ROUSSEAU (1712 – 1778)

(a) **History**

Rousseau's character and personality were so complex that they affect different people in different ways (Curtis, 1977). Whatever opinion one may have about Rousseau's character and personality after reading the document "confession", it should be acknowledged that he had the ability to say the right thing the right way and

at the right time. Rousseau was born 1712 in the small city-state of Geneva. His mother died at his birth and was therefore brought up and educated by his father. He never had the experience of being a pupil in a class. He received his education under a tutor. He was unsettled in the early part of his life. As an adolescent he served as an apprentice, but ran away from his master because he was not happy. He had also tried to become a tutor but was not successful. However, the experience he had spur him to develop interest in the problems of education.

At the age of about twenty-five, Rousseau had a serious illness and either before or during his breakdown (Curtis & Boultwood, 1977), he commenced a course of reading, which was very influential in forming his ideas. He studied the writings of Hobbe and Locke and was influenced by their ideas. Also, he studied the works of distinguished French authors such as Montaigne, Pascal Fenelon and Voltaire and the philosophies of Lebranche, Leibntze and Descartes (Curtis, 1977), also influenced him.

Rousseau's literary career began with his article titled "Discourse on the Arts and Science" which won him the Academy Dijon Prize in 1749. Thereafter, he published so many other major articles and other minor treatises. However, it was his publication of the book "Emile" in 1762 that consolidated his reputation as an educational theorist. The publication of the "Emile" produced a universal outburst of indignation. The book was condemned and ordered to be burnt publicly. An order for his arrest was also given. To avoid being arrested, he fled and took refuge in different places but finally went to Paris in 1770 where he completed the second part of his book titled the "Confessions". He died in 1778.

ACTIVITY IV

1.	Briefly explain the life history of Rousseau.

(b) **Philosophy and Theory of Rousseau**

Rousseau's philosophy is usually designated by the term "Naturalism". To some extent this name is justified because Rousseau was indebted to more than one school of philosophy when he was formulating his ideas. This was also why he was seen as an idealist. Rousseau's ideas about education are bound up with the general attitude, which coloured his political philosophy and which according to Curtis and Boultwood (1977) cannot be properly understood without reference to the former. There were three main influences which combined to shape his ideas about education. These are the experiences of the "Enlightenment" movement; the extremely varied experience of his personal life and his impulsive and emotional nature.

Rousseau viewed education as one of the influences, which corrupt mankind. In his book "Discourse on the Arts and Science (p. 147 – 148), he stated that"

> *If the cultivation of the sciences is prejudicial to military qualities, it is still more so to moral qualities. Even from our infancy an absurd system of education serves to adorn our wit and corrupt our judgment"……..*

Rousseau felt society and its evil practices and injustices, education inclusive, have corrupted mankind. He saw the natural man as a noble and magnificient creature, free to develop his own nature without any interference. He argued that the downfall of man started when the ownership pf property began. He therefore advocated a return to nature.

In idealizing natural man, Rousseau was opposed to Hobbe's conception of man's life in the state of Nature as "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short". Rousseau however, realized the impossibility of annihilating society and suggested that feeling. Rousseau also believed this is the stage to give the young person religious instruction.

Rousseau, also clearly recognised the importance of sex instruction during adolescence. Although his attitude to sex education was that of a healthy realism in contrast with the hypocrisy of the Victorian age, his teaching is by no means satisfactory (Curtis & Boultwood, 1977).

Rousseau's influence upon later educational thinkers was perhaps more far reaching than that of any other writer on education. Curtis and Boultwood (1977) observed that even those who disagreed with some of his principal doctrines borrowed such from him. Pestalozzi and Froebel whose importance as educational reformers were such celebrated, took many of their main ideas from Rousseau's book, the Emile. It may be safely said that there were but few educational thinkers of the nineteenth century who were not influenced in one way or the other by Rousseau.

ACTIVITY V

1. Discuss/explain the pedagogic implications of Rousseau's theory to early childhood education.
2. Discuss/explain the curricula implications of Rousseau's theory to early childhood education.

SECTION 4

IMPACT OF THE TWO THEORIES ON EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

The history of early childhood education in Nigeria is very recent compared to the history of early childhood education in other parts (U.S. & Europe) of the world. That not withstanding,

close look at the practical operations of early childhood institutions in Nigeria, seem to suggest that the curricula and methods of teaching in most of our early childhood institutions owe much to the theories of Comenius and Rousseau. For example both theories support and advocate learning through play method and de-emphasized formal learning in early childhood education. Early childhood institutions in Nigeria are doing just that. Learning in most early childhood institutions in Nigeria is activity based and relies heavily on the use of the child's senses. This practice also seems to agree with the two theories. The provision of swings and other facilities found in most early childhood institutions in Nigeria, which children use in exercising their bodies is also line with Rousseau's belief that the child should be assisted to exercise his body, his limbs, his senses and strength.

The National Policy on Education (1981 revised) identified eight objectives of Pre-primary education in Nigeria. Three of the eight objectives (e, f, & g) seem to be in line with the positions of the two theories on early childhood education. Even though it appears that not many empirical studies have been carried out on the effect or impact of the two theories on early childhood education in Nigeria, evidence on ground seem to suggest that the theories of Comenius and Rousseau have had their significant influence on the organization and practice (Curriculum & Methods) of early childhood education in Nigeria.

ACTIVITY VI

1. In what ways have the theories of Comenius and Rousseau influenced early childhood education in Nigeria?

SUMMARY

- In this unit, we examined the philosophies and theories of Comenius and Rousseau. We also examined the curricula and pedagogic implications of the two theories to early childhood education. The impact of the two theories on early childhood education in Nigeria was also briefly examined.

ASSIGNMENT

1. Explain the philosophy and theory of Comenius or that of Rousseau.
2. Discuss the curricula and pedagogic implications of the theories of Comenius and Rousseau o early childhood education.
3. In what ways have the two theories influenced the practice of early childhood education in Nigeria.

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UNIT FIVE THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE PHILOSOPHIES AND THEORIES OF PESTALOZZI (1746 – 1827) AND FROEBEL (1782 – 1852) TO EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

INTRODUCTION

In this unit, we will examine the contributions of the philosophies and theories of Pestalozzi and Froebel to the development of early childhood education. We will therefore examine not only the theories but also their curricula and pedagogic implications to early childhood education. In addition we will briefly examine the impact of the two theories in early childhood education in Nigeria.

OBJECTIVES

The specific objectives of this unit are to enable you do the followings:

a) Explain the philosophies and theories of Pestalozzi and Froebel.

b) Discuss the curricula and pedagogic implications of the two theories to early childhood education.

c) Explain the impact of the two theories on early childhood education in Nigeria.

HOW TO STUDY THIS UNIT

1. Follow the guidelines presented in unit 1.

SECTION 1

THE PHILOSOPHY AND THEORY OF JOHANN HEINRICH PESTALOZZI (1746 – 1827)

(a) **History**

Pestalozzi was born in Zurich on January 12 1746 into a Protestant family of Italian origin. His family came to Zurich in the middle of the 16th century. Pestalozzi was born into a middle-class family. His family's social status in the community made it possible for them to enjoy full civic rights which were the privilege of a relatively few. Although, at the time he was born, Zurich his native town flourished economically, like the other main Swiss towns, and its government was liberal and enlightened, there was social disunity and inequality (Curtis & Boultwood, 1977). At the time of his birth Zurich had 5,000 citizens and about 140,000 non-citizens who for the most part were treated like serfs. Thus, at an early age, Pestalozzi was made sensitive to inequalities based on wealth and social class. Pestalozzi's father a

surgeon died at the age of 33, when Pestalozzi was only 5 years. He and his older brother and sister were left to be brought up by their mother. Having a shy and cultured mother, Pestalozzi's every wish was gratified, but was denied companionship with play fellows and kept shielded from the outside world. He did come in contact with some of the realities of life during regular visits to his paternal grandmother, a pastor in a small village on the outskirts of Zurich. The degradation of the poor deeply affected him and inspired his life-long humanitarianism.

Pestalozzi had an undistinguished career in school. At the Collegiums Carolinas in Zurich, where he studied for the Ministry, he came under the influence of some Liberal professors, especially J. J. Bodner, the famous historian (Silber, 1960)

After graduating from the collegiums, Pestalozzi studied law at the University of Zurich. He abandoned this career, and under the influence of Rousseau's novels he turned to farming, seeking the "natural life" that Rousseau had popularized. For the son of a ruling-class family, farming meant a decline in social status, but this did not deter him. He justified his course as an opportunity to be of service to the poor.

Financial difficulties however led to his failure as a farmer. In 1773, he undertook to teach poor, neglected, sometimes even physically unfit children to earn their living as cotton spinners or weavers. While working the children would learn arithmetic and the catechism by oral repetition. In the evening, for recreation, the boy would engage in gardening, the girls in cooking and sewing. In free hours the children would be taught reading, writing and computation. Yet financial problem could not be averted and in 1779, the school was disbanded. After the collapse of the school, Pestalozzi went into writing and wrote a number of books and reports. In one of his reports titled "Die methods" (The method) Pestalozzi sought to psychologize human education (Silber, 1960)

ACTIVITY I

1.	Discuss briefly the life history of Pestalozzi.

(b) **Philosophy and theory of Pestalozzi**

Pestalozzi saw education as a means of social reform but not solely as an ameliorating influence (Curtis & Boultwood, 1977). His plea was truly an appeal for equality of opportunity for all citizens. He believed it was the duty of the society to develop each man's abilities to the maximum. According to him, this could only be achieved by providing good schools, high moral standards and sound teaching methods. He also believed that the type of education society should provide to its citizens is that which would prepare the individual for his future place in life, not in the sense of class distinction, but in the sense that he should be able to find satisfaction in his occupation and in his domestic life (Curtis & Boultwood, 1997).

In "On Infant's Education" as cited by Curtis & Boulwood, (1977), Pestalozzi described the end of education as "not a perfection in the accomplishments of the school, but fitness for life; not the acquirement of habits of blind obedience and of prescribed diligence, but a preparation for independent action". He further maintained that society has no right to "shut out the child from the development of those faculties which we may not for the present conceive to be very essential for his future calling or station in life". Pestalozzi truly believed that the rich child does not get the best of family education by being excused family chores and responsibilities. He also believed that putting the child under the care of unimaginative nurses and tutors would deny the child of the best kind of maternal training. In his school-family, he aimed to reproduce those conditions of precept and practice, example and experience, which he considered to be the most likely to fulfill the right of all people to "a general diffusion of useful knowledge, a careful development of the intellect, a judicious attention to all the faculties of man, physical, intellectual and moral".

Pestalozzi also believed in the importance of physical education to the individual. He was not content to let Nature educate at her own speed in any sphere of development. Thus, although he accepted Rousseau's standards of simplicity in dress and living conditions, he included in his scheme a very considerable element of physical exercises allied to modern gymnastics, and in addition allowed such time for free out-door activities. The aim of physical education according to him is to develop strength and control of the limbs through exercises and, in addition grace through rhythmic movement. He thus believed that exercises may be devised for every age and for every degree of bodily strength however reduced. He also saw gymnastics as promoting cheerfulness, comrade spirit, frankness, courage and perseverance.

On moral education, Pestalozzi believed that the foundations are formed by the mother who awakens in the child feelings of love, confidence, gratitude and obedience. By a mother's constant loving care, her firmness, her consistency and her simple teaching about God, the child will gain feelings of security and confidence combined with habits of obedience to both parents. The task of the educator therefore is to preserve these virtuous feelings and habits. Pestalozzi said moral education should not be left to nature. The educator must do all in his power to supply the place of her guidance by the wisdom of experience. According to him, life itself forms the beginning of moral education, and its continuation, through the development of the will to goodness, should also be based on real experience and not on mere homilies and sermons. Thus, Pestalozzi emphasized the three-fold nature of moral education – the arousing of noble feelings, the exercise of self-control, and the formation of personal standards.

The basic elements of intellectual education are comparable to those of physical and moral education although he suggested that the natural laws for the development of human powers are not the same for the heart, the mind and the body (Curtis & Boultwood, 1977). Thus, according to Pestalozzi, "each of our moral, mental and bodily powers must have its development based upon its own nature and not based

upon artificial and outside influences. Accordingly, faith for example must be developed by exercises in believing and cannot be developed from the knowledge and understanding only of what is to be believed; thought must grow from thinking, for it cannot come simply from the knowledge and understanding of what is to be thought; love must be developed by loving, for it does not arise just from a knowledge and understanding of what love is, and of what ought to be loved. Such a return to the true method of Nature in the method of the development of our powers necessitates the subordination of education to the knowledge of the various laws which govern those powers (Curtis & Boultwood, 1977).

Pestalozzi emphasized that the three aspects of education need to go hand in hand for harmonious development of the individual. In explaining the training of the intellect, he clearly defined his principles for "improving the tendencies and powers of humanity according to the course of Nature. Pestalozzi therefore said the mother and the teacher can do more than "assist the child's nature in the effort which makes for his own development". Thus, the first task of educational research should be the discovery by observation of the child's unfolding powers and changing needs, and the arrangement of the whole range of human knowledge in an order adapted to those powers and needs. Pestalozzi believed that child development should proceed like that of plants – according to the "norms" for each stage.

From Pestalozzi's definition of education as the art of assisting natural development, it is clear that he assumed the assistance of inborn tendencies to form ideas through "Anschaung". The simple ideas gained from early experience build themselves up into complex powers of reasoning and abstract thought, so that the educator's task is not to put knowledge or reasoning power into the pupil, but to provide the best conditions for his full development – to tend him as a gardener tends a plant, removing noxious weeds from his vicinity, and supplying healthy, fertile soil and the right degrees of sun, water and shelter. Pestalozzi maintained that the pupil develops himself through self-activity – he develops speech through speaking and thought through thinking, he believed that the highest and best form of any human skill, accomplishment, or virtue is achieved through performance and practice in the right conditions, from the elementary beginnings initiated by natural human impulses (Curtis & Boultwood, 1977).

The justification for education is, therefore, that even as a plant's growth may be uncertain or retarded in neglected soil, so man, without education, is prevented from achieving full mental and moral stature. The accidental, ill-arranged experiences of life permit but limited development, so that both parents and teachers need to order and plan the environmental experiences of the young.

Pestalozzi, however, does not suggest that complete development can be achieved without conscious effort on the part of the learner. The learner needs to study – to direct his own search for knowledge – and he needs to seek constant exercise of his powers of reasoning and judgment. Such activity starts from much experience in

weighing up. Practice and maturity according to Pestalozzi bring increased capacity to proceed from the known to the unknown. The use of this mental capacity to weigh up impressions, to compare and contrast them, to put them into categories, is the activity which results in the formation of ideas, whether simple or complex (Curtis & Boultwood, 1977).

Pestalozzi believed that the formation of ideas through "Anschauung" will lead to the highest intellectual processes. It is therefore important that the teacher should guide and foster the production of clear, accurate ides at each stage. To ensure this accuracy, Pestalozzi observed that two factors are essential – perfection and completeness of the original sense impression (or intuition, or observation) and the achievement through practice, of facility in reasoning and judging at that level before proceeding to the next stage which involves more difficult and more complex ideas. This repetition and practice at each stage needs to be based upon a series of the most representative experiences in that particular category.

ACTIVITY II

1. Briefly explain Pestalozzi's philosophy and theory of education.
2. Explain his position on the physical and moral education of the child.

SECTION 2

IMPLICATIONS OF PESTALOZZI'S THEORY TO EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

The implications of Pestalozzi's theory in class teaching are simple but nevertheless of fundamental significance (Curtis & Boultwood, 1977). Assuming that Pestalozzi's equipment – educational research has been fulfilled, the teacher should be able to plan a syllabus graded according to difficulty. Each study should begin with observation of the object or the external physical manifestation of the topic – which should be a normal, representative specimen, or series of specimens. If it is not possible to have the real specimens, then it may be replaced by pictures – but never merely by words. From Pestalozzi's point of view, the teacher should help the pupils to name the object, to investigate and name its parts and properties, and, after due consideration of the description, to formulate a definition representing their distinct idea of the object. The teacher's function is to train pupils in habits of accurate observation, not in the memorizing of words (Curtis & Boultwood, 1977). No matter how true the teacher may know those words, to be, they have no reality or truth for the pupil unless based on his own perceptions. The inspiration of Herbart's theory of appreciation (Curtis & Boultwood, 1977) probably lies in Pestalozzi's belief that the association of like ideas – gained from like objects – serve to weaken the non-conforming ideas gained from unrepresentative objects in a category. Therefore, it is

important that plenty of worthy, noble, and correct ideas are formed for they will surely oust the unworthy, ignoble and incorrect.

The teacher is also expected to encourage the pupil in the development of language, observation, and mental skills which proceed from the "three elementary powers" of making sounds, forming images and imagining concepts, powers on which Pestalozzi based his whole educational practice. In aiming to make education a steady, unbroken development of these fundamental powers, and to ensure steady progress from obscure to definite sense-impressions, from definite sense-impression to clear images, and from clear images to distinct ideas, Pestalozzi wanted to base all teaching on sound, form and number. He postulated that the natural tendency of the mind, when presented with a confused mass of objects, is to sort them out into separate objects and to group them into categories – that is, to number them; the mind also notices the shape of the objects and seeks to apply to them some name already in the mind through previous experience. According to Pestalozzi, the properties of number, form and name are common to all things, and all other properties which are not thus shared, are nevertheless related to those three elements. He argued that whatever ideas we may have to acquire in the course of our life, they are all introduced through the medium of one of these three elements.

From such a conviction, Pestalozzi developed his methods in elementary education. All activities according to him should be planned to enable correct ideas of number, form and language be developed from good and full perception. According to Pestalozzi, reading, writing and arithmetic should not be seen as the bases of instruction but merely subsidiary activities.. He argued that it is good to make a child read, write and learn to repeat the learnt material; but it is still better to make a child think. According to Pestalozzi the elementary skills of reading, writing and arithmetic are useful only if they can be employed in the pursuit of further knowledge.

Applying the Pestalozzi principle to reading, it means children must learn to feel, and think and must have some knowledge of the world around them before learning to read. Thus, the study of grammar for example should come only after a long, thorough, carefully graduated course in language – using has been taught. Language teaching also should consist of giving exercise in "describing accurately" at the appropriate level of the child. Constant exercise in describing what he sees, feels and hears, and what he has seen, felt and heard, will give a child increasing command over language both in vocabulary and construction.

The teaching of "form" was also another attempt to combine measuring, drawing and writing on the assumption that the natural order of learning involved these activities in this order (Curtis & Boultwood, 1977). Practice in measuring and drawing gives clearer, more accurate ideas of shapes of objects, but that the pupil should not be employed in making copies of copies. Rather, the child should be made to measure and draw real things or objects.

In number teaching, Pestalozzi had interest in finding ways of helping children to really understand number, and not just to develop speed and accuracy in the mechanical working of examples. He wanted children to discover for themselves the elementary mathematical rules

through activities based – like all other learning activities – in the first place on sense – impressions (Curtis & Boultwood, 1977). According to Pestalozzi, any number, whatever be its name, is nothing but an abbreviation of the elementary process of counting. According to him, the counting of real objects, the grouping the adding, and the subtracting were the essential basic activities of early number work, in order that the primitive constitution of numbers would be deeply impressed upon the mind without being complicated and confused by written symbols. Pupils would gain an intuitive knowledge of the real properties and proportions of numbers. In describing his method, Pestalozzi (as cited by Curtis & Boultwood, 1977) said "I make him go over the same numbers again .with beans, pebbles, or any other objects which are at hand." Nursery and infant schools today use a great deal of number apparatus in a similar way. While it may be true that the main aim of using number apparatus is to enable the child gain experience in counting, grouping adding, and subtracting without the teacher's guidance, the principle behind the use of units at first solid and later as marks on paper is exactly the same (Curtis & Boultwood, 1977).

To facilitate progress to division, multiplication and the understanding of fractions, Pestalozzi devised a table of units in which the unit adopted was the square, a figure which lends itself to simple visual subdivision and partition (Curtis & Boultwood, 1977). Through activities with these divisible squares, pupils gain an intuitive knowledge of the proportions of the different fractions and so can proceed later to their symbolic representation with clear ideas of their true significance.

This then, was Pestalozzi's basic curriculum. His scheme according to Curtis & Boultwood, 1977) have opened up wide fields of knowledge and experience. Not only did he provide an education which even according to modern standards was "general (at a time when child education was hedged in by tradition), but he also made praiseworthy attempts to apply his "Anschauung" principle to the teaching of all other subjects.

ACTIVITY III

1. Discuss/explain the curricula implications of Pestalozzi;'s theory to early childhood education.
2. Discuss the implications of Pestalozzi's theory to early childhood education.

SECTION 3

THE PHILOSOPY AND THEORY OF FRIEDRICH FROEBEL (1782 – 1852)

(a) **History**

Born in 1782, his mother died when he was a baby and so he spent a rather lonely childhood, browsing in the countryside of his South German mountain home.

Friedrich had to attend the village girls' school until at the age of ten, when he was sent to his mother's brother. In the village school near his new home, he gained little except for some small skill in arithmetic. It was reported that he lived a lonely childhood life, fond of nature but not very good at games with his fellows (Curtis & Boultwood, 1977).

At fifteen, he was apprenticed to a forester. In two years as an apprentice, he learnt little except what he gained from geometry books. He gave much time to the observation and study of plants and insects – experience significant in his later philosophy with its tendency to pantheism. At seventeen, he went to Jana to his brother who was studying at the University. He remained with his brother and took some biology and mathematics courses. While at Jana University, he was influenced by the ideas of some scholars. Later, he was invited to Frankfurt to teach drawing. From 1807 to 1810, he tutored three boys and spent most of his time at Yverdun with his pupils in self-education. He also studied the ideas of Pestalozzi which greatly influenced his own thought and experiment. Being a scientist by natural inclination, he embarked on the study of sciences. Not only physics, chemistry and geology, but also philosophy engaged his attention as well as his early study, mathematics. He opened his first school in 1816, where in partnership with two of his friends, he worked out the principles of his educational theory and practice.

In 1831, Froebel left his school to his partner and took up appointment in Switzerland as a trainer of teachers. In 1835, he built a training establishment and a demonstration school at Burgdorf, Pestalozzi's old centre, and it was in the course of this work that he grew more and more aware of the importance of the early stage of education.

Convinced that only by the right education of young children would be achieved his aim of a commonwealth of good, cooperative people, he set his heart on studying and developing infant teaching (Curtis & Boultwood, 1977). His wife's illness made him to give up his work at Burgdorf in 1836. Thereafter, he spent some time visiting German infant schools but was not satisfied with what he saw. From that time onwards, he spent all his efforts on the task of working out methods of teaching young children. He moved up to the mountain village of Blankenburg in his native Thuringia and established "a school for Psychological Education" which he later called "Kindergarten". In his kindergarten school, he experimented in the organisation of materials and activities through which children might express their natural capacities while cultivating their powers of observation and understanding. He was also able to develop his methods and extend his ideas, and by 1850 many kindergartens were founded, many infant school teachers trained and infant teaching materials developed.

His democratic views of educating children were however not widely accepted in Germany. In 1857, the Prussian Government proscribed the kindergarten. Froebel died in 1852.

ACTIVITY IV

1. Discuss the life history of Froebel.

(b) **Philosophy and theory of Froebel**

Froebel lived at a time when Germany was leading the world in philosophical thought. He was both student and scientist by nature, so that his own educational theory was developed from a combination of observational method learned from Pestalozzi and study of the ideas of other educators and philosophers (Curtis & Boultwood, 1977). Froebel leaned towards Pantheism because this philosophy has a deeply religious foundation, maintaining that all material things are expressions of God's creative will. His constant desire to realize his concept of all-sided unity drove him to seek an understanding of the laws underlying human experience and knowledge. Froebel pursued scientific research not only in the older, more orthodox sciences, but also in the science of language and above all, in the science of the human mind. As a research worker, Froebel paid attention to factors deliberately ignored by Pestalozzi, factors which often help the researcher to find short cuts – the results of previous research and the opinions of specialists. Froebel's interest in studying the result of previous research and opinions on science as well as education explained to a certain degree the trend of his philosophical conclusions. His interest in, and knowledge of, evolution in nature no doubt helped in shaping his educational theories and philosophy which was strongly individual and one that was adopted from his contemporaries (Curtis & Boultwood, 1977).

The main factor of Froebel's philosophy – a factor hardly even implied by any previous educator was the view that life is an evolutionary process. Like Pestalozzi he assumed that the improvement and elevation of group and individual go hand in hand, and that the opportunity is offered to man to reach higher and higher stages of goodness and perfection through never-ending evolutionary process which had already brought him so far from the rest of the animal world (Curtis & Boultwood, 1977). Education, in its widest sense, was the active, fermenting element in this process, an element which man, at its present evolutionary level, now had the power and understanding to manipulate for his own welfare – that is, for the acceleration of the rate of development of the human race. The old definitions of education were thus as obsolete as the old methods. No longer was it enough to aim primarily at the inculcation of habits, knowledge, and values esteemed by its generations, although such might be gained in the main educational process. No longer was it enough also to offer opportunities to develop a certain narrow range of skills and to seek in him the signs of conventionally desirable capacities, although such skills and abilities might be an integral part of the main educational process. The new aim of the educational process according to Froebel must be to produce a new "harmonious personality" with a capacity for spontaneity, a person of fully developed individual abilities and rich, well-adjusted social relationships. Education should make a world

of people looking not to the past but to the future, aware of their responsibilities and privileges, and contributing to the betterment of mankind.

Educators before Froebel (Pestalozzi, Rousseau & Comenius) had likened education to the cultivation of plants, but none had interpreted this argument in such clearly defined biological terms like Froebel. Froebel sees God as the original organism creating an entire, changing universe, in which men and all else contained in it, are thus part of God himself (Curtis & Boultwood, 1977). The perfect development of any whole is dependent on the full, balanced, relevant functioning of each small, essential portion. Each person, as a small, essential portion, contributes to God's purpose in so far as he performs his part as a smoothly functioning, balanced unity.

Froebel holds firmly to the idea that functional unity involves the exercise of physical and mental activities together. Therefore education, aiming to achieve harmony, yet freedom, in the realization of human potentialities, is only to be achieved, in his opinion, through "productive" activity which calls into play both physical and mental capacities and attitudes (Curtis & Boultwood, 1977). The emphasis on productivity carries the organic analogy a stage further – the natural functioning of an individual or a group is purposeful and productive, so that training designed merely to exercise a set of muscles or a type of reasoning, or a certain sense, is not only out of date but may well be harmful. This is because the attempt to develop separate faculties conflicts with the idea of unity and harmony within the organism. Froebel believed that the education of the hand or brain can only be full and significant when related to the education of the whole body and spirit, and that the true education of the individual is only possible when its relationship to the education of all society is realized. According to Froebel, each small unity in the universe has a distinctive function and purpose. It maintains its unity only as it is related to other smaller unities and to the larger unity which contains them all.

Another important aspect of Froebel's educational theory is his idea of development – of unfolding, of evolution – according to a universal law or force. Accepting the biological principle, Froebel saw each unity – whether animal, vegetable, or mineral, whether physical or mental – as having a "drive" to develop along those lines fitted to its characteristics. The fundamental force was the same throughout the universe, the lines of development were the same throughout each category, but the possibilities for change through evolution were unknown and unending. Therefore, all aspects of human life, moral and ethical as well as physical, are subject to the same law of development; all aspects of man's environment are similarly kept to a process of orderly evolution by the same force. By the same doctrine, the highest and most complex product of the evolutionary process is man, who now has achieved understanding of his own potentialities and limitations and who therefore must devote his superior powers to the deliberate, rational and scientific fostering of the process itself (Curtis & Boultwood, 1977).

ACTIVITY V

1. Briefly explain Froebel's philosophy and theory of education.
2. How does Froebel's interest in the study of science influence his philosophy of education?

SECTION 4

IMPLICATIONS OF FROEBEL THEORY TO EARLY CHILD EDUCATION

As is frequently evident in his writing, Froebel saw the problems of education from a sociological point of view. In a letter of 1834 as cited by Curtis and Boultwood, (1977: P. 378) Froebel said: "no community can progress in its development while the individual who is a member of it, remains behind; the individual, who is a member of the whole body, cannot progress in his development while the community remains behind." Froebel saw the school and kindergarten as socially significant institutions, fostering the emergence of individuality through the experience of group relationships and activities. Just like Pestalozzi, he believed in the importance of family education and in the need for a firm link between home and school. Like Comenius, he also believed that parents should be trained in the home education of their children.

He did not approve of the vocational and utilitarian education favoured by some thinkers. He saw the school as a nursery of future citizens, group members prepared to put their special abilities to the best service of the community. His central idea for all stages of child education is expressed in the term "Darstellung", a wide concept of expression and expressive activities, hardly realized in its entirety by the "expression work" of the modern primary school (Curtis & Boultwood, 1977). The nearest translation of "Darstellung" is "creative self-expression," for it is the process whereby is satisfied the innate urge of the organism to push out to greater life, and to make its adjustments and contributions to the greater unity of which it is a part. The impulses walling up in the pupil need to be "lived out" through activities which offer best opportunity for this development and adjustment. According to Froebel, children may express ideas, feelings, and purpose in activities which at the same time give them knowledge and experience – construction, play-acting, writing, painting, calculating, story-telling and several other pursuits, some individual, and some needing cooperation in groups. Froebel did not favour formal sense-training as advocated by Pestalozzi and other earlier educators. He believed strongly that sense perception would develop through "Darstellung" which is purposive and progressive. He therefore maintained that methods and materials devised by the teacher are not to be imposed on the pupil but are rather to be available for his use, under teacher guidance.

Froebel therefore devised "gifts" for use in the first period of education. These were solid shapes, the basic forms being the sphere, the cube and the cylinder, augmented for constructional activities by triangles, squares, rings and sticks (Curtis & Boultwood, 1977).

He selected these shapes because in his views they represented typical forms of nature and art, and thus together signified the unity of nature and art created by the greatest unity. Froebel calls any wooden blocks "symbols which unlock the child's soul for the thought or spirit which is innate in everything that has come out of God's creative mind". Besides playing with the "gifts", he said children at the earlier stage should be involved in dancing, singing, number games, drawing and games involving speech. For other children, Froebel's scheme offers such activities as gardening, building boats and other useful objects, exploring and reading, the need for both individual and group experience being kept in view. At this stage, Froebel encouraged the acquisition and care of personal possessions because the child is now eager to collect. Similarly, more group activities are to be provided at this period when the "gang" spirit is strong. The tendencies fostered by these earlier activities in adolescents are expected to gradually modify into normal attitudes of active and enterprising young adulthood.

From Froebel's point of view, it appears that the school has the task of producing educated youngsters through a time-table of unlimited free play. While he is the great exponent of the fundamental use of play in education, he envisaged activities that are both guided and progressive. By stressing the purposive element in activity, Froebel made possible the identification of play and work as one. the teacher's task therefore, is to organise and guide the free and continuous development of the pupil through play – a gradual development of self-activity, never forced. The teacher is also to encourage the awakening senses, to help the pupil find words to express his ideas and mental images, and to ensure the retention of such knowledge by play way methods. Froebel saw in the imitative games of children innate human virtue stretching out towards the instinctively desired goal of social order and good. He had faith that the play experiences of children would enable them to achieve confidence and balance in orderly world, a process which he called "rounded life harmony."

In conclusion, it might be said that Froebel believes education should fit the individual for a full life within the group. Froebel laid emphasis on practical activity which according to him will open up to the child the whole wide range of human knowledge and experience. He also stressed the "relatedness" of knowledge. His method is rather a concentric arrangement of learning round one main topic. In seeking to bring out the impulses of each pupil, Froebel relied on psychological approach. He also aimed to develop character and would avoid vocational education except in its widest sense.

ACTIVITY VI

1. Explain briefly the curricula implications of Froebel's theory on early childhood education.
2. Explain the general implications of Froebel's theory on early childhood education.

SECTION 5

IMPACT OF THE PHILOSOPHIES AND THEORIES OF PESTALOZZI AND FROEBEL ON EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

The philosophies and theories of Pestalozzi and Froebel has contributed much to the general development of early childhood education, especially in the area of curriculum and pedagogy.

Both theories see the education of the child as very important, and a right which no society should deny the child of it. Both theories also emphasized the need to properly plan the curriculum of early childhood education. The two theories also emphasized on the need to have a graded curriculum in the order of difficulty. Play activities according to the two theories should be varied, interesting and purposeful.

Early childhood education in Nigeria also subscribes to most of the teaching of the two theories on early childhood education, especially in the area of curricula and pedagogy of early childhood education. The use of play activities and varied concrete learning materials are very common in most Nigeria's early childhood institutions.

However, a lot of the ideas expressed in the two theories on early childhood education have not found expression in most of Nigeria's early childhood institutions, even where such ideas are applicable. This is because early childhood education in Nigeria is still in its developmental stages. The level of government involvement at all levels is very low. There is yet no national standard for early childhood education, especially in the area of curriculum and pedagogy. Available early childhood institutions are mostly owned by private proprietors who are mostly ignorant about the importance and the methods of early childhood education. Most of them also embarked on such projects for profit making. Consequently, most of them are unwilling to implement noble ideas if it will increase their expenditure and reduce their profit.

ACTIVITY VII

1. Briefly discuss the impact of the theories of Pestalozzi and Froebel on early childhood education in Nigeria.

SUMMARY

In this unit, we examined the philosophies and theories of Pestalozzi and Froebel. The unit also examined the curricula and pedagogic implications of the two theories to early childhood education on a general perspective. The unit also briefly examined the impact of the two theories to early childhood education in Nigeria

ASSIGNMENT

1. Briefly explain the philosophies and theories of Pestalozzi and Froebel.

2. Discuss the curricula implications of the two theories to early childhood education.
3. Discuss the impact of the two theories on early childhood education in Nigeria.

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UNIT SIX: CONTRIBUTION OF THEPHILOSOPHY AND THEORY OF DEWEY (1859 – 1952)

INTRODUCTION

In this unit we will examine the philosophy and theory of Dewey. We will also examine the curricula implications of the two theories to early childhood education. In addition, the unit will examine the implications of his theory to early childhood education in Nigeria.

OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

1. Discuss John Dewey.
2. Discuss the curricula implications of Dewey's theory to early childhood education.
3. Analyse the implications of Dewey's theory to early childhood education in Nigeria.

HOW TO STUDY THE UNIT

1. Follow the guidelines provided in Unit 1.

SECTION 1

JOHN DEWEY 1859 - 1952

John Dewey, American philosopher, psychologist, and practical teacher, is the thinker "per excellence" whose beliefs have emerged, not only from his teaching experience, but also from the fundamental social and religious characteristics of his early environment.

Born in Vermont, the son of a village shopkeeper, he grew up in a rural community typical of a multitude of others in New England where matters of religion and politics maintained their traditional importance in everyday life. The experiences of those early years brought to Dewey the two outstanding convictions which directed the whole course of his educational work – a conviction that traditional methods of schooling were futile and fruitless, and the conviction that the human contacts of everyday life provide unlimited natural, dynamic "learning situations".

In 1879, Dewey graduated at the University of Vermont, and after a year's study of philosophy and brief period of school teaching he proceeded to John Hopkins University where he sat under celebrated lecturers who greatly influenced the evolution of his philosophy and educational philosophy. An undergraduate course in physiology which he took, introduced him to Darwinian ideas, which also greatly influence him and contributed to his going into philosophy. According to Curtis & Boultwood, (1977) Dewey also studied Psychology under G. Stanley Nall, History under Herbert B. Adams, Philosophy under G. S. Peirce and G. S. Morris. After two years, he got his Ph.D degree and became a lecturer in

philosophy at the University of Michigan. Then, he became a professor of Philosophy first at the University of Minnesota and later at the University of Michigan. In 1894, he became the head of Philosophy department at the University of Chicago.

The years that followed saw Dewey's research and experiment in education which won him world-wide reputation. The "laboratory school," set up in connection with the University, was opened in 1896 for the sole purpose of research and experiment in new ideas and methods. The experiments were carried out in lines indicated by theories evolved by Dewey. As pointed out by Curtis & Boultwood (1977) Dewey had no "crank" schemes to impose upon the school; he only wished to create the conditions for the discovery of more natural ways of teaching and learning.

The Chicago experiment was not only a great contribution to educational research, it was also the experience which gave conviction and certainty to Dewey in his philosophical views as applied to education. Dewey wrote so many books and articles in his life time. He died at the age of 93 years.

SECTION 2

THE PHILOSOPHY AND THEORY OF JOHN DEWEY (1859 – 1952)

According to Curtis & Boultwood (1977) John Dewey was encouraged to return to University study by one of his friends in 1880s. While in the university, he was able to familiarize himself with Nigelian doctrine, and as a teacher he was able to see the link between philosophy and education. At that time also, the influence of German thinkers was very strong in American universities. It was an era of pilgrimage to Germany and of the development of cults such as Herbartianism (Curtis & Boultwood, 1977). Dewey became a leading member of Herbartian society. Following the exposition of pragmatism by C. S. Peirce in 1870, Dewey gave attention to a new philosophical view-point. Dewey evolved his own particular brand of pragmatism. In evolving his philosophy he was influenced not only by Peirce's pragmatism but also by William James' publication of "The Will To Believe" in 1896, and the controversy on the theory of evolution going on at that time. Dewey approached his philosophical viewpoint from a biological and scientific point of view which was clearly reflected in some of his statements. For example, he asserted that education has no aims. In his book "Democracy and Education", Dewey argued that "since there is nothing to which growth is relative save more growth, "there is also nothing to which education is subordinate save more education". The educational process has no end beyond itself – it is its own end. The main principle of pragmatism is that the personal and purposive character of thought must be taken into account in the formulation of any adequate philosophic theory (Curtis & Boultwood, 1977). Since thinking is influenced by our emotions and capabilities, it is impossible to establish any absolutes of truth, reality and those other concepts which have always fascinated philosophers. The pragmatist defines a concept by acquiring what practical effects it involves in the way of experience and action, and he regards these effects as constituting the concepts themselves. If faced with two conflicting concepts, he would seek out the practical effects involved in each concept. If no difference is found, then the two

concepts are the same. According to Curtis & Boultwood, (1977), Dewey applied this argument to logic and ethics and so formulated his "Instrumental" theory of truth – the idea that all knowledge is personal which every individual makes for himself for the purpose of adapting himself to new situations. The pragmatists believed that there can be no absolute truth since the meaning of a concept depends on its relationship to the individual. Even scientific laws according to them remain true only as long as they summarise truly the current state of human mind. Dewey's emphasis on the personal, variable element in thinking leads to the assumption that while the result of thought is important to the individual, it is still second to the process of thought. It is inquiry which matters, for through this process the adjustment between a person and his environment is brought about. Dewey also believed that inquiry is the same with the process which enables the growing biological organism to modify its environment and to be modified by that environment into a state allowing for more growth and development.

The control and direction of inquiry is a major factor in Dewey's educational theory. He argued that the natural method of inquiry, whether intellectual or otherwise, involves a preliminary review of the situation, and the making of an estimate as a guide. This according to him may involve collecting and arranging material in intellectual activities, a process which according to Curtis & Boultwood, (1977) may be probably related to the organism's purposive strategy in physical and biological spheres. This meant that development effort is not haphazard. The objective of each effort is decided before hand, so that the mental or physical equipment is organised first. In the processes which involve thought, the truth or validity of that preliminary organisation of ideas is tested by inquiry –by experiment. It is in the course of putting ideas to the test of experience that education is gained, and therefore Dewey believed that pupils should be given wide opportunity for the practice of purposive inquiry.

Dewey's psychological principles also influenced his philosophical concept of instrumentality of the mind in all its aspects-thinking, willing, and feeling. He maintained that in the process of evolution, man gradually acquired mind and intelligence superior to that of other animals. It has been a process of learning through activity, through practical experience in the normal struggle for existence and for survival. Dewey believed that through practicing, we use the intelligence to overcome obstacles, make adjustments and obtain satisfactions. The only way to sustain its continued development is through practicing it – in living situations. The acquirement and retention of knowledge according to Dewey, is only a part of man's natural activity in adjusting himself to his environment. His ideas are activities of the mind, which is part of the whole activity of adjustment. Further progress or improvement is dependent not on abstract knowledge or information but on some conclusions resulting from new experiences gained as a result of movement or action on the part of the learner. Dewey explained that, biologically, the action of the organism arises from inherited instincts and impulses, so that in a straight forward evolutionary process innate impulses result in educational experiences, with each organism gradually acquiring knowledge, or learning, to the level of his predecessors and eventually surpassing them (Curtis & Boultwood, 1977).

Curtis and Boultwood (1977) therefore argued that if the philosophical argument as to the independent existence of knowledge is avoided, this interpretation of human evolution provides a clear guidance for the teacher. They however observed that the complexity of experience and relationships now achieved by man may likely hinder the "straight forward evolutionary process", especially in view of the so many obstacles man has erected for himself and his successors in terms of political and economic inequalities and social and moral taboos. Therefore, the function of the teacher is to guide the young through the complexities of life and give them opportunities to learn in the natural way without encountering the severe frustrations and injury that slow them down, and sometimes dam up the out-flowing of impulses towards greater and more abundant life. Dewey also observed that man has now gained some measure of control over his own evolution.

Consequently, the future function of the teacher should not only be to help children to cope adequately with contemporary conditions as their predecessors coped with less complex conditions. But, the new teacher should aim to produce not a set type of individual or citizen, but a race of young people competent to cope with new experiences and new tasks which must come. Dewey observed that we live in a world where changes are going, changes resulting into mankind's weal or woe. Every act of mankind modifies these changes and hence is fraught with promise, or charged with hostile energies. From this, it follows that education must start by capturing and focusing on natural impulses, by gaining spontaneous attention to problems and topics which, in offering challenge to investigate, call into play those human powers which need, not only to be developed but also controlled.

Thinking, according to Dewey is a capacity which the human organism has acquired in the evolutionary practice of seeking and attaining his objectives and also coping in his struggle to cope with the environment. According to Curtis & Boultwood (1977), this is one of Dewey's most significant contributions to ideas on the nature of thought. Dewey maintained that even though the ability to think develops in and to the full biological expansion of man, thinking does not take place until when some extra effort is needed to prevent the interruption of that expansion. Man starts thinking when a change in the environment affects his comfort or whenever a problem arises. This argument according to Curtis and Boultwood (1977) explains Dewey's formulation of the "problem" method of learning. According to Dewey, thinking and reasoning are exercised by the human organism in tackling problems.

In his book titled "Now We Think", Dewey discussed in some detail the implication of his theory with reference to inductive reasoning. In the book, he identified five steps or stages of the thinking process which leads to problem solving. The first stage is the consciousness of a problem or obstacle; the second stage is the mental survey, the analysis of the situation, and the location of the main factor; the third stage is the listing of possible solutions; the fourth stage is the stage of thinking out of the implications of each solution so that comparison will indicate the most suitable course for experiment. The fifth stage is the actual putting into practice of the decision and the reaching of a conclusion as to its success or failure.

Some educators have however observed that while the implied methods might be useful in purely intellectual pursuits, their function would be less easy to justify in aspects of education

involving aethetics, sentiments and morals. While it is clear that Dewey would not want the child to suffer unnecessary mental, emotional or physical hardship, it is equally clear from his psychological stand point that he does not see the development of an integrated dynamic personality except through a life which presents constant challenges to the immature human organism.

In consequence, Dewey sees schooling as a life which prepares the child and require him to surmount obstacles rather than avoidance; a life which increases sensitivity and adaptability by requiring contribution to a self-controlled group rather than conformation in a regimented society.

ACTIVITY I

1. Discuss the theory of Dewey.

SECTION 3

CURRICULA IMPLICATIONS OF DEWEY'S PHILOSOPHY AND THEORY TO EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Talking about education and its aims, Dewey identified two kinds of aims of education. One of the aims of education is that which is conceived only for the purpose of seeking greater efficiency in producing knowledgeable and disciplined youngster, while the other aim is that which involves the reform and revision of the social system. Dewey saw the first aim as exclusively concerned with the transmission of posterity, the best standards of racial or community tradition as nothing but "indoctrination" and therefore he does not subscribe to it. He however subscribed to the second aim which is concerned with the search for ways of educating the young so that they themselves become the regenerating force of society (Curtis & Boultwood, 1977).

Dewey saw the child as a being who by reason of the adaptability and plasticity of youth has potentialities for development beyond the stage reached by his predecessors.

Such an orientation of the mind of the educator towards the future, demands the sacrifice of pre-conceived ideas on the content and method of education. Dewey observed that the handing on of past knowledge and codes can only be achieved by instruction, either directly or indirectly. No matter how pleasant and interesting the methods involved may be, they are still concerned with a content of known quantities and pre-estimated values, and these set limits to pupils' learning. No matter how we look at the child's mind, Dewey maintained that teaching methods must aim at either moulding the mind to a known pattern or guiding it to a known end. He thus, maintained that the teacher who can face the future with an open mind must be ready to risk the impact of new knowledge, experiences and ideas on the minds of his

pupil. The teacher must also not interfere with the natural or social situation in which education is to take place, except to make it more comprehensible to children.

Dewey maintained that educational ideals have to do with the protection, sustenance and direction of growth of the human organism. He applied his philosophy of growth consistently in defining his educational theory. Growth and movement are fundamentals of the universe; the human mind cannot envisage their cessation into a state of static perfection. Therefore, Dewey maintained that the educator need not try to envisage an end for human growth. His task is to guide and foster growth and to find ways of studying changes and discovering what they signify.

Therefore, the educator who is an outstanding figure in a democratic society must constantly aim to see the relationship between the child's natural impulses and those great biological forces of the race. He must also try to provide comparable materials and situations for the beneficial exercise of those impulses. Dewey does not underestimate the role of the teacher. While it is true that the pupils' impulses as expressed in their interests should be of more concern to the teacher than the transmission of knowledge, Dewey believed that it is the responsibility of the teacher to regulate and organise the freedom of the child. The teacher as a stage manager according to Dewey is more powerful than the teacher as a player. The teacher is well ahead of his pupils in experience, and therefore, more capable of surveying the social heritage, looking to a more distant end and purpose than his pupils, and making a reliable hypothesis as to the best course of action to pursue. Dewey therefore feels that the competence of the teacher is to be judged by his skill in estimating what will work. The good Deweyan teacher according to Curtis and Boultwood (1977) is he whom society, accepting the estimate of his fellow specialists, can be entrusted with the task of ensuring that the process of "perfecting" and refining will continue. He is also one who realizes his own power and responsibility to guide the young to the acquirement of the skills and knowledge which have raised man in the past.

ACTIVITY II

1. Discuss the curricula implications of Dewey's theory to early childhood education.