



# Suitability of Methods Used by Tutors to Implement Early Childhood Education Curriculum in Primary Teachers' Colleges in Eastern Uganda

Moses Wambi, Prof. Alice Merab Kagoda, Prof. Anthony Muwagga Mugagga  
Makerere University-College of Education and External Studies

[moswambi@yahoo.com](mailto:moswambi@yahoo.com)

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**Abstract:** *This paper examines the suitability of methods used by tutors to implement Early Childhood Education Curriculum in primary teachers' colleges in Eastern Uganda. It is based on a realisation that a new curriculum was introduced by Kyambogo University in 2012 advocating for hands-on-approach to implementing the ECE curriculum. However, the curriculum came when tutors were, and many are still used to the transfer of knowledge approach. The most disturbing questions are; have these tutors adopted hands-on approaches or they do it their own way to make things happen? A cross-sectional survey design with predominantly qualitative data collection methods and analysis was adopted on a sample size of 306 respondents/participants selected from colleges in Eastern Uganda. Data was analysed thematically and reported qualitatively alongside the statistical data. Verbatim was also applied appropriately and backed-up by quotations and statements of participants. Results indicated that material development skills, display skills, handwriting/ printing skills, drawing skills, reading skills, effective listening skills, speaking skills and ability to employ learner-centred methods of teaching which make the instructional process interesting and promote collaborative learning were crucial in the package a tutor of ECE ought to possess. In conclusion, majority of ECE tutors did not employ methods which stimulate highlighted aspects. Through continuous interactions with respondents/participants, it was discovered that Kyambogo University in conjunction with MoES conducted only a two-day training workshop on the revised 2012 ECE Curriculum to the Tutors, a duration which was actually inadequate. In conclusion, tutors were not able to measure to the required pedagogical standards in line with Hands-on-learning' to the expectations of Kyambogo University and MoES. It was recommended that equipping tutors with desirable qualities and skills would be the way to go in the direction of improving their role modeling practices to their teacher trainees. Among the desirable qualities and skills required of tutors of ECE, is effective communication, creative thinking, manipulative skills, critical thinking, problem-solving, and commitment, resilience at work, organisational skills and pedagogical leadership skills. Demonstration schools and Model ECD centres should be a core requirement to all PTCs across the country in order to boost practicum skills of both tutors and teacher trainees through continuous demonstration lessons, modeling lessons, micro-teaching lessons and continuous child study.*

**Key words:** Evaluation, Pedagogical competences, Early Childhood Education and Curriculum.

## 1. Introduction

Early Childhood Education (ECE) curriculum is aimed at preparing children (0-8) years of age towards meaningful learning through Provision, Protection and Participation to realise their full potential and self-sufficiency as future adults. ECE contributes to effective school entry, better school performance and visible success later in the child's life. However, in the midst of those benefits, there are observed issues surrounding effective ECE curriculum implementation most of which accrue from areas such as tutors' pedagogical competences whose position in ECE implementation is not well explored and articulated in available studies and thus, not paid close attention to by

stakeholders in public and private sector. Professionally unprepared teachers are available to facilitate day-to-day teaching/learning in Early Childhood Development (ECD) centers, a clear indication that tutors' pedagogical competences in implementing the ECE curriculum in PTCs where these teachers are prepared need to be evaluated. Competent tutors are expected to avoid transfer of knowledge to teacher trainees but strategise the implementation of approaches that enable teacher trainees acquire skills which they can in turn use to competently teach primary school pupils after the course. The researcher, therefore, wonders whether tutors still use the traditional approaches of knowledge transfer to implement the ECE curriculum and thus, justifying the stated

inadequacies in lower primary classes (P.1-P.3) and ECD centers.

UNESCO (2019) report states that caring for, and educating young children is an integral part of human society that has evolved over time and remains varied across cultures, often reflecting family, community structures, plus the social and economic roles of women and men. Eddy and Matthew (2016) noticed that it was out of those responsibilities that ECE emerged as a field of study during the enlightenment in European Countries with high literacy rates. In developed countries such as the United States of America (USA), Denmark, Germany, Netherlands, Finland, Sweden and some developing countries notably; Nigeria, Tunisia, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Kenya and Uganda, Early Childhood Education (ECE) has become a serious concern. ECE provides a wide range of programmes for children (0-8) years of age aimed at physical, cognitive and social development. Many countries across the world, therefore, strive to implement ECE programmes to provide for children's early learning through Provision, Protection and Participation for self-sufficiency as they grow up (Unicef report, 2018).

In Africa, it is mainly South Africa, where ECE is reported to be faring well. However, a number of African countries experience implementation challenges which include lack of specialists in ECE; stakeholders' negative attitude, vague curriculum (Tunisia), inadequate funding (DRC), and lack of thorough supervision (Adenike, 2016). The present study is based on a realisation that since Kyambogo University in conjunction with MoES put in place the ECE curriculum for PTCs in 2012, the curriculum has never been evaluated yet, stakeholders continue to pose questions regarding its implementation in relation to its intended goals.

In Uganda, UNESCO Report (2019) and Allan (2013) show that for several years, the private sector has been managing ECE until 1980 when the government made a strategy and the preschool programme for 3-5 year olds was transferred to the MoES while the responsibility for 0-3 year old children was assigned to parents' (Elkind, 2010). In 1993, an ECE policy emerged in response to the Education Policy Review Commission Report(1989) which found lack of government control of quality, curriculum, pedagogy, facilities, and age of entry (Eddy & Matthew, 2016). The Report set out recommendations and government committed itself to supporting a holistic model of ECE as a foundation for basic education and the right of every child. The goal was to improve existing institutions for 0-1 year olds, kindergartens for 1-2 year olds and nurseries for 3-5 year olds which currently serve as the contents of the new Uganda National ECE curriculum implementation framework (Louis, 2017). Currently, ECE in Uganda is among the key strategies to implementation of Education for [National] Development 2030 Agenda. As a result, the Government of Uganda is working hand in hand

with a large number of Education Development Partners through the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES), e.g, Uganda Teacher and School Effectiveness Project (UTSEP) under Global Partnership for Education (GPE), School Health and Reading Programme (SHRP) under Research Institute Triangle (RTI), Community Child Care Programme (CCCP), Quality Education Initiative (QEI), STiR Education, World Vision and many others to ensure improved Early Grade Reading (Absolunet, 2013). Unfortunately, research has indicated that implementation of ECE curriculum in PTCs is to a large extent done by teachers [tutors] majority of whom use traditional methods of teaching instead of employing activity-based methods to enable trainees learn by themselves (Metto & Makewa, Learner-Centered Teaching can work in Kenyan Public Primary Schools, 2015). Evidence on this can be traced in the New vision Paper for Thursday 16<sup>th</sup>, June, 2016 revealing that effective implementation of the ECE curriculum in Uganda is handicapped by poor qualification of teachers leading to misinterpretation of the ECE curriculum content (Nichos, 2016).

The present study is constructed on a realisation that majority of the ECE tutors in Eastern Uganda were trained many years ago before 2012, when Kyambogo University introduced the new ECE curriculum in PTCs. The implication is that they lack adequate professional training and yet, the PTCs in which they operate lack appropriate reference materials for ECE implementation. On that note therefore, with the ongoing graduation of teacher trainees who can barely prepare pupils to acquire functional skills, tutors' pedagogical competences have become a contentious reference point and till the problem is tackled from the PTCs, it cannot be controlled as an aftermath of teacher trainees' graduation. Evidence from Kagoda (2012) shows that in a situation where society keeps changing (is dynamic) but the teacher educators still employ traditional methods of training teachers, that [pedagogical]mismatch leaves a lot to be desired. If this state of affairs is not adequately addressed, the effort of various partners in development and government regarding ECE curriculum implementation may definitely remain futile.

Ideally, ECE curriculum implementation ought to follow the Kyambogo University ECE Curriculum which was revised and approved by MoES in 2012 to encourage a hands-on-learning approach and enable teacher trainees acquire skills practically rather than digesting concepts theoretically. This is in view that tutors who are charged with the core responsibility of implementing the ECE curriculum are well grounded in the required pedagogical competencies. On the contrary however, implementation of ECE curriculum in PTCs in Eastern Uganda predominantly reflects transfer of knowledge to teacher trainees, rather than hands-on-learning. By implication, ECE curriculum implementation is currently not to the standard and intentions of Kyambogo University.

On its part, government through MoES put in place refresher courses for tutors, revised minimum tutors' qualifications to teach in a PTC to at least a degree, revised teacher trainees' entry to the G.III teachers' certificate course and facilitates routine monitoring and support supervision (Mirembe, et al., 2017). Regardless of those interventions however, the current trend of ECE curriculum implementation has not yet been suited to Kyambogo University's expectations. Similarly, the academia has tried to address issues relating to ECE Curriculum but much of the published work addresses issues facing ECE in Early Childhood Development Centers and this still leaves the root of the problem merely massaged, thus continuing to leave a gap that permits evaluation of tutors' pedagogical competences and ECE curriculum implementation for this study to fill. The most unfortunate scenario is that, if this situation is left unattended to, the efforts of government and development partners to uphold ECE curriculum implementation in PTCs may remain frustrating to stakeholders.

## 2. Literature Review

This chapter explores the related literature of other scholars and researchers whose work was used to strengthen this study and whose gaps this study sought to fill. (Calman & Tarr-Whelan, 2005) revealed that ECE is critical in preparing children to enter and succeed in the grade school classroom, diminishing their risk of social-emotional, mental health problems and increasing their self-sufficiency as adults. In addition, (Awino, 2014) asserted that by providing education in a child's most formative years, ECE gradually closes educational achievement gaps between low and high-income learners before formal schooling begins. Whereas, available literature indicated such great importance attached to ECE, it was not clear whether PTCs in Eastern Uganda had a focus on the highlighted areas of concern in the implementation of the ECE curriculum, thereby, prompting the researcher to conduct an evaluation study with a focus on the syllabus content for teacher trainees.

At the macro level, Absolutnet (2013) unfolds that public investment in ECE produces economic returns roughly 10 times its costs in terms of; child care that enables mothers to work and provide education plus other support for child development that increases subsequent school success, labour force productivity, pro-social behaviour and health. Economic consequences also include reductions in public and private expenditures associated with school failure, crime, health problems and increase in earnings. As the researcher appreciates the available literature of other scholars about the value of implementing ECE initiatives in economic terms, there is a lot of silence about the position of ECE in the context of PTCs in Eastern Uganda, hence, creating a gap for this study to remain relevant.

The ECE curriculum guide for tutors (*Revised Kyu, 2012*) provides a framework that sets forth the programme's

philosophy, goals and objectives for children as well as guidelines for teaching to address all aspects of a child's development (socio-emotional, cognitive and physical). It attempts to offer teachers with the guidance, support and freedom to be creative and spontaneous with children (Mariana, 2016). The curriculum focuses on helping the teacher to provide a rich, carefully organised environment with opportunities for developmentally appropriate activities (Goldhaber, 2017). After a general description of the philosophy and theory underlying the curriculum, the goals and objectives, the physical environment, the teacher's role, planning the daily programme and the parent's role, the curriculum focuses on interest areas and describes in detail what and how children learn and the teacher's role in using all centres of children's interest (Thilo, Richter, & Kunter, 2012). The only gap that the available literature does not explore and leaves this study to fill, is the failure to evaluate the ECE curriculum in the context of PTCs in Eastern Uganda so as to tighten the loose ends, hence, prompting the researcher to conduct this study.

In addition, available literature also indicates that appropriate instruction in classrooms with diverse learners requires a variety of instructional methods to address individual needs though many educators, however, find themselves philosophically tied to one instructional approach for every learner to the exclusion of other approaches (Awino, 2014). The allegiance to one method of teaching reduces choices for teachers and students. Strict adherence to a limited view of learning can also hinder inclusion of efforts by denying some students appropriate instruction. A continuum of teaching methods that includes "explicit" and "implicit" instructional approaches is proposed as a more inclusive alternative (Faar, 2014). Research that supports a continuum of approaches is reported along with implications for classroom instruction and teacher education (Andreia & Mata, 2011). The ideas and assertions of the highlighted scholars in this paragraph prompted the researcher to conduct a study on ECE implementation in the context of tutors' pedagogical competences and PTCs in Eastern Uganda.

Further available literature indicates specific components of the framework that colleges find challenging to implement. Majority of the tutors report that not all of them in their colleges were appropriately qualified to teach different areas as specified in the training framework. They also do not have reference books, appropriate instructional materials, and their private colleges were still to register with the Ministry (Merill & Melanie, 2013).

At the institutional level, most colleges were started by individuals and therefore, run as a family business thus, changing this set up to encourage them open up to other parties as demanded by the framework was still challenging. In addition, many of those privately owned colleges operate in personal homes; others operate within other institutional premises, while the rest operate in a different premise every semester. If we are to strictly

enforce standards as specified in the framework, some of those colleges may face closure (Morlock, 2018).

Whereas the framework has specified the qualification of staff who are supposed to train ECD teachers at different levels, most of the staff were not available in the training colleges by the time this study was conducted. Specific components of the framework that were challenging to implement (N = 53) Component % of responses on Appropriate staff 100.0, Adequate reference books 94.3, Provision of adequate equipment for teaching/learning aids 88.6, Conditions for registration of institutions 56.6, Institution of separate management and administrative structures 52.8, Time schedule 52.8, Practicum 37.7, Assessment guidelines 28.3 and Content scope 28.3. Ejuu (2019) observed that, available staff in many colleges have qualifications in other related fields like secondary, primary or primary teacher education and social works other than ECD teacher education. This mix of staff being made to train ECD teachers poses a challenge on quality and the nature of standard being followed by trainers (Edutopia, 2015).

Guidance from the Ministry of Education about implementing the Curriculum Standard states that early learning services are a vital link to ensuring all New Zealand children, regardless of ethnicity, are given the opportunity to develop knowledge and an understanding of the cultural heritages of both parties to TeTiriti Waitangi. Quality in Action: TeMahiWhaiHua also outlines how services can ensure their curriculum is bicultural by describing understandings, values, beliefs and practices that are significant to Māori and that can enrich the philosophies and practices of service (Coppie & Bredekamp, Developmentally appropriate practice in early childhood programs: Serving Children from Birth through Age 8 (3rd ed.), 2017).

Furthermore, a number of strategies have been highlighted towards improved implementation of ECD. Effective Body Language: this is the most powerful communication skill that a teacher must possess. Good presentation skills include a powerful body language supported by verbal skills. This can create a long lasting impression in the minds of the learners. Thus, teachers' lessons will inevitably become more interactive and interesting for the learners. Besides, a teacher should maintain the volume, tone and rhythm of their voice during a lesson. Sense of Humor: the importance of this factor has been regularly underestimated. A good sense of humor keeps the learners active and interested in the teacher's class. A teacher who is dour and lacks humor doesn't contribute to the overall wellbeing of the learners (uber.com, 2013). On that note therefore, the production of the Learning Framework for Early Childhood by National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC) is a major breakthrough for ECD and a great encouragement for all stakeholders committed to the education sector. The Framework is an outcome and competence based on results rather than on goals or aims and objectives; it greatly emphasises observable and

measurable skills, competences, and values acquired by the children (Carleton, 2016). The Caregiver's Guide also provides information on the teaching and learning experiences that enhance the holistic development of a child. Emphasis is on learner-centeredness, and provides for increased learner-teacher contact time, different ability groups and use of familiar language for initial literacy. Care should be taken in handling children at this stage because any mistake made may have a lasting impact on the learner. All stakeholders should play their role in ensuring proper early childhood development (Carleton, 2016).

One response to educational reform initiatives has been the utilisation of professional development programs designed to introduce teachers to new or alternative curricula for implementation in the classroom. As a result, teachers are often exposed to an innovative pedagogic intervention and subsequently expected to implement the intervention with little consideration for their viewpoints or for the operative classroom context (Kai, Policy Implementation Barriers Analysis: Conceptual Framework and Pilot Test in Three Countries, 2018). This mixed methods study considers the influence of early childhood education teachers' beliefs on classroom practice, especially in relationship to their willingness to implement a constructivism-based curriculum in their classroom (Botta, Strengths-based group work with children. In N. B. Webb (Ed.), Helping children and adolescents with chronic and serious medical conditions, 2019).

Much as the available literature review covers most of the aspects of the variables, it is clearly indicated that the local sources there-in are so limited. This implies that most of the previous studies were conducted outside Uganda. Such literature, therefore, may not be appropriate to directly respond to the problem of this study (Marope & Kaga, 2015). Worse of it all, though the part of pedagogy has been widely addressed by various authors as earlier explained, the views raised are not in the context of this current study since they address issues in secondary schools and vocational institutions other than Primary Teachers' Colleges in Eastern Uganda. Furthermore, since the introduction of the Revised Curriculum for ECE to be followed by all PTCs was put in place in the year 2012, there has been no current studies intended to evaluate its implementation yet, its relevance in terms of strengths and gaps ought to be documented to allow government and development partners continue supporting it (Adenike, 2016). It was, therefore, against all those reasons, that this study became very relevant most especially at this time when Uganda has committed herself to employing ECE as one of the key strategies towards achieving Education for Development 2030 Agenda, targeting a teacher of the 21<sup>st</sup>. century and responding to the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Number 4 in particular and all the 16 in general (Armentano & Dominick, 2013).

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1 Research Design

A cross-sectional survey design with a mixed methods approach of quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection and analysis was adopted for this study. The adoption of the highlighted design was in line with Alley Dog.com (2017)'s establishment that, a cross sectional design allows for studying people of different demographic characteristics at the same time. In addition, that design was chosen for being relatively quick and easy to conduct (no long periods of follow-up) in a sense that data on all variables is always only collected once and it also makes it possible for the researcher to measure prevalence for all factors under investigation.

#### 3.2 Target Population

Due to constraints of time and other resources, the researcher was able to target 891 teacher trainee ECE specialists, 44 tutors of ECE, 19 Principals, 19 regular teachers of lower primary from the selected schools, 19 Head teachers of the selected schools and 23 Deputy Principals of PTCs, totaling to 1,015 people. The sample size was determined mathematically from the parent population as illustrated under the subsequent subheading.

#### 3.3 Sample Size determination

$n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$  where  $n$  = sample size,  $N$  the total population targeted which was 1305 and  $e$  = percentage of error made in selecting sample (5% or 0.05), and 1 is representative of any likely avoided element that would have been included.

$$n = \frac{1305}{1+1305(0.05)^2} = \frac{1305}{1+1305 \times 0.0025} = \frac{1305}{4.2625} = 306.1$$

respondents  
Given the varying numbers of teacher trainee-specialists in ECE from college to college, the researcher found it convenient to involve all those found in each PTC as long as they specialised in ECE. In addition, the geographical scope was vast in that, the average distance from one PTC to another was roughly between 30 to 70 kilometers, thence, involving a lot of traveling expenses. On that note, therefore, the researcher decided to scale down to the accessible population consisting 12 Principals, 15 Deputy Principals, 15 tutors of ECE, 238 teacher trainee-specialists in ECE, 19 ECE regular teachers of lower primary, 5 primary school headteachers, 1 Head of Department for ECE at Kyambogo University and 1 Commissioner for ECD in the MoES, making a total of 506 respondents / participants who were used in the entire study.

Principals and Deputy Principals were selected and used in the study because they were expected to directly oversee and supervise tutors of ECE and teacher trainees during the implementation of the PTE curriculum in general and that of ECE in particular. In addition, tutors of ECE were selected to participate in the study because they were at the forefront in as far as the implementation of ECE curriculum

was concerned. Teacher trainee-specialists in ECE were identified and used as respondents because they were at the discretion of tutors for training in ECE skills at PTC level. Teachers of lower primary classes (P.1-P.3) were involved in the study in order to enable the researcher follow up the level of implementation of ECE curriculum after acquiring skills from tutors in PTCs. As a matter of policy, the ECD Head of Department for Kyambogo University and Commissioner In-charge ECD (MoES), were involved in the study because they were policy makers whose views were expected to have a significant bearing on the entire process of ECE implementation.

#### 3.4 Sampling techniques

Stratified sampling; Stratified sampling, was used to categorize study population by gender and professional characteristics so as to make the sampled population well balanced in a homogeneous manner.

In addition, this study adopted the concept that purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling method and it occurs when elements selected for the sample are chosen by the judgment of the researcher. Purposive sampling was therefore, used to include Principals, Deputy Principals, headteachers, teachers of lower primary classes, the Head of Department for ECE at Kyambogo University and the Commissioner for ECD in the MoES because they possessed the attributes which were being looked for in the study in terms of being at the forefront of curriculum management, support supervision, monitoring and quality control.

Furthermore, the researcher in this study also adopted the idea that, a simple random sample is a subset of individuals (a sample) chosen from a larger set (a population). Each individual is chosen randomly and entirely by chance, so that each individual has the same probability of being chosen at any stage during the sampling process and each subset of  $k$  individuals has the same probability of being chosen for the sample as any other subset of  $k$  individuals (Daniel, Moore & Starnes, 2008). This study therefore, employed simple random sampling (SRS) for selecting individual respondents from each stratum. As the most commonly used sampling technique, it was chosen for being free from errors in classification, it was suitable for the use of inferential statistics given the fact that this study had a quantitative component and SRS as a technique was envisaged to be free from bias and prejudice. In this study therefore, SRS (rotary) was employed to select teacher trainee-specialists in ECE as respondents for the study.

At the same time, ECE teachers of lower primary were selected using snow-ball sampling technique because they were still few in circulation and it therefore required one to provide guidance on how to find another.

#### 3.5 Data collection instruments

**Survey Guide (Questionnaire);** self-administered questionnaires (Likert type) were distributed to tutors of ECE, teachers of lower primary and teacher trainees in selected PTCs in Eastern Uganda. The respondents were given a period of two weeks (*14 days*) to study and provide their appropriate responses before the completed instruments were collected back by the researcher and research assistants. Self-administered questionnaires were very convenient and cost-effective because data was collected from different categories of respondents (*tutors of ECE, regular teachers of lower primary who specialised in ECE & teacher trainee specialists in ECE*).

**Interview Guide;** the researcher employed the Semi-structured type of interview items in this study. The interview guide contained a list of open-ended questions based on the specific objectives and research questions as stipulated in Chapter one of this Thesis. The interview sessions provided an opportunity for the researcher to have an interface with individual participants. In instances where particular participants (interviewees) were anticipated to experience difficulty in responding to an item or providing an unclear response, the researcher (interviewer) would employ an elaboration type of probing to help the participant provide an example to enrich the provided information. The main task in interviewing was to understand the meaning of what the participants could say. Interviews were also employed to seek and facilitate the researcher to obtain facts from the participants about the topic under study. For such reasons, interviews were particularly useful in facilitating the researcher to get the views, ideas, opinions, feelings and perceptions within the participants' experiences.

**Direct Observation Guide;** Direct Observation Guide was used to ascertain the level of appropriateness of; microteaching, role plays, group work, storytelling, think-pair-share, team-teaching and debate as were ideally expected to be used by the tutors of ECE in teaching the teacher trainees in the selected PTCs under study. Physically observing lessons in progress for selected teachers who specialised in ECE and were teaching in schools under geographical area of study was also found necessary by the researcher.

Bearing in mind that tutors of ECE and college administrators could possibly conceal some information as a way of protecting their jobs, employing a participant observation method so as to cross-validate data through triangulation was deemed helpful. Direct observation was also anticipated to be very useful because the participants would be found in their natural setting. However, participants were made aware of the purpose of the observation that it was to establish how the learning of their trainees took place. On every dependent variable, the researcher intended to spend at least a total of 10 minutes on a single observation.

**Document Analysis Guide;** This tool of data analysis was used to ascertain availability of ECE syllabus, ECE

Modules, ECE assessment records, ECE departmental minutes and reports. The revised ECE syllabus of Kyambogo 2012, among the highlighted documents was key in the implementation of ECE. The researcher, therefore, found it necessary to employ the Document Analysis Guide to ascertain the availability and functional use of such findings for purposes of data triangulation. The documents for analysis were obtained from subject tutors, Director of Studies and Deputy Principals.

### 3.6 Data Management

Data were summarised, grouped / sub-grouped, analysed thematically following steps and procedures recommended by Corbin and Strauss (2008 & Creswell 2013). Finally, alongside the statistical data, the analysed qualitative data were also reported qualitatively (*in verbatim form*), backed-up with quotations and statements of the participants.

## 4. Results and Discussion

### 4.1. Tutors' Competence of Implementation of ECE Curriculum in PTCs in Eastern Uganda

This was a guide to establishing views of tutors, teacher trainees and teachers of lower primary (TsLP) on possession of tutors' competences in ECE curriculum implementation in the area under study.

The researcher made an effort to find out from principals & Deputies whether their tutors incorporated contemporary issues into lessons which they conducted to the teacher trainees. In response, majority of the College Administrators reported that it was true, tutors incorporated issues like Children's Rights, HIV/AIDS, PIASCY, Peace Education, ICT, Child labour, Child Trafficking and Gender responsive pedagogy into lessons. In further cross-validation of data which was obtained using the informant interview guide, a Direct Observation Guide (*DOG*) was also employed by the researcher as a participant observer to follow up tutors' competences in applying similar skills most especially in incorporation of contemporary issues into lessons. The analysis of the (*DOG*) indicated that Gender Responsive Pedagogy was the most frequently highlighted contemporary cross-cutting issue, whereas, Children's Rights took the least position.

During further interview sessions with Principals and Deputy Principals on tutors' competences of ECE implementation, the key areas of concern centred around competences based on reference books, use of extra materials to meet changing demands, upgrade on basic content with new information, teaching based on learners' responses to learning, use of assessment and feedback to

meet learning objectives and allowing learners to interact while learning. Majority of the participants confessed that much of those highlighted aspects were very low in terms of rating in their PTCs under study. The researcher established gaps between what respondents agreed upon in SAQ and what majority of the Principals and Deputy Principals reported during the informant interview sessions.

Furthermore, the Document Analysis Guide was used by the researcher to examine the ECE (Kyu ECE syllabus Revised version 2012), with a focus on assessment and development of instructional materials. In the Kyambogo University Syllabus, ECE was highlighted as one of the practical oriented subjects; therefore, instructional materials were not only meant for purposes of obtaining marks for assessment but also for exhibitions, conducive learning environment, for skills development and many other purposes. In an effort to cross-validate data using statistical instruments, the researcher employed the direct observation Guide under knowledge of implementation of ECE Curriculum. Among the key contemporary issues, the researcher focused on the component of Local language use as medium of instruction, numeracy, life skills/values and functional literacy for life-long learning (MoES, 2012). On the contrary however, the visits made by the researcher to directly observe tutors' lessons, indicated that majority, around three quarters of those whose lessons were observed, expressed inability in the use of Local language as medium of instruction.

In further cross-validation of data to follow up tutors' competence in ECE Curriculum implementation, the researcher discovered that tutors possessed the competence to assess the teacher trainees during ECE Curriculum implementation in a theoretical form (pen & paper). The practice of assessing ECE teacher trainees theoretically was contrary to the guidelines in the ECE Kyu, 2012 Revised Curriculum and Vygotsky's socio-cultural learning theory which was adopted to underpin this study. In further follow up on tutors' competences in ECE Curriculum implementation, more interview sessions were held with Principals and Deputy Principals of colleges in Eastern Uganda, the researcher established various views on competences tutors of ECE ought to possess in ECE Curriculum implementation in PTCs. One of the Principals made the following observation:

...Currently, majority of our tutors of ECE have gaps in their competences to facilitate their trainees to acquire the required competence in ECE Curriculum implementation. An ideal tutor of ECE would possess competences in activity-based methods of teaching, instructional materials development, display of learning materials, development of learning centres, scheming, lesson planning and content delivery, unfortunately, majority of our tutors fall short of such competences...(Informant interview session

with a Principal in Eastern Uganda, September, 2019).

Basing on the foregoing quotation of one of the Principals in an interview, it implies that whereas stakeholders insist that let teacher trainees be supported by tutors to be competent, it looks like some tutors may not possess what to offer their trainees in terms of desirable competences. Similarly, on the issue of competences required of a tutor of ECE, one of the Deputy Principals from one of the colleges in Eastern Uganda shared views that;

...if our teacher trainees are to catch up with the competences of the 21<sup>st</sup> century skills which include effective communication, problem-solving, creative thinking, articulation of findings, adoption of change, being self-motivated, applying technology, having ethical values, managing time etc, the tutors of ECE require a lot of fine-tuning. In fact if tutors themselves lack such competences, how possible can they pass them on to their trainees? Competent tutors breed competent trainees...(Informant interview session with a Deputy Principal, September, 2019).

Coincidentally, the views of the Kyambogo University Head of ECE Department were still similar to the ones of the Principals and Deputy Principals in terms of the competences of tutors of ECE in Primary Teachers' Colleges. The Head of ECE at Kyambogo University described the ideal competences of a tutor of ECE as being practical, creative, committed, a researcher, a mentor, a reflective practitioner and a facilitator. On the kind of competences required of a tutor of ECE at primary teachers' college level, the researcher made an initiative to get the views of the Commissioner and the following statement was made:

...a competent tutor of ECE should be well grounded in making schemes of work, lesson planning, instructional material development, application of learner-centred methodology, exhibition of materials, development of learning centres, curriculum interpretation, assessment and content delivery...(Informant interview session with the Commissioner for ECE -MoES, September, 2019).

By impression, the researcher realised that majority of the key stakeholders had similar views on the issue of competences required of a tutor of ECE in primary teachers' colleges.

## 4.2 Nature of preparations on how tutors should be equipped to implement ECE effectively

During one of the informant interview sessions, the researcher prompted the Principals to give their opinions on the nature of preparation required to equip tutors to implement ECE effectively. Majority of the Principals observed that tutors of ECE ought to be prepared on serious breakthrough to literacy skills, creativity, Life skills, Effective Communication skills, manipulative skills and the ability to facilitate their trainees to undergo collaborative, co-operative and interactive learning approaches. The training institution for tutors (Kyambogo University) ought to competently prepare tutors to be well grounded in pedagogy of teaching and leadership so as to enable them influence their trainees positively. Above all, Kyambogo should provide adequate time for their tutor trainees on hands-on-learning in order to produce competent tutors who may consequently influence competent teacher trainees in PTCs.

## 4.3 Tutors' exhibition of pedagogical standards required in implementation of ECE curriculum

In an initiative to establish the extent to which tutors could exhibit their pedagogical standards, the researcher prompted Principals and Deputy Principals in an interview session to share their individual experiences. As a result, lecture, demonstration and role play were identified as the most common methods employed by their tutors during the teaching of ECE as a subject in PTCs. In further interactions between the researcher and the participants, one of the Principals asserted that;

...currently, the most commonly applied methods of teaching by tutors of ECE are those that are participatory in nature. The reason, it is important for tutors to employ student-centred methods of teaching is that teacher trainees always copy from their mentors who are automatically the tutors of ECE. It is almost impossible to assume that when the student teachers qualify with gaps, may make a big improvement in the application of participatory methods of teaching if they missed a proper dosage during their training... (*Informant interview session with a Principal of one of the colleges in Eastern Uganda, September, 2019*).

Basing on the assertions of the interviewee, the researcher was attracted to go and observe some lessons of ECE in the same institution. By the help of Direct Observation Guide, the researcher became a participant observer and all the three lessons of ECE which were conducted by tutors,

lecture method was the most frequently employed throughout and Demonstration was the least used. There was therefore, a variation between the information provided by the college administrators (Principals) and what the researcher personally observed in the classroom within the same colleges, a situation which left a lot of questions to be desired. The researcher still deemed it necessary to cross-validate data using different tools. As a result, the researcher as a participant observer, continued to engage with the Direct Observation Guide to observe more lessons. The following areas of concern regarding pedagogical standards were investigated according to individual tutor's instructional sessions and they included; conducting direct instruction, use of drill & practice approach, use of discovery learning and application of inquiry-based approach. In the final analysis, majority of the tutors whose lessons were observed employed direct instruction approach and the least number of them employed discussion method.

In further proceedings, the researcher continued to assess the experience of Deputy Principals on Tutors' exhibition of pedagogical standards required in implementation of ECE curriculum. The guiding interview question which was posed to the participants (Deputy Principals) was to provide views on (a) how tutors handled ECE curriculum content during their day-to-day teaching. In response, contradicting views were provided by the participants in that as almost one half of them observed that tutors of ECE in their colleges cross-referenced and integrated curriculum content in the Kyambogo University documents with real life-situations, concrete examples and teacher-trainees experiences, whereas the other half of the participants expressed a deep disappointment of their tutors of ECE being theoretical, lacking practical examples and doing a great deal of transferring information from Kyambogo University Modules and other textbooks directly to the teacher trainees. The impression of the researcher was that whereas some College Administrators seemed to be in the know of what could go on in class with tutors of ECE and the teacher trainees, some Principals and Deputy Principals banked on assumptions.

During different interview sessions, the researcher engaged individual Principals and Deputy Principals to provide their views on the nature of preparation that their tutors of ECE undergo and what they may need so as to get well equipped with effective ECE implementation in the PTCs under study. Among the most frequently shared views, Principals and Deputy Principals observed that; material development skills, display skills, handwriting/ printing skills, drawing skills, reading skills, effective listening skills, speaking skills and the ability to employ learner-centred methods of teaching which make the instructional process 'fun' and interactive were crucial to package a tutor of ECE, most especially in preparation for the 21<sup>st</sup>. Century education. In the researcher's further engagement with the college administrators (Principals & Deputy Principals), over the nature of tutors existing in the PTCs under study, one of the



Deputy Principals in charge of Pre-service programme (*Deputy Principal from one of the colleges in Eastern Uganda*) commented as follows at one of the interview sessions:

...it is seemingly becoming very difficult for Primary Teachers' Colleges to produce well equipped and practical teacher trainees because of the nature of their tutors in terms of being incompetent in a number of areas across the ECE curriculum. ECE by nature requires a very practical tutor, lively, active, with effective communication skills, highly creative, self-motivated and very inspiring but majority of the tutors of ECE we have in most of the PTCs are short of such qualities...(*informant interview session with a Deputy Principal from one of the colleges in Eastern Uganda, September, 2019*).

Following the verbatim views of the Deputy Principal in the foregoing quotation, similar observations were made by the researcher during the direct observation of lessons. To the researcher, Deputy Principals were more aware of what was taking place with tutors of ECE than the Principals of the PTCs in Eastern Uganda.

In further findings, the ECE syllabus copies available in the colleges under study were strictly accessible to tutors of ECE not to the teacher trainees who were specialising in ECE, except in only two colleges in Eastern Uganda. In terms of other ECE reading materials, the modules containing content covered in the students' first year of study were available in the ratio of 4:1 but there was no single module of ECE covering students' work in their second academic year across all the PTCs under study. In further analysis of findings, the content of ECE in the available documents was well graded, clear, rich and suitable but required tutor's/student's competence to integrate it with real life situations and students' practical experiences which could mainly be brought out through meaningful pedagogical means.

On the exhibition of pedagogical standards of tutors of ECE, the Commissioner shared his views that tutor of ECE who operate under supportive College Administrators exhibit better pedagogical standards than their counterparts. The researcher further prompted the participant to share views on tutors' pedagogical standards in terms of curriculum content. In his view, the Commissioner observed that majority of the tutors of ECE lack the competence to standardise ECE curriculum content in line with the 21<sup>st</sup> century skills. The argument of the Commissioner was that the tutors of ECE had not facilitated their teacher trainees enough to enable them assist the learners in the primary schools acquire a breakthrough to meaningful literacy to meet the

expectations of MoES and in response to the frequently asked question by TWaweza; are our children learning?

In further proceedings, the researcher continued to assess the opinion of the Head of ECE at Kyambogo University as regards Tutors' exhibition of pedagogical standards required in implementation of ECE curriculum. The guiding interview question which was posed to the participant was to provide views on:(a) how tutors handled ECE curriculum content during their day-to-day teaching. In response, the participant stated that tutors of ECE cross-referenced and integrated ECE curriculum content in the Kyambogo University documents with real life-situations, provided concrete examples, used teacher-trainees' experiences during the instructional process and employed learner-centred methods of teaching, for example Discovery, Storytelling, Dramatization, Role play etc. In summary, the participant emphasised that Generic methods of teaching were very crucial in implementing the ECE curriculum in PTCs.

In further cross-validation of data obtained from the Head of ECE Department at Kyambogo University regarding tutors' pedagogical standards, the researcher employed the Direct Observation Guide, to follow up the methods which the ECE qualified specialists (teachers of lower primary) were using in the primary schools/Early Childhood Development Centres under the geographical area of study. Findings indicated that majority of the ECE specialists in ECD centres employed role-play more frequently than any other generic method of teaching in one of the ECD centres which was attached to a Core PTC in Eastern Uganda.

Overall, interview sessions with participants about the extent to which tutors exhibited pedagogical standards during ECE curriculum implementation led to various responses. Majority of the Principals viewed that tutors of ECE managed to exhibit pedagogical standards in areas of instructional materials development, display, clear printing/handwriting, positive feedback to their learners and positive tutor-learner relationship. The Principals went ahead to view that if ECE curriculum implementation was to measure to the standards of the 21<sup>st</sup>. century, then tutors ought to be well equipped with practical skills which would enable them to exhibit pedagogical standards in aspects such as designing joint productive activities for teacher trainees, facilitating language development for effective communication, contextualization, complex thinking by subjecting challenging tasks to teacher trainees and interactive/collaborative teaching.

On the aspect of tutors' exhibition of pedagogical standards, the researcher prompted the Head of ECE Department at Kyambogo University. Through probing by the researcher, the Head of Department was able to identify competences which included management of big/large classes, teaching learners with special needs, integrating content with ICT skills, aligning content with the 21<sup>st</sup>. century skills and integrating theory with practical learning. The commissioner for ECE in the MoES was able

to identify competences required of a tutor of ECE as Creativity, Action Research, Reflective Practice, Problem-solving, positive reinforcement and Pedagogical Leadership. In summary, all participants shared views which were almost similar on the aspect of tutors' exhibition of pedagogical standards in terms of the required competences to implement the ECE Curriculum in the PTCs under study.

#### 4.4 Discussion of Results

The extent to which tutors exhibit pedagogical standards required in the implementation of the ECE Curriculum was established using qualitative results. The study established that Lecture, demonstration and role play were the most common methods employed by tutors during the teaching of ECE as a subject in PTCs. Among the most frequently shared views, Principals and Deputy Principals observed that; material development skills, display skills, handwriting/ printing skills, drawing skills, reading skills, effective listening skills, speaking skills and the ability to employ learner-centred methods of teaching which make the instructional process 'fun' were crucial in the package a tutor of ECE ought to possess. To the researcher, the highlighted aspects are in total agreement to the views which form the heartbeat of Vygotsky's socio-cultural learning theory which was adopted to underpin this study.

In addition, by standard, all the 68 interview sessions which were conducted all together, indicated the most frequently reported challenges as inadequate continuous professional development (CPD) courses in form of workshops, seminars, conferences; inadequate support supervision to tutors, inadequate resources such as relevant references, time and attitudinal issues as well as lack of training to match the curriculum as presented in chapter four. Majority of the Principals and Deputy Principals identified lack of training to match the current Revised ECE syllabus of 2012 as the most frequently reported challenge in their colleges and the least reported challenge was inadequate support supervision to tutors. In terms of other ECE support reading materials, the modules containing content covered in the students' first year of study were available in the ratio of 4:1 but there was no single module of ECE covering students' work in their second year of study. To the researcher, the ongoing challenges associated with the implementation of the ECE curriculum in the PTCs under study stem from the fact that the procedure and steps highlighted in the Organisation Development (OD) theory which was adopted to guide this study seem not to have been put into consideration by those who initiated the curriculum change in question.

In terms of standard, it was discovered that the content of ECE in the available curriculum documents was rich, relevant, well graded, clear and suitable but required tutor /student's competence to integrate it with real life situations and students' practical experiences which could mainly be brought out through meaningful pedagogical means. Those

results were in line with other research findings of different researchers. Similarly, Merrill & Melanire (2013) also established that colleges find it challenging to implement a given change by the tutors and students, for example, in the current study, majority of the tutors reported that they did not have ECD centres attached to their colleges to work as laboratories so as to facilitate them in handling activities stipulated in the ECD Learning Framework to provide for the teacher trainees' practicum. To the researcher, it is only the sense of creativity which may be a factor as highlighted in the Vygotsky's socio-cultural learning theory which was adopted to underpin this study. However, in support, ECD centres are crucial in the practical training of teacher trainees.

In terms of pedagogical standards, majority of the participants (College Administrators) reported on their tutors' being well grounded in hands-on-learning by use of participatory methodologies, knowledge of thematic curriculum implementation (Primary school curriculum of P.1 to P.3), continuous assessment implementation, implementation of life skills/values and functional literacy for life-long learning as in (MoES, 2012). On the contrary however, the visits made by the researcher to directly observe tutors' lessons, indicated that majority, around three quarters of those whose lessons were observed, expressed inability in the use of local language as medium of instruction and exhibited pedagogical gaps in the application of learner-centred methodologies. To the researcher, the controversy between what was reported and the reality could be as a result of Administrators endeavouring to defend their positions as immediate supervisors to the tutors. Additionally, it is also possible that the Administrators fell short of the ideal situation. In brief, it is possible that controversies may also be as a result of failure to observe the systematic steps and procedures highlighted in the OD theory and also inability to align their pedagogical practices to the principles of Vygotsky's socio-cultural learning theory which were used to guide this study.

#### 5. Conclusions and Recommendations

Concerning the extent to which tutors exhibit pedagogical standards in implementing ECE curriculum, lecture, demonstration and role play were the most common methods employed by tutors during the teaching of ECE as a subject in PTCs. Among the most frequently shared views, Principals and Deputy Principals observed that; material development skills, display skills, handwriting/ printing skills, drawing skills, reading skills, effective listening skills, speaking skills and the ability to employ learner-centred methods of teaching which make the instructional process interesting and promote collaborative learning were crucial in the package a tutor of ECE ought to possess. In conclusion, majority of the ECE tutors did not employ methods which could stimulate the highlighted aspects. Through continuous interactions with the respondents/participants and the researcher, it was

discovered that Kyambogo University in conjunction with MoES conducted only a two-day training workshop on the revised 2012 ECE Curriculum to the Tutors, a duration which was actually inadequate. In conclusion, tutors were not able to measure to the required pedagogical standards in line with, Hands-on-learning' to the expectations of Kyambogo University and MoES.

In the revised ECE Curriculum of Kyu, 2012, it is clearly indicated that tutors of ECE are expected to be well grounded in pedagogy that promotes 'Hands-on-learning'. However, by the fact that the findings of this study revealed a smaller extent of tutors' exhibition of pedagogical standards than what was required/expected of them in the implementation of the ECE Curriculum, equipping them with desirable qualities and skills would be the way to go in the direction of improving their role modeling practices to their teacher trainees. Among the desirable qualities and skills required of tutors of ECE, is effective communication, creative thinking, manipulative skills, critical thinking, problem-solving, commitment, resilience at work, organisational skills and pedagogical leadership skills.

The arrangement to improve the standards of tutors in pedagogy may not wait for MoES but could as well be an approach of down-up initiative to begin with individual PTCs. It is therefore, hereby recommended that Demonstration schools and Model ECD centres should be a core requirement to all PTCs across the country in order to boost practicum skills of both tutors and teacher trainees through continuous demonstration lessons, modeling lessons, micro-teaching lessons and continuous child study.

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