

# Techniques Used by Teachers in Teaching Literacy and Numeracy in Selected Primary Schools in Kongwa District, Tanzania

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## Abstract

The study investigated techniques used by teachers in the teaching of literacy and numeracy in selected Primary Schools in Kongwa District. It examined the factors that contribute to pupils' inadequate literacy and numeracy skills. A cross-sectional survey research design, with a sample size (N=95) was used. Simple Random Sampling and Census Inquiry techniques were adopted. Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS and the Qualitative data were analyzed using the verbatim method. The study findings suggested that there were literacy and numeracy issues in these particular Primary Schools since most of the Teachers lacked the skills needed to impart these abilities the majority of the Teachers never used the brainstorming technique, and others never used cooperative learning to teach literacy and numeracy. Likewise, few of these teachers' use playing games as a technique for teaching literacy and numeracy. The study concluded that the majority of the teachers never used brainstorming, cooperative learning, and the use of play games as techniques to deliver lessons to learners. The study recommends retraining Teachers, employing teachers who have qualifications and cooperative teaching.

**Keywords:** teaching, quality teaching, literacy and numeracy

## 1. Introduction

According to the Northern Ireland Audit Office (2013), literacy and numeracy are two fundamental skills for success in life and the modern global economy. Every child has to be literate and numerate because it is essential to their participation in school, their capacity to develop to their full potential, and their ability to contribute fully to society. The development of more complex abilities is supported by literacy and numeracy (DET, 2017). Tanzania has significantly increased the number of children registered in primary school, although the majority of children do not achieve competency in the early grades; for instance, just one in five (1/5) students in Grade 3 can read at the Grade 2 level (Uwezo, 2011). Sifuna (2007) asserts that since Tanzania gained political independence from the British in the 1960s, increasing access to basic education has been a priority for several stakeholders. The number of pupils enrolling in grade one (1) grew after the Universal Primary Education (henceforth UPE) policy was implemented in the 1970s. This was greatly facilitated by the nation's villagization program, which required the establishment of at least one elementary school in each village (for rural areas) and street (for urban areas) (Ndiguye & Rao, 2018). The United Republic of Tanzania's government began creating various educational methods known as Education Sector Development Plans (ESDP) for five years in 1997. These plans aimed to give all people the chance to learn fundamental literacy and numeracy skills to improve their contributions to the society they live (MoEVT, 2017). Alcock (2000) asserts that inadequate literacy and numeracy skills have affected Tanzania's primary school system and continue to do so. This implies that most schools especially government schools experience this problem. According to Mrutu, Ponera, and Nkumbi (2005)

mind map, simulation, role-play, games and sound can easily help pupils to understand literacy and numeracy. In addition to that Hussain, (2020) said that teaching literacy and numeracy by using different techniques is considered to be very effective in lesson delivery and it also directly invites learners to participate in the learning process. About, Anderson et al, (2001) argued that teaching by using technique enables learners to learn by experience. According to Anderson & Krathwohl, (2001); Bloom, Engelhart, Furst, Hill & Krathwohl, (1956); Bonwell & Eison, (1991); and Hackathorn et al., (2010) supported the above that Children who learn by experience are more likely to employ higher-order thinking abilities like analysis, synthesis, and assessment, according to cognitive theory. Not only that but they are also more adept at understanding concepts in context, manipulating phenomena for their purposes, thinking conceptually and creatively about the subject matter, and better able to recall, retain, and memorize it (Donovan, Bransford, & Pellegrino, 1999; Driscoll, 2002; Rubin & Hebert, 1998; Serva & Fuller, 2004). Additionally, according to Pluck and Johnson (2011), these techniques help students to have “wow” moments. This increases the students’ curiosity and capacity for reasoning.

Also, these findings concur with Tsai (2017) argued that brainstorming is considered to trigger innovation among learners which promotes creativity. In line with that Seechalio (2017) stated that learners need the potential of developing their critical thinking and problem-solving skills by brainstorming. Similarly, Hoque (2016) declared that techniques drawn from several methods/approaches are frequently used by students to learn modern languages in class. Depending on the unique needs of their students, teachers choose techniques from a range of approaches. A teacher should be able to identify the instructional techniques which will best support a given learning objective.

#### 4.2 Conclusions

The study concludes that the majority of the teachers never used brainstorming, cooperative learning, and the use of play games as techniques to deliver lessons to learners since the findings indicate that most teachers did not use games and brainstorming to teach literacy and numeracy due to the lack of skills to teach by using the above techniques. The use of teaching techniques allows the teachers to be confident in the class to accomplish their objectives. Each teacher can choose the technique that is best for him or her and their students. The language, ideas, culture, and subject matter of the teacher should all be reflected in these teaching techniques. There ought to be a connection between thoughts and actions to fulfil learning objectives. It also concluded that the teachers do not use strategies like using remedial teaching and talking classes. Taking class aids learning in a variety of ways, teaching materials are very important in the communicative approach. They may lighten the classroom, offer more diversity and excitement to language instruction, and encourage students to speak the language in addition to reading and writing it by presenting situations that illuminate the meaning of the words used.

Furthermore, it is concluded that there is limited infrastructure which contributes to overcrowding of classes. The learning environment is influenced by the school’s buildings, furniture, and equipment. This is also underscored by the mixing of learners who have special needs and those without special needs and teachers lack the techniques on how to use the limited space. Not only that but also there is a limited number of qualified teachers to handle both the special needs learners and the normal learners, and no developed pedagogies to ensure the teaching of literacy and numeracy.

#### 4.3 Recommendations

The study recommends that there be retraining of teachers and seminars so that teachers can be able to use brainstorming, and cooperative learning and also use games as techniques to deliver lessons to learners since the findings indicate that most teachers did not use games and brainstorming to teach literacy and numeracy due to the lack of skills to teach using the above techniques. It is encouraged to use ward meetings to address and resolve issues that prevent the development of literacy skills in a particular ward. Teachers themselves should meet and share ideas on how to use techniques of teaching. Schools should encourage teachers to use play games in their classes to ensure that students are involved in class. Specifically, the Government/ school Managers should recruit teachers who are creative in games for students also who have the skills to use teaching techniques and different approaches to teaching. School management should encourage teachers to use talking classes to encourage learners to read and write in class. Specifically, the focus should be on the teaching of literacy and numeracy.

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