

Associateship
Certificate in
Education
series

Nursery Education

Published for

Institute of Education University of Ibadan

UNIT FIVE

The Humanistic Position and Nursery Education

5.1 Introduction

The humanists have respect for the human being as a self-determining, free and unique individual with worth and dignity. They are usually opposed to any procedure that de-humanizes or demoralizes the individual. Humanists furthermore, believe that the affective factor is an invaluable component of human behaviour. Since educators are also concerned with the child's personality, and since pupils are sometimes assessed in terms of their attitude, and behaviour in class, apart from the academic achievement, affective development of the child becomes important. Affective development may be encouraged through the establishment of an educational atmosphere where valuing is encouraged. This can be done, by providing a humanistic classroom situation where the teacher attempts to achieve a climate of personal trust and a climate in which affective growth of the child is fostered in unity with cognitive development. Noble humanists include Erasmus, Rogers, Fromm and Maslow.

Thoughts and expressions have been observed in a reciprocal relationship, and the more the pre-school child is afforded the opportunity to express his thoughts and feelings, the more he actually develops and becomes aware of his own perspective.

5.2. Possible applications of the Humanistic ideas in Teaching the Pre-school child

The humanistic teacher is expected to balance the philosophical viewpoint of humanism with the aims and objectives of humanistic education and psychology.

If teaching and learning may be conceived basically as an interpersonal relationship, then the qualities or the attributes of the teacher-pupil relationship which lead to personal growth will also serve to facilitate learning.

5.2.1. *Realness*: If human growth and adjustment consists of increasing self-awareness, this may only be possible when reality,

including the real needs and feeling of the pre-school child is not misrepresented. That is, if the pre-school teacher's relationship is a facade which hides both the teacher's, and the child's real feelings, then the relationship may not facilitate the development of the "real self" and other awareness.

5.2.2. *Being open and honest:* The pre-school teacher by being open and honest with the child, can help the child become more open and honest about his or her thoughts and feelings during cooperative activities and other activities the children perform. This will encourage positive moral development in the children.

5.2.3. *Acceptance and Trust: (Prizing the Learner):* This is the basic respect for the integrity of the child as a separate person, having worth in his own right. When the pre-school teacher respects the integrity of the child, he is able to accept the child's thoughts and feelings.

5.2.4. *Empathic understanding of the pupil:* Empathic understanding may be described as an attitude of attempting to see the child's point of view. However superficial or immature the child's view or concern may seem at times from the "adult's view", they are real enough to the child and should be respected. This is not to say that any misconceived idea should not be corrected while teaching.

5.2.5. *Active Listening:* This is the ability to feed-back the feeling or statement expressed so that the speaker knows that he has been understood. The pre-school teacher through his active listening to what the child expresses, his questions and other concerns, respects the worth and dignity of the child.

The humanistic pre-school teacher should function more than an "importer" of informations, he should be a facilitator of learning. He needs to use the feed-back from the children and by so doing, he can vary his approach to fit the situation and the needs of the children. When the nursery teacher as a facilitator creates to a modest degree, a learning environment, incorporating the humanistic ideas of realness, openness, acceptance and active listening he is undoubtedly contributing to the positive affective development of the child.