

**EFFECT OF TEACHERS' FEEDBACK ON PRESCHOOL CHILDREN'S
CLASSROOM PARTICIPATION IN EMBU WEST DIVISION**

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DECLARATION

This project report is my original work and has not been submitted for an award in any other university.

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This project report has been submitted for examination with my approval as the university supervisor.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ZPD – Zone of proximal development

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ABSTRACT

The Kenyan government has embarked on achieving middle income status as stipulated in the vision 2030's blue print by working on five key sectors of the economy namely: Agriculture, ICT, Manufacturing/Industry, Education and Finance. Therefore, provision of education to children in preschools will help Kenya become an industrialized nation by 2030. Teachers' feedback enhances children's participation in the classroom. The purpose of this study was to establish the influence of teachers' feedback on preschool children's classroom participation in Embu West Division, Embu County. The objectives of the study were to establish how methods of teachers' feedback influence preschool children's participation in class, how timeliness of teachers' feedback affects preschool children's participation in class, how the content of teachers' feedback influences preschool children's participation in class and the effect of preschool children's attitude towards teachers' feedback on their participation in class. The study used a quasi experimental design and the theoretical framework of this study was Vygotsky's theory of learning. The target population of the study was 530 children and teachers and a sample of 159 was picked. This sample was picked using stratified sampling and purposeful sampling. Open ended questionnaire, interview schedule, observation schedule and documentary analysis were used to collect data and ten (10) respondents were used for Pilot testing before the commencement of the study and errors in the data collection instruments corrected. Data analysis was done using Statistical Package for Social Sciences, descriptive statistics computed and data presented using tables. The study shows that verbal method of feedback is the mostly used feedback method used by teachers in preschools as indicated by both preschool teachers and children while written feedback is used in preschools on examinations or after examinations on report books. The content of teachers' feedback influence preschool children's participation in class and preschool teachers use words like excellent, very good, good or good attempt as the content of feedback on task accomplishment. Immediate feedback promotes proactive interference once participants commit themselves to an incorrect response and it is mostly used during class work at questions and answer sessions, oral presentation, peer tutoring and discussion. If a child is disorderly in the work he or she warrants oral criticism which should be placed side by side with comments of encouragement. The study findings will be useful to future scholars as it will add to the existing body of knowledge and this will improve provision of education in preschools and hence achieve the vision 2030.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Teachers' feedback has been defined as the information about the gap between the actual level and the reference level of a system parameter which is used to alter the gap in some way; this is according to Saddler, 1989. In this definition, in the context of assessment for learning, the 'system parameter' is the intended learning outcomes from a course, topic or most often a particular assessment task. The actual level is each child's achievement in response to the assessment task, while the reference level is the agreed standard of performance expected for successful completion of the task. In a classroom context, feedback is information provided to pupils that is used by them to alter the gap between their current performance and the ideal performance. If comments are not or cannot be used by pupils to alter the gap, then those comments do not constitute feedback. As Walker (2009) notes, a necessary precondition for a child to act on a gap is that he/she is given a comment that enables him / her to do so: the comments must be usable by the child. Hattie (2007) defines teachers' feedback as information provided by an agent, for example a teacher, peer, book, parent, self or experience regarding aspects of one's performance or understanding.

Classroom participation is an instructional strategy which is easy to use, straight forward, expected and often quite successful at accomplishing a number of learning goals (Hattie, 2009). Classroom participation adds interest to learning and controls what is happening in class. It is an important method of teaching as it provides pupils with an opportunity to receive input from fellow pupils, to apply

knowledge and enhance public speaking skills. From classroom participation, teachers can get a more accurate idea about the understanding level of pupils on a concept being taught. Meyers and Jones (1993), claim that active pupil participation in the classroom facilitates both acquisition of knowledge and development of problem solving skills. It is important that teachers make greater use of instructional techniques that require active pupil participation such as class discussion, cooperative learning, debates, role- playing, problem– based learning and others. Underlying this recommendation is the assumption that children who participate actively in the classroom will in fact learn the subject matter more effectively and in addition, will show greater development in areas such as oral communication, critical thinking and problem solving.

According to Stipek (1984) teachers' feedback has a major influence on classroom participation. The type of teachers' feedback can either be verbal, which includes praise or criticism. The other type of teachers' feedback is written comments on pupil's written work. Praise is a verbal compliment from the teacher which communicates a positive evaluation and goes beyond communicating right from wrong while criticism is negative teacher comments that express anger, disgust or frustration (Stipek, 1984). Praise as a form of feedback carries little information and therefore is unlikely to be effective. Wilkinson, (1981) says that praise bears little if any relationship to student's achievement. Praise also may be counter productive and has negative consequences on pupils 'self evaluation of their abilities (Meyer, (1979). As a pedagogical genre, teachers' written feedback is designed to carry a heavy informational load, offering commentary on the form and content of a text to encourage children to develop their learning.

The other aspect of teachers' feedback according to Nicol and Macfarlane, (2006) is timeliness. There has been research on timing of feedback, particularly contrasting immediate and delayed feedback. Nicol and Macfarlane (2006), say that high quality information about pupils' learning means that feedback is provided in a timely manner, that is close to the act of learning production and that it should focus not just on strength but also on weakness. Quality feedback includes a provision that the feedback is provided close to when the children are learning. They further add that timely detailed feedback provided as near in time as possible to the performance of the assessed behaviour is most effective in providing motivation and shaping behaviour and mental constructs. Anderson (2008) also made an input in this by saying that pupils need feedback near to the event of learning in order to learn effectively. Educators must therefore provide assessment opportunities for children with timely and relevant feedback built into the assessment or these assessments are limited in value.

The content of teachers' feedback is critically important and can be studied under four levels (Nadler, 1979). The first one is on feedback about a task. This looks into issues such as whether work is correct or incorrect. It may also include direction to acquire more on the task given. The other content feedback is about a process to complete a task. This content feedback is aimed at the processing of information or learning processes requiring understanding or completing the task. The third content feedback is on self-regulation which includes greater skills in self evaluation or confidence to engage further on a task. Such feedback can have major influence on self efficacy, self regulatory, proficiencies and self beliefs about pupils as learners, such that pupils are encouraged or informed how to better and more effortlessly

continue on the task. The fourth feedback content is personal in the sense that it is directed to the self, which is too often unrelated to the performance on the task.

The reaction of pupils towards their teachers' feedback is the most critical factor that influences the usefulness of the given feedback which should be taken to teacher consideration when responding to the classroom participation (Piper, 1989).Katayama, (2007), says that difference in learners' learning styles affect the learning environment by either supporting or inhibiting their intentional cognition and active engagement. This stems from the fact that learners are expected to be highly motivated in doing things that they prefer. As such, it is necessary to understand that learners have different preferences that is styles in the way they like to be corrected.Leki, [1991) also points out that an awareness of pupils learning styles will enable teachers to adopt appropriate techniques and methods that suit the pupils preferences.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

This study focused on teachers' feedback and its influence on classroom participation of preschool children. A frequently heard complaint among teachers as reported in the Daily National Monday 5th 2002, was that children all too often were extremely reluctant to speak up during classroom hours and were often unwilling to participate adequately and effectively during class time. The article went ahead to talk of how silence and fear seem to reign in classrooms. It was therefore difficult for teachers to ascertain whether children have understood or learnt anything when the overwhelming majority do not ask questions to seek clarification let alone respond immediately to questions posed by the teachers. It had been the case in Embu West Division that children do not participate in classroom activities. This had been

attributed to large class size which is known to hamper communication often, more lecturing occur which in turn meant fewer participatory opportunities for children (Weaver & Qi, 2005).

In Embu West Division, was a case of children not participating as teachers did not pay attention to them, make fun of them, put them down or were overly critical of them. The problem in Embu West Division as Breen, (2001) points out was not lack of overt participation in itself but it was when pupils wanted to participate overtly in class but do not feel comfortable or confident enough to do so. Here teachers showed a very short wait time and did not purposely wait for children to elaborate on the answers before making comments, this had been recorded in minutes during staff meetings. When teachers spoke quickly and did not allow for sufficient wait time, children perceived that their participation was unwanted. According to an article in the image magazine (2009)3rd edition by Quality Assurance Officer Embu County, there had been an evident lack of volunteers in classes to even read aloud questions or short passages and that had been particularly noticed in cases where the teacher addressed the class as a whole. It had been a concern in Embu West division that it featured in parents meetings as well as in staff meeting. Another informal source of evidence about the problem on classroom participation came from learners themselves who revealed that they were reluctant to participate for fear of making mistakes and being corrected. Therefore, the study was intended to examine the effect of teachers' feedback on classroom participation.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to establish the effect of teachers' feedback on preschool children's classroom participation.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The study was guided by the following objectives;

- i. To find out how the methods of teachers' feedback influence preschool children's participation in class.
- ii. Examine how the timeliness of teachers' feedback affects preschool children's participation in class.
- iii. To determine the influence of the content of teachers' feedback on preschool children's participation in class.
- iv. Establish the effect of preschool children's attitude towards teachers' feedback on their participation in class.

1.5 Research Questions

The following were the key research questions that were addressed in the study.

- i. What is the influence of types of teachers' feedback on preschool children's participation in class?
- ii. What is the influence of timeliness of teachers' feedback on preschool children's participation in class?
- iii. How does the content of teachers' feedback affect preschool children's participation in class?
- iv. How does the attitude of preschool children towards teachers' feedback influence their participation in class?

1.6 Significance of the Study

The study was of importance as it aimed to provide an in depth analysis of feedback usage in classrooms to promote classroom participation.

The findings were intended to increase awareness of positive strategies used in schools today and to contribute to that body of literature that examines factors in the classroom that may contribute to increased participation in class. The findings would enlighten teachers to improve practice by creating friendly and pupil centred learning environment in classrooms.

This study would reinforce the need for continuous assessment methods for teachers that incorporate assessment for classroom environment through teachers' use of positive strategies. Moreover, making teachers aware of their actions through analysing their own feedback data that may help reduce their propensity to rely on negative feedback. Thus greater awareness could lead to greater action. Finally, information obtained from this study was intended to shed some light on external influences other than teachers' feedback that may increase or promote classroom participation.

1.7 Limitations of the Study

The study focused on preschools in Embu West Division. The researcher used a quasi – experimental design and lack of classroom participation in the control group may not solely be attributed to lack of teachers' feedback. There could be other factors like lack of motivation, physical wellbeing of children and that of the teacher and bigger class sizes such that the teacher had no time to go through children's work and provide feedback. The study focused on the variables in the study, that is the methods of teachers' feedback, the timeliness of teachers' feedback, the content of teachers' feedback and the attitude of preschool children towards teachers' feedback. There could be other factors of teachers' feedback that may have been left unexplored

like sources of teachers' feedback, characteristics of teachers' feedback and frequency of teachers' feedback. All these may have had an impact on classroom participation.

1.8 Delimitations of the Study

The study was conducted in some randomly selected preschools within Embu West Division and focused on the teachers' feedback and preschool children participation in class.

1.9 Basic Assumptions

It was assumed that teachers from the selected schools gave feedback to children and that they valued it and knew its importance.

1.10 Definition of key terms

The key terms in this study were defined as follows;

Children:-A person between birth and full growth or below the legal age of majority.

Classroom Participation:-it is a feature of many course designs which can result in insightful comments and interesting connections being made by pupils and can foster a high level of energy and enthusiasm in the classroom learning environment.

Feedback: -it is information about how one is doing in his/her efforts to reach a goal.

Preschool:-It is an early childhood program in which children of between infancy and six years combine learning with play in a programme run by professionally trained adults.

Scaffolding: - it is a variety of instructional techniques used to move students progressively towards stronger understanding and, ultimately greater independence in the learning process.

Teacher: - A person whose occupation is to deliver useful information to others, especially children.

Zone of proximal development: - the distance between the actual development and the level of potential development of a child.

1.11 Organisation of the Study

The research study was organized into five chapters. Chapter one covered:- background of the problem, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research objectives, research questions/hypothesis, significance of the study, limitations of the study, delimitations of the study, basic assumptions, definition of key terms and the organization of the study. Chapter two included:- review of related literature which are classroom participation, methods of teachers' feedback, timeliness in teachers' feedback, content of teachers' feedback and attitude of preschool children towards teachers' feedback. The chapter had a section on theoretical and conceptual frameworks. Chapter three covered: research methodology which included research design, population, sampling procedure, data collection instruments, validity of research instruments, how to administer instruments, procedure of data collection and how to analyse data. Chapter four is on discussions and findings while chapter five is on summary of the study, conclusions and recommendation. Finally there is a section on references and appendices.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

The literature was thematically reviewed under the following subtitles: classroom participation, types of teachers' feedback, timeliness of teachers' feedback, content of teachers' feedback and the attitude of preschool children towards teachers' feedback.

2.2 Classroom Participation

According to Dancer and KamVounias, (2005), classroom participation refers to the number of unsolicited responses from the learner. This can come in many forms including questions and comments (Fassinger, 1995), and it can take a few seconds or an extended period of time (Cohen, 1991). Classroom participation can be seen as an active engagement process which can be sorted into five categories namely: preparation, contribution to discussions, group skills, communication skills and attendance. Lyons, (1989), Weaver and Qi (2005), perceive that there is a strong evidence for the importance of participating in class. They say that participation is a way to bring pupils actively into the educational process and to assist in enhancing teaching and bringing life to the classroom. Junn,(1994) adds that pupils are more motivated, learn better, become critical thinkers and have self-reported gains in character when they are prepared for class and participate in discussions. The more learners participate the less memorization they do and the more they engage in higher levels of thinking, including interpretations, analysis and synthesis, (Berdine, 1986). Dancer and KamVounias (2005) commented that pupils who participate show improvement in their communications skills, group interaction and functioning in a democratic society.

McCroskey, (2001) suggests that participation of pupils in the classroom could be increased by redesigning curriculum and different types of courses in a significant manner which may prove a milestone in engaging different groups of pupils with one another. Still on enhancing classroom participation, Kate, (2010) advises that the best learning environment and participation could be increased through demolishing factors like uncertainty of teachers' feedback and anxiety in the classroom. For effectiveness in participation, the teacher should ensure that everyone's contributions are audible. Also as a teacher, one should come up with activities that elicit participation like discussion based activities – role playing and jig saws. These ones encourage pupils to talk with one another and with the teacher. Hollander (2002) discusses the need to present participation as a collective responsibility of the class rather than just an individual responsibility. In order to facilitate a conversation where connections are made, pupils need to view their participation as a contribution to a shared experience. Asking a pupil to respond to a peer's response helps to facilitate a conversation positively, reinforcing such contributions builds a sense of collectivism.

2.3 Methods of Teachers' Feedback

According to Kulhavy (1997), feedback should provide information specifically relating to the task or process of learning that fills the gap between what is understood and what is aimed to be understood. Saddler (1989) says that feedback can fill the gaps through a number of ways like increased efforts, motivation or engagement.

According to Kepneric, (1991), teachers' feedback can be delivered in many methods.. Some kinds of classroom participation render themselves better to written feedback, for example reviewing and writing comments on pupil's written work.

Others need oral feedback, for example observing and commenting as pupils do number work as seatwork, while some classroom participation need demonstration like helping a child hold a pencil correctly. Talking with pupils is usually the best as Page (1990) puts it because you can have a conversation unlike the written form which is based on pupils reading ability. However, a teacher does not have the time to talk with every child about everything. For teachers to be able to communicate feedback message in the most appropriate way, they should use written feedback for comments that children need to be able to save and look over, use of oral feedback for children who don't read well and also if there is more information to convey than pupils would want to read. They should also use demonstration if pupils need to see how to do something or what something looks like (Reed, 1985).

Oral or verbal feedback can take the form of praise or criticism. Raimes (1983) argues that praising whatever a pupil does well improves his/her participation in class more than any kind or amount of correction of what he/she does badly. Researchers, Raimes (1983), Semke (1984), Asiri (1996), believe that pupils who receive praise feedback in their classroom participation develop a positive attitude towards participation in class and become receptive to suggestions and even seek advice on how to improve their participation in class. Hence teachers need to create a supportive classroom environment in which their pupils can feel confident about expressing their idea and feelings freely, (Hendrickson, 1987). Therefore teachers in responding to their pupils are advised to provide them with positive comments that motivate them and help them adapt positive attitude towards classroom participation. Verbal or oral feedback should be handled carefully by teachers as they potentially have significant effects on the development of pupils' perception of classroom participation at a very critical stage in their lives (Entwise, 1987).

Written teacher feedback which means providing pupils with information about a task has a higher effect compared to verbal praise or criticism, reward or punishment (Hattie 1988). He says that the most effective types of feedback provide cues or reinforcement to learners and relates to learning goals. Many scholars have called attention to the importance of written feedbacks. Ferris (1997) claims that written feedback although difficult and time consuming is arguably the teacher's most crucial task. Hyland (2003), further stresses the importance of written feedback when he says that a response is potentially one of the most influential texts in a classroom situation and the point at which the teachers' intervention is most obvious and perhaps most crucial. He goes further and says that not only does an individual's attention play an important part in motivating learners; it is also the point at which correction and explicit teaching are most likely to occur. A variety of techniques have been applied when providing written feedback to children. Written commentary where written comments are usually provided at the end or in the margins or both types may be used simultaneously (Hyland, 2003). End comments can serve as summative commentary bringing together the strengths and weaknesses of the child (Goldstein, 2004).

Written response has been emphasized as being more preferable to children (Harklau 2002). He says that children find written response easier to work with than peer or teachers' talk because the written feedback is reviewable while others are not. She also observes that opportunities for teacher- pupil interaction or peer talk are quite limited especially in larger classrooms. She found that there was very little time for oral response allotted to individual child as the teachers did most of the talking. However, she found that the written input was more varied. Some researchers have found that marginal comments are most effective as they are written next to the place

where revision is needed and should leave no doubt what they refer to. Rubrics, according to Hyland (2003) are a form of commentary usually used on the final product as an assessment. Correction codes are kind of written feedback which is in-text and form based type of response that has been called minimal marking (Hyland 2003). These correction codes make use of symbols intended to locate and give the type of error without providing the correct answer, thus intended to stimulate the child to find and identify the mistakes. The only drawback is that, children may find the codes confusing. Teacher- child conferencing is necessary where the teacher provides guidance on how to interpret written feedback.

Though seen as effective, different researchers, for example, Knoblauch and Brannon (1981), Sommers (1982), Ziv (1984) and Zanael (1985), have questioned the efficacy of this type of feedback. Other researchers like Fathman and Whalley (1996), Kepneric (1991) have examined the types of teachers' feedback like form and content that teachers perceive as being more effective. Hillocks (1982), observed that focused written comments applied with assignment and revision produce a significant quality gain. However other research findings (Cohen, 1987) indicate that some pupils do not read their teachers' feedback when their papers are given back to them. Teachers' written feedback can be in form of direct correction, where a teacher provides the pupil with the correct form of his or her errors. This one shows the pupil what is wrong and how it should be written but leaves no work for them to do. Semke, (1984), argues that direct correction is the least effective method of providing feedback on pupils' errors. Byrne (1988) observes that use of codes, symbols and stars is effective than directly correcting errors. Corder (1981) maintains that making a learner try to discover the right form could be often instructive to both learner and teacher. This claim has been supported by Lalande's (1982) study which found that

pupils who used codes and symbols in revising their work made significant greater gains in their participation in class.

2.4 Timeliness of Teachers' Feedback

According to Hattie and Timpeley (1998), teacher feedback's timing is an important variable. They argue that teachers' feedback is best provided to learners during and not after the learning process. The longer the time gap between the complete of the work and its feedback, the less effective the feedback becomes. Ideally, feedback should be provided within minutes after the completion of a task, for example immediately after a pupil asks or answers a question. Hattie and Timpeley (1998) suggest that the optimal timing of feedback might vary based on the feedback content. They argue that while simple error correction may be most effective if provided immediately, for feedback relating to processes, delaying the feedback allows pupils time to attempt the task without interruption. Shute (2008) identified that, while high achieving learners may benefit from delayed feedback, low achieving learners may need more immediate feedback. Clariana(2000) found that the effectiveness of delayed compared with immediate feedback varies as a function of the difficulty of items in their test of information taught in a series of lessons. This author suggested that difficult items are more likely to involve greater degrees of processing about the task and delayed feedback provides the opportunity to do this, whereas easy items do not require this processing and so delay is both unnecessary and undesirable. According to Brackbill, (1962), delayed feedback across brief intervals promotes the retention of meaningful material. Proponents of delayed feedback generally adhere to the interference perseveration hypothesis proposed by Kulhavy and Anderson (1972). Although the delayed retention effect has not been

supported in several studies, delayed feedback has typically been effective as immediate effect. Proponents of immediate feedback theorize that the earlier corrective information is provided, the more likely it is that efficient retention will result (Phye and Andre, 1989). On the other hand, Sassenruth (1972) contends that immediate feedback promotes proactive interference once participants commit themselves to an incorrect response.

2.5 Content of Teachers' Feedback

According to Nadler (1979) task content feedback includes information about how well a task is being accomplished or performed, such as distinguishing correct from incorrect answers, acquiring more or different information and building more surfaces knowledge. This content feedback can relate to correctness, neatness, behaviour or some other criterion related to task accomplishment. Airasian, (1997), add that content feedback about a task is more powerful when it is about faulty interpretation and not lack of information. If a pupil lacks necessary knowledge, further instruction is more powerful than feedback information. The problem of feedback about task is that it does not generalize to other tasks. Thompson (1998) demonstrated that improvement was specific to the question for which feedback was provided and was not used to answer other questions. He also warns that too much of task feedback within a task may even detract from performance and encourage pupils to focus on the immediate goals and not the strategies to attain the goal. Winnie and Butler (1994) argued that the benefits of task feedback depends heavily on learners being attentive to the varying importance of the feedback information during study of the task, having accurate memories of those features when outcome feedback is provided and being sufficiently strategic to generate effective internal feedback about

predictive validities. The effectiveness of tasks feedback depends very much on pupils' commitment and involvement in the task and on their notion about whether it relates to their performance (Nadler, 1979).

Content of teachers' feedback about the process is more specific to the process underlying tasks relating and extending tasks (Marton1993).He goes further to say that a surface understanding of learning involves acquisition, storing, reproduction and use of knowledge and thus relates more to feedback content about a task. A deep understanding of learning involves the construction of meaning and relates more to the relationship, cognitive process and transference to other more difficult untried tasks (Marton 1993). Content feedback about a process relates to learners' strategies for error detection thus providing oneself with feedback. Such errors may indicate failure and a need to re-strategize, to choose different strategies to be more effective in applying strategies and to seek help. Whether pupils engage in error correction strategies, following error detection depends on their motivation to continue to pursue the goal or to reduce the gap between the current knowledge and the goal. Feedback information about the process can act as a cueing mechanism and lead to more effective information search and use of task strategies.

The other content feedback is on self regulation. It involves interplay between commitment control and confidence. It addresses the way children monitor, direct and regulate action toward the learning goal. It implies autonomy, self control, self direction and self disciplines, this is according to Zimmerman (2000). Such regulations involve self generated thoughts, feelings and actions that are planned and cyclically adapted to the attainment of personal goals (Zimmerman, 2000) and can lead to seeking, accepting and accommodating feedback information. Effective learners create internal feedback and cognitive routines while they are engaged in

academic tasks. Butler and Winnie (1995) argued that the less effective learners have minimal self regulation strategies and they depend much more on external factors (such as the teacher or the task) for feedback. They rarely seek or incorporate feedback in a way that will enhance their future learning. They also argue that students willingness to invest efforts in seeking and dealing with feedback information relates to the transaction cost involved at the self regulatory level. The transaction cost includes the effort necessary for feedback search, the evaluative effects of others on the individual for seeking feedback and the implications of inferential errors resulting from inaccuracy, interpreting feedback. The degree of confidence that children have in the correctness of responses can affect receptivity to and seeking of feedback, (Kulhavy and Stock, (1989). Feelings of self efficacy are important mediators in feedback situations. From their major review, Kluger and Denisi (1996) concluded that feedback is effective to the degree to which it directs information to enhanced self regulation, such that attention is directed back to the task and cause children to invest more effort or commitment to the task.

Content feedback about self as person is content feedback that may not be effective but it is often present in class situation, this is according to Bond, Smith Baker and Hattie, (2000). Personal feedback such as “Good girl” or “Great effort” typically expresses positive (and sometimes negative) evaluations and affects children this is according to Brophy, (1981). It usually contains little task related information and is rarely converted into more engagement, classroom participation, and commitment to the learning goals or understanding about the tasks.

2.6 Attitude of Preschool Children Towards Teachers' Feedback

It is important to understand children's preferences in the teaching and learning process. This is because according to Katayama (2007), differences in learners' learning styles affect the learning environment by either supporting or inhibiting their intentional cognition and active engagement. This stems from the fact that learners are expected to be highly motivated in doing things they prefer. As such, it is necessary to understand that learners have different preferences, that is, styles in the way they like to be corrected. Teaching methods also vary. Some instructors tend to correct all the errors while some tend to be tolerant and still others do not correct at all, (Riazi and Riasti, 2007). Leki (1991) also points out that an awareness of children's learning styles will enable teachers to adapt appropriate techniques and methods that suit the children preferences. Ferris (2003) gives an input in this by saying that it is crucial to find ways through which pupils prefer to be corrected, hoping that such information can help teachers. Children think that positive teachers' feedback given makes them feel good about themselves. Diab (2005) adds that pupils are usually eager to receive teachers' feedback on their participation in class and they believe that they benefit from them. Some learners may disregard feedback given to their classroom participation as they view the teacher as an evaluator rather than a genuinely interested instructor (Ziv 1984). Such pupils may feel hostility towards their teachers as they want to maintain authority over their own classroom participation, this is according to Leki (1990). Those pupils who are not favoured by their teachers for their participation ability may develop defences to protect their self-esteem and pupils with poor self-perception as learners and with poor proficiency in the classroom participation may find feedback less useful than other pupils (Cohen, 1987).

Ferris (1997) has argued that children who do not study based on teachers' feedback might not be lazy but, instead, might be thinking independently and creatively. This may be related to their proficiency in participating in discussions, peer tutoring or in role play among other classroom activities. Proficient pupils tend to take more responsibility for their work. On the other hand, Hyland (1998) found that the less proficient pupils lose self-confidence and were unwilling to revise on their own initiative, preferring to rely on teacher's feedback. Straub (1997) also found out that pupils preferred and found most useful comments framed in moderate modes, that is, comments that provided direction, did not insist on a certain path for revision or participation in class, and came across to pupils as helpful. Pupils also appreciated feedback that was specific and elaborate. Other studies have found that pupils appreciate feedback which includes praise (Reed and Burton, 1985). As Ferris (1995) rightly noted; teachers should not abandon constructive criticism but should place it side by side with comments of encouragement. Cardelle and Corno (1981) also concluded from their study that giving a combination of praise and criticism brings the biggest gains. Ferris (1995) noted that children value positive comments and remember many specific examples while expressing some bitterness when they feel they have not received any praise. Another aspect of preference to feedback is whether children prefer to be praised quietly and individually or loudly in front of their peers. Others may not even want to be praised at all, whether publicly or individually. Burnet (2001) postulated that some children find public praise uncomfortable or even punishing particularly if peers use what teachers say to belittle or bully them outside of class time. Finally despite their negative reaction to criticism as feedback, it sometimes motivates children to participate in class.

2.7 Theoretical Framework

It is argued that one of the ways to improve classroom participation in children is to develop teachers' awareness and understanding of the importance of quality of classroom interaction in developing talk and learning. It is suggested that concepts of Vygotsky's zone of proximal development (ZPD) and scaffolding can provide a useful framework which will equip teachers with the necessary strategies and skills in appropriate ways at different ages and stages of learning. Vygotsky's theory of learning as socially co-constructed between collaborating partners within a cultural context gives a fundamental role to interaction in the cognitive and language development of children and this provides a framework to describe progress, learning and interpretation of teachers' feedback. Vygotsky's social constructivism theory is described in details in a wide range of child development and educational literature. For Vygotsky's, the child develops cognition and language which he or she uses in classroom participation as a result of social interaction with more knowledgeable others in activities which have specific goals. As a result of the child's participation and the interactive, verbal give –and –take with a more skilled or knowledgeable person in the undertaking of everyday problem-solving and tasks, external socially-mediated dialogue is gradually internalized and becomes an inner, personalized resource for the child's own thinking. At first the teacher has all the language cognition and information necessary to be able to perform a task and therefore he or she guides the child through relevant behaviour and providing feedback until the child is able to perform the task independently and successfully. Through modelling behaviour which is part of teachers' feedback, language and familiarizing the child with the process and procedures involved, the teacher leads the child to being able to act competently and confidently on his own. The area in which the child can perform

an action or task provided that a more skilled or knowledgeable person is available to help and provide feedback; Vygotsky termed it as the zone of proximal development (ZPD). This he defined as the distance between the actual developments levels as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers this is according to Vygotsky's (1978). In an everyday classroom context, this might be paraphrased simply as the gap between a child being able to do a task easily without any help or support at all and a task which is simply out of reach for the child at the moment and cannot be attempted without guidance of which teachers' feedback is one of them. Also help from someone who is more knowledgeable or skilled, in this case the teacher.

In this way, the ZPD provide a valuable conceptual framework in an educational context for situating the level of challenge in classroom activities and tasks that may be appropriate for children at any one time. These are tasks which will challenge, stretch and extend learning through classroom participation that is achievable and which will allow for success. The ZPD contrasts with the area of self-regulated action, says Van Lier (1996) where the child can carry out tasks competently and independently. In interaction in the ZPD, the teacher provides guidance through linking the task to previous knowledge and experience, providing feedback and enabling the child to participate in carrying out the activity in a meaningful way. Together the teacher and the child create states of intersubjectivity where participants are jointly focused on the activity and its goals and they draw each other's attention in a common direction as per Van Lier (1996).Scaffolding is the metaphorical concept used to describe the interactive verbal support provided by teachers to guide a child through the ZPD and enable them to carry out a task that

they would be able to do without help. As the metaphor implies, scaffolding is temporally and can be put in places, strengthened, taken down piece by piece or taken away completely, as the child develops knowledge and skills, is increasingly able to act competently and independently.

2.8 Conceptual Framework

The indicators for the different variables are presented in the figure 1

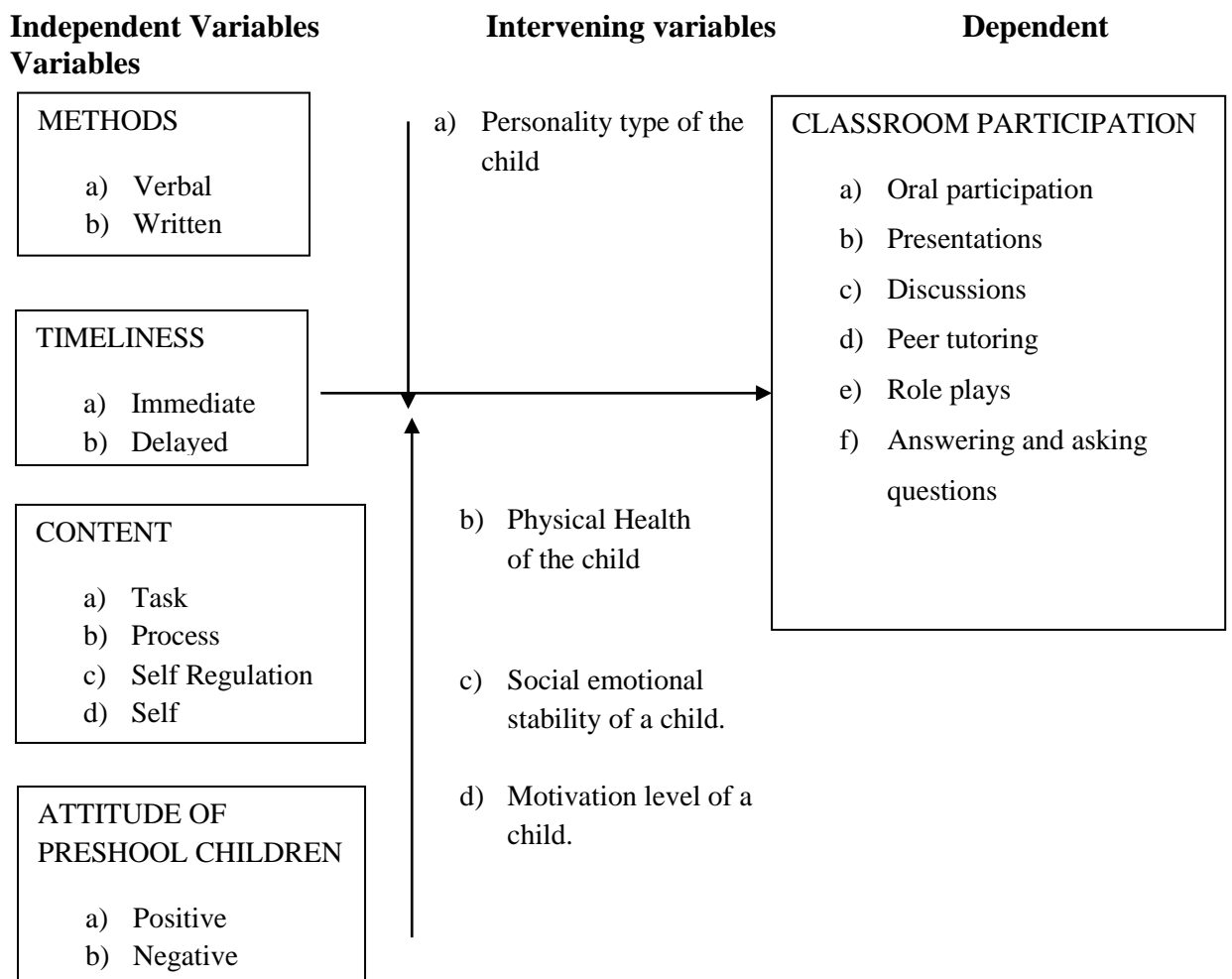


Figure 1
Conceptual Framework on Teachers' on Preschool Children's Classroom

Participation

In figure 1 the independent variable is teachers' feedback and the dependent variable is preschool children's classroom participation. Under the independent variable, there are sub-variables which influence classroom participation. Methods of teachers' feedback is one of the sub-variables and has indicators such as verbal teachers' feedback and written teachers' feedback. Another sub variable is the timeliness of teachers' feedback, and here the researcher will look at immediate and delayed feedback. There is also the content of teachers' feedback where the researcher will focus on content about a task, process, self regulation and self. Finally there is attitude of preschool children towards teachers' feedback. The attitude can either be positive or negative. These variables have an influence on classroom participation which is the dependent variable. However, we have the intervening variables that also affect classroom participation. Such variables include the personality type of the child, physical health of the child and the social emotional background of the child.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter discussed the research methodology that was used in the study. It detailed research design, population of the study, sampling procedure and sample size, instruments of validity and reliability procedure for data collection and data analysis.

3.2 Research Design

The researcher used pretest-post test quasi experimental design. The researcher observed the sample of teachers before and after the group was trained and noted the difference in the way teachers used feedback on children. During training the teachers were subjected to teachers' feedback where teachers were trained on the importance and how to use teachers' feedback. Here teachers were exposed to different methods of teachers' feedback, timeliness of teachers' feedback and content of teachers' feedback through a training module. Then participation of pupils in class was assessed through an assessment rubric to ascertain whether teachers' feedback was important for children's participation in class.

3.3 Target Population

Embu West Division has twelve preschools, seven of which are private and five are public. The population comprised of the preschool children and their teachers. The preschool teachers assisted in the study in determining how the methods of teachers' feedback affects classroom participation. They also helped in determining how the timeliness of teachers' feedback influenced classroom participation. The teachers also assisted in showing how the content of teachers' feedback dclassroom

participation. The preschool children assisted in the study by determining how their attitude towards teachers' feedback affected classroom participation as well as how the methods of teachers' feedback influenced participation in the classroom.

3.4 Sampling Procedure and Sample Size

Sampling is the procedure of identifying those to take part in the research. A sample is a small group of research participants from whom data is to be obtained. Mugenda and Mugenda (1999) recommend that where the target population is so small, selecting a sample would be meaningless, the whole population should be studied. In this study, the research worked with five public and seven private schools found in Embu West Division. The researcher then used stratified random sampling so as to come up with two strata, that is, public and private. She then random sampled them in order to determine which schools would be used before and which ones would be used after intervention. Since each school had two preschool classes, that is baby and upper, the upper classes were purposively selected as the children could communicate with ease in these classes. This translated to having a sample of twelve teachers who teach these classes. To get the sample for children the researcher used 30% of the class's population. On average private schools had classes of 40 and public 50 this gave a sample of 159.

Table 3.1 Sample Size

| Category | Pop'n Preschool (Class) | Percentage % | Size |
|-----------------|--------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| Public | 50x5 Sch = 250 | 30 | 75 |
| Private | 40x7 Sch =280 | 30 | 84 |
| | | | 159 pupils |

3.5 Instruments

The research instruments consisted of open-ended questionnaires, interview, observation and documentary analysis. The researcher also used a training module to teachers on how to use teachers' feedback as an intervention. The researcher took time and requested six teachers, two from public and four from private to meet in one of the schools after lessons and she trained them on different types of teachers' feedback, content and timeliness of teachers' feedback. The researcher emphasized the importance of teacher's feedback on classroom participation.

3.5.1 Open – Ended Questionnaires

This instrument was used to capture information on types of teachers' feedback timeliness and content of teachers' feedback from teachers. The questionnaires were distributed to teachers after training..

3.5.2 Interview

The researcher conducted interviews on pre-selected children during snack time where the researcher interacted with the children. The researcher sought to get information on attitude of preschool children towards teacher's feedback

3.5.3 Observation

The observation schedule was used for both teachers and children. The researcher observed both groups before any intervention was done. Later the researcher observed six teachers before training and at the same time took record of the children they were teaching. On different dates the researcher observed the six teachers after intervention and also took note of the children they were teaching. The observation schedule for teachers covered variables on types of teachers' feedback, timelines and content of teachers' feedback. The one for children covered the variables on attitude of preschool children to teachers' feedback

3.4.5 Documentary Analysis

The researcher used an assessment republic form to grade pupils' participation in class. The form had a column for grades and one for criteria. The grades ranged from 0-4 and the grading is done weekly then you get the average for scores. Under the column for criteria the teacher would assess pupils' participation in terms of activeness in discussion group skills peer tutoring, demonstration of good preparation and involvement in class activities. The researcher distributed four forms per teacher at the beginning of data collection as it took four weeks. The researcher also made use of children's class work books and their test papers to find out how written feedback was provided

3.6 Validity and Reliability

3.6.1 Validity

Validity is the degree to which a test measures what it purports to measure. It is concerned with the soundness and the effectiveness of the measuring instruments. The

test items in the questionnaire, observation schedule and interview schedule were presented to the project supervisors to access them for relevance of content. Her recommendations were in co-operated in the instruments. On content validity, a pilot study was carried out on two randomly selected preschools in Embu North district which were not part of the target population. From the results of the pilot study the researcher was able to do away with ambiguities in the questions.

3.6.2 Reliability

Reliability is the degree of consistency that the instrument demonstrates (Mugenda and Mugenda, 1999). To test for reliability of the questionnaires, the researcher used test-retest technique. An appropriate group of participants was selected and the test administered to them. The answered questionnaires were scored; the same questionnaires were administered to the same group of participants after two weeks and the responses scored. The responses from both tests were then co-related to get the coefficient of reliability using the Pearson's product moment formula. On observation and interview the researcher co-related the results of active observation and those of passive and got the coefficient of reliability while on interview, she interviewed the children twice and got the coefficient. The value of r lay between +1. The closer the value is to +1, the stronger the congruence measure. The value of observation schedule and that of the interview was at 0.918 respectively.

$$r = \frac{N \sum XY - (\sum X)(\sum Y)}{\sqrt{[N \sum X^2 - (\sum X)^2][N \sum Y^2 - (\sum Y)^2]}}$$

Where

N= Number of respondents

X= scores from the first test

Y= scores from the second test

3.7 Data Collection Procedure

Authority to conduct the study in preschools was obtained from the ministry of culture and social services, Embu county. The researcher then reported to DEO Embu West Division in Embu County for clearance. The researcher began by observing teachers before training to get a clue on what they knew about teachers' feedback. They were then trained on type, content and timeliness of teachers' feedback.

3.7.1 Questionnaires

The researcher personally delivered the questionnaires to the schools and handed them to the teachers who had been informed prior about the study through the head teachers. The instructions clearly spelt out there in and the researcher personally clarified where necessary. Respondents were given adequate time to respond.

3.7.2 Interview

Interview in the study was conducted on preschool children. The researcher had printed questions; contacted each child in person recording date, time the interview took place. The researcher conducted a face to face communication intended to elicit information or opinion from the interviewees..

3.7.3 Observation

As for observation, the researcher arranged with teachers in the sampled schools in order to be allowed in class during lessons. The researcher used an observation schedule to fill in the methods of teachers' feedback commonly used, timeliness of teachers' feedback as well as on the content.

3.8 Data Analysis

Data analysis entailed thorough reading of the collected data which gave the researcher clear understanding of it. Before analysis was done, thorough editing and data cleaning was done in order to ensure consistency and accuracy of the responses obtained in each instrument. The data was analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively according to study objectives. The data from the questionnaires was tabulated into frequencies and the percentage of which type of teachers' feedback is commonly used was determined. The same was done to the other variables, that is, content, timeliness of teachers' feedback and also on attitude of children on teachers' feedback. The same procedure was applied on the other instruments like interview and observation schedule. On documentary analysis, the researcher used an assessment rubric form that has three columns, one for grades that ranged from 0-4. The second column was of criteria of children's participation in class and the last column is for the awarded grade. The assessment rubric form is illustrated in table 3.2. Then data was analyzed using statistical package for the social sciences (S P S S).

Table 3.2 Assessment Rubric Form

| Grade | Criteria | Grade awarded | Percentage |
|--------------|---|----------------------|-------------------|
| 0 | Absent | | |
| 1 | Present not disruptive. Tries to respond when called but does not offer much. Demonstrates very infrequent involvement in discussions. | | |
| 2 | Demonstrates adequate preparation and knows basic case or reading Offers straight forward information with collaboration. Does not offer to contribute to discussion but contributes to moderate degree when called on. Demonstrates sporadic involvement. | | |
| 3 | Demonstrates good preparation. Offers interpretations, analysis of case material (more than just facts). Contributes well to discussion in an ongoing way. Demonstrates consistent ongoing involvement. | | |
| 4 | Demonstrates excellent preparation. Offers analysis, synthesis and evaluations of case material. Contributes to ongoing discussion. Demonstrates on going very active involvement. | | |

3.9 Ethical Concerns

This study adhered to issues of privacy of participants, nature of participation and the right to withdraw partially or completely from the study. The researcher also requested for consent to interview the children from their teachers. The researcher also assured the participants that the findings would be used for the purpose of the research.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter contains findings and discussion of findings. The study investigated the influence of teachers' feedback on preschool children's classroom participation. The chapter discusses results of the study under the following headings: objectives of the study namely: how methods of teachers' feedback affect preschool children's participation in class, how timeliness of teachers' feedback affects preschool children's participation in class, how the content of teachers' feedback affects preschool children's participation in class and the effect of preschool children's attitude towards teachers' feedback on their participation in class.

4.2 Methods of teachers' feedback and their influence on preschool children's participation in class

In this section the researcher sought to find out how methods of teachers' feedback affected preschool children's participation in class. The researcher used the responses from teachers' questionnaires and observation schedules for both teachers and children. The results are illustrated in table 4.1.

4.3 Methods of teachers feedback

The researcher illustrated the methods of teachers' feedback used as observed during the research. The teachers had been asked to indicate the methods of feedback most likely to use. The results comprised those of an observation schedule for children on the methods of teachers' feedback and information from the questionnaires and the responses are in Table 4.2 and Table 4.3 respectively.

Table 4.1 Methods of feedback teachers most likely to use

| Type of feedback | No.of teachers | Percentage |
|------------------|----------------|------------|
| Verbal | 11 | 91.7 |
| Written | 1 | 8.3 |
| Total | 12 | 100.0 |

From table 4.1, 91.7 % of the respondents use verbal method of feedback. Teachers mostly use verbal feedback when learners ask questions or answer questions correctly. Verbal feedback includes oral praise and criticism. Praise improves the pupils' participation in class. This agrees with study by Raimes (1983) who stated that praising whatever a pupil does well improves his/her participation in class more than any kind or amount of correction of what he/she does badly.

Table 4.2 Observation schedule for children

| Type of teachers feedback | No.of children | Percentage |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Verbal | 119 | 76.3 |
| Written | 37 | 23.7 |
| Total | 159 | 100.0 |

From the observation schedule of the children, 76.3% of children indicated verbal method of feedback as the one mostly used by teachers. This collaborates with the study by Entwisle (1987) who observed that verbal or oral feedback should be handled carefully by teachers as they potentially have significant effects on the development of pupils' perception of classroom participation at a very critical stage in their lives. This is also supported by Page (1990) who indicated that talking with pupils is usually the best as she puts it because you can have a conversation unlike the written form which is based on pupils reading ability.

4.3.1 Praising children as a form of teachers' feedback

The preschool teachers were asked to indicate how they use praise as a form of feedback to children and children were asked to indicate how they would like to be praised and their responses are shown on Table 4.3, Table 4.4 and 4.5 respectively.

Table 4.3 When do teachers use praise as a form of feedback

| When to use praise | No.of teachers | Percentage |
|--|-----------------------|-------------------|
| When learners ask questions or answer questions correctly | 2 | 16.7 |
| When there is a correct response or action | 3 | 25.0 |
| When the learner has performed an activity correctly | 4 | 33.3 |
| When there is an improved performance in exercise or exams or on general behaviour | 3 | 25.0 |
| Total | 12 | 100.0 |

From table 4.3, 33.3% of the respondents indicated that they use praise when the learner has performed an activity while 25% of respondents indicated that they have used praise when there was a correct response or action and when there was an improved performance in exercise or exams or on general behavior. This agrees with Raimes (1983) who argues that praising whatever a pupil does well improves his/her participation in class more than any kind or amount of correction of what he/she does badly.

Table 4.4 Ways children would like to be praised

| Ways to be praised | No.of children | Percentage |
|--|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Through good words like excellent, very good, good | 66 | 42.3 |
| Through written comments | 20 | 12.8 |
| In the presence of many people | 35 | 22.4 |
| Through gifts and presents | 35 | 22.4 |
| Total | 159 | 100.0 |

From table 4.4, 42.3% of the respondents indicated that they would like to be praised through good words like excellent, very good and good while 22.4% indicated that they would like to be praised in the presence of many people and through gifts and presents. Praise boosts the learners morale in learning and thus participate in learning. This study agrees with Raimes (1983), Semke (1984) and Asiri (1996) who believed that pupils who receive praise feedback in their classroom participation through good words like excellent, very good and good, develop a positive attitude towards participation in class and become receptive to suggestions and even seek advice on how to improve their participation in class. The preschool children were also asked to indicate what they do to win teachers' praise and their response is shown on Table 4.4

Table 4.5 What children do to win teachers praise

| How to win teachers praise | No.of children | Percentage |
|--|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Do my work well and assignments | 70 | 44.9 |
| Pass my examinations and subject | 39 | 25.0 |
| Come to school tidy and smart | 29 | 18.6 |
| Doing the right thing at the right time | 18 | 11.5 |
| Total | 156 | 100.0 |

From table 4.5, 44.9% of respondents indicated that they can win teachers praise through doing well in studies and assignments. Teachers approve a correct response and approve a good behaviour in the classroom in different ways. This collaborates studyPage (1990) who stated that some kinds of classroom participation render themselves better to written feedback, for example reviewing and writing comments on pupil's written work. Others need oral feedback, for example observing and commenting as pupils do number work as seatwork, while some classroom participation need demonstration like helping a child hold a pencil correctly. Talking with pupils is usually the best as Page (1990) puts it because you can have a conversation unlike the written form which is based on pupils reading ability

4.3.2 Type of class participation where written feedback is used

The preschool teachers were asked to indicate when they use written as a form of feedback to children and their responses are shown on Table 4.7

Table 4.6 Writing as a form of feedback

| Written feedback | No.of teachers | Percentage |
|---|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Examinations or after examinations on report book | 3 | 25.0 |
| When answering questions (written) | 7 | 58.3 |
| When marking assignments, group works or books | 2 | 16.7 |
| Total | 12 | 100.0 |

From table 4.6, 58.3% of the respondents use written feedback on examinations or after examinations on report books. Written feedback motivates the learner every time he or she sees it. This agrees with Hattie (1988) who stated that written teacher feedback which means providing pupils with information about a task has a higher effect compared to verbal praise or criticism, reward or punishment. The study is further supported by Harklau (2002) who stated that written response has been emphasized as being more preferable to children and by Reed (1985) who indicated that for teachers to be able to communicate feedback message in the most appropriate way, they should use written feedback for comments that children need to be able to

save and look over, use of oral feedback for children who don't read well and also if there is more information to convey than pupils would want to read. This study is further supported by Hyland (2003) who stresses the importance of written feedback by stating that a response is potentially one of the most influential texts in a classroom situation.

4.3.3 Observation Schedule for children

The researcher carried an observation schedule for the children on the two types (verbal and written) of teachers feedback and the responses are in Table 4.7

Table 4.7 Observation schedules for children

| Types of feedback | No. of teachers | Percentage |
|--------------------------|------------------------|-------------------|
| Verbal | 8 | 66.6 |
| Written | 4 | 33.3 |
| Total | 12 | 100 |

From table 4.7, 66.6% of the respondents indicated that the teachers use verbal feedback on their children while 33.3% of the respondents indicated that the teachers use written feedback on their children. The findings collaborates with study by Sassenruth (1972) who stated that immediate feedback promotes proactive interference once participants commit themselves to an incorrect response.

4.3.4 Methods of teachers' feedback and preschool children's participation in class.

This section shows how the methods teachers' feedback affects classroom participation among preschool children. The results are illustrated in table 4.8

Table 4.8. Methods of teacher feedback and their influence on preschool children's participation in class.

| Methods | Participation | No. of Teachers | Percentage |
|----------------|---------------|-----------------|------------|
| Verbal –praise | 4 | 6 | 50% |
| criticism | 1 | 2 | 16.66% |
| Written | 2 | 4 | 33.3% |
| Total | | 12 | 100% |

From table 4.8, 50% of the teachers used praise verbal feedback and participation was at its highest with grade 4. This shows that children demonstrated excellent preparation, contributed in a very significant way to on-going discussion, offered analysis, synthesis and evaluations of case material and also demonstrated on-going active involvement in class work. On the other hand 16.6% of the teachers used verbal criticism as a form of feedback and during this time, participation was at its lowest with a score of 1 showing that children only participated when called upon, were present and disruptive, tried to respond but did not offer much. Also during this time children demonstrated

very infrequent involvement in peer tutoring. The findings also showed that 33% of teachers used written feedback and participation score was at 2, showing that children here demonstrated sporadic involvement, they offered straight forward information with difficulty and did not offer much during discussion and peer tutoring but contributed to moderate degree when called on.

4.4 Effect of timeliness of teachers' feedback on preschool children's participation in class

In this section, the researcher sought to find out how timeliness of teachers' feedback affects preschool children's class participation. The researcher analysed the responses on use of immediate feedback. The respondents were asked to indicate which teachers' feedback is best and when they would use immediate feedback and responses are shown on Table 4.9.

Table 4.9 Use of immediate feedback

| Immediate feedback | Frequency | Percentage |
|--|------------------|-------------------|
| When there is a correct response | 1 | 8.3 |
| During class work eg questions and answer sessions | 6 | 50.0 |
| During oral presentation, peer tutoring and discussion | 4 | 33.3 |
| When an extra ordinary activity is done | 1 | 8.3 |
| Total | 12 | 100.0 |

Table 4.9, shows that 50% of the respondents use immediate feedback during class work at questions and answer sessions while 33.3% indicated that they use immediate feedback during oral presentation, peer tutoring and discussion. From the study all the preschool teachers (100%) indicated that immediate feedback is better than delayed feedback. This is because immediate feedback sounds to be more genuine, it is more effective and fulfilling and it motivates and encourages the learner. This is supported by Hattie and Timpeley (1998) who stated that teachers' feedback is best provided to learners during and not after the learning process since the longer the time gap between the complete of the work and its feedback, the less effective the feedback becomes. The study further collaborates study by Sassenruth (1972) who stated that immediate feedback promotes proactive interference once participants commit themselves to an incorrect response.

4.4.1 Delayed teachers feedback

The researcher also analysed results of delayed feedback. The preschool teachers were asked to indicate when they use delayed teachers' feedback on children and Table 4.10 shows the responses.

Table 4.11 Delayed teachers' feedback on children

| When to use delayed feedback | Frequency | Percentage |
|--|------------------|-------------------|
| When the response is incorrect or not very clear | 3 | 25.0 |
| When marking an evaluation work | 4 | 33.3 |
| When the teacher wants to observe pupils behaviour first | 2 | 16.7 |
| When you correct books for marking | 3 | 25.0 |
| Total | 12 | 100.0 |

Table 4.11 shows that 33.3% of the respondents use delayed feedback when marking an evaluation work while 25% of the respondents use delayed feedback when the response is incorrect and when returning books after marking. This collaborates study by Hattie and Timpeley (1998) who suggested for feedback relating to processes, delaying the feedback allows pupils time to attempt the task without interruption. This is further supported by Shute (2008) who stated that while high achieving learners may benefit from delayed feedback, low achieving learners may need more immediate feedback. This study also agrees with Brackbill (1962) who said that delayed

feedback across brief intervals promotes the retention of meaningful material covered in the classroom and thus enhance classroom participation..

4.4.2 When do children receive feedback from children

The children were asked to indicate about when do they receive feedback from their teacher and responses are shown on Table 4.12.

Table 4.12 When do children receive feedback from teachers

| Kind of behaviour | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|------------------|-------------------|
| When I answer questions well | 72 | 46.2 |
| When I have done my assignments correctly | 40 | 25.6 |
| When my work is tidy and correct | 9 | 5.8 |
| When I misbehave and not completed work | 7 | 4.5 |
| When I do well in examinations | 28 | 17.9 |
| Total | 28 | 100 |

From table 4.12, 46.2% of the respondents indicated that they receive feedback from their teachers when they answer questions well while 25.6% of the respondents indicated that they receive feedback from their teachers if they do assignments correctly. The study agrees with Ferris (2003) who stated that it is crucial to find ways through which pupils prefer to be corrected, hoping that such information can help teachers since positive teachers' feedback given makes children feel good about them.

4.4.3 Influence of the timeliness of teachers' feedback on preschool children's participation in class.

This section sought information concerning the influence of the timeliness of teachers' feedback on preschool children's participation in class. The results are illustrated in table 4.13.

Table 4.13 Influence of timeliness of teachers feedback on preschool childrens participation.

| Timeliness | Participation | No. of Teachers | Percentage |
|-------------------|----------------------|------------------------|-------------------|
| Immediate | 3 | 7 | 58.3 |
| Delayed | 2 | 5 | 41.66% |
| Total | | 12 | 100% |

Table 4.13 , 58.3% of teachers used immediate feedback and participation scored grade 3 showing that when teachers used immediate feedback children demonstrated good preparation, contributed well to answering oral questions and also showed consistent on going involvement. On the other hand 41.66% of teachers used delayed feedback and participation score was at 2. This shows that children demonstrated adequate preparation and knew basic case or reading. They also did not offer to contribute to discussion. This findings , concur with Hattie and Timpeley(1998) who stated that teachers' feedback is best

provided to learners during and not after learning process since the longer the time gap between complete of the work and its feedback, the less effective the feedback becomes. Though delayed feedback seemed to have not scored much, authors like Clariana(2000) argue that when dealing with difficulty items of study ,teachers should employ delayed feedback as it requires more time to digest. He proposes that both delayed and immediate feedback should be used hand in hand depending on the complexity of the item at hand.

4.5 Content of teachers feedback

This section sought to establish the effect of content of teachers’ feedback on preschool children’s participation in class. The researcher analysed the responses from the questionnaires and observation schedules on content of teachers’ feedback. The teachers had been asked to indicate the contents of feedback they use on task accomplishment. The responses are shown in Table 4.14.

Table 4.14 Contents of feedback on task accomplishment

| Contents of feedback | Frequency | Percentage |
|-----------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Excellent | 2 | 16.7 |
| Very good | 4 | 33.3 |
| Good | 3 | 25.0 |
| Good attempt | 3 | 25.0 |
| Total | 12 | 100.0 |

Table 4.14, 33.3% of the respondents use very good as content of feedback on task accomplishment while 25% of the respondents use good or good attempt as content of feedback on task accomplishment. These words acknowledge a good work or good response from the child. The study agrees with Nadler (1979) who stated that task content feedback includes information about how well a task is being accomplished or performed, such as distinguishing correct from incorrect answers, acquiring more or different information and building more surfaces knowledge. The study is further supported by Winnie and Butler (1994) who argued that the benefits of task feedback depends heavily on learners being attentive to the varying importance of the feedback information during study of the task, having accurate memories of those features when outcome feedback is provided and being sufficiently strategic to generate effective internal feedback about predictive validities.

4.5.1 Influence of the content of teachers' feedback on preschool children's participation in class

This section sought to establish the influence of the content of teachers' feedback on preschool children's participation in class. The response are shown in Table 4.15

Table 4.15 Contents of teachers feedback and participation.

| Content | Participation | No. of Teachers | Percentage |
|-----------------|----------------------|------------------------|-------------------|
| Task | 2 | 2 | 16.6 % |
| Process | 3 | 4 | 33.3% |
| Self-Regulation | 3 | 1 | 8.33% |
| Self | 4 | 5 | 41.69 |
| Total | | 12 | 100% |

Table 4.15, 16.6% of teachers use task as content feedback showing that only 2 teachers offered feedback on how to distinguish correct from incorrect answers, feedback on how to acquire more or different information and also feedback on building more surface knowledge. The participation for task content was at 2 which is low participation meaning that children did not offer to contribute to discussions and other class activities as well as just offering straight forward information with collaboration.

On content regarding process 33.3% of teachers used it showing that here teachers gave feedback on acquisition ,storing, reproduction and use of knowledge. The score here was at 3 showing that children demonstrated good preparation and contributed well to discussions in an ongoing way. The findings further show that content on self regulation influenced lowest participation and only 8.33% of teachers used it. This shows that very few teachers gave feedback on self control, self direction and self disciplines. The participation score was at 1 indicating that children tried to respond when called upon but did not offer much and demonstrated very infrequent involvement in discussion. When teachers used self content feedback such as ‘good girl’ or ‘great effort’ participation score was at 4. This shows that children demonstrated excellent preparation ,contributed to ongoing discussion and demonstrated on - going very active involvement in class activities. Though content feedback about self seemed to score, Bond(2000) says that it may not be long lasting as it contains little information related to class work and is rarely converted to more engagement and commitment to learning goals.

4.6 The effect of preschool children’s attitude towards teachers’ feedback on their participation in class

This section covers the effect of preschool children’s attitude towards teachers’ feedback on their classroom participation.

4.5.3 Kinds of children behavior warranting praise and oral criticism

The researcher sought to analyse the responses from the observation schedules on behaviours warranting different types feedback. The respondents were asked to indicate the kind of children behavior warranting praise and oral criticism. Table 4.16 and Table 4.17 show the responses.

Table 4.16 Kind of children behavior warranting praise

| Kind of behaviour | Frequency | Percentage |
|--|------------------|-------------------|
| Attempt to answer or even answer questions | 2 | 16.7 |
| Constructively engaging other children | 6 | 50.0 |
| Completing assignments on time and getting the correct answers | 4 | 33.3 |
| Total | 28 | 100 |

From table 4.16, 50% of the respondents indicated that if a child constructively engages other children, the child should be praised for this behaviour while 33.3% of the respondents indicated that if a child completes assignments on time and gets the correct answers, the child should be praise for this behaviour. This agrees with study

by Katayama (2007) who stated that differences in learners learning styles affect the learning environment by either supporting or inhibiting their intentional cognition and active engagement.

Table 4.17 Kind of children behavior warranting oral criticism

| Kind of behaviour | Frequency | Percentage |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| When a learner is not attentive | 1 | 8.3 |
| When child is making noise in class | 2 | 16.7 |
| Disorderly in the work | 3 | 25.0 |
| Disturbing other learners in class | 1 | 8.3 |
| Misconduct like shouting in class | 5 | 41.7 |
| Total | 28 | 100 |

From table 4.17 , 41.7% of the respondents indicated that if a child has misconduct like shouting he or she warrants oral criticism while 25% indicated that if a child is disorderly in the work he or she warrant oral criticism. Oral criticism makes the child not to repeat the behaviour again. This agrees with Ferris (1995) who rightly noted that teachers should not abandon constructive criticism but should place it side by side with comments of encouragement. This is further supported by Cardelle and Corno (1981) who concluded from their study that giving a combination of praise and criticism brings the biggest gains.

Table 4.18 .Preschool children’s attitude towards teachers’ feedback and their participation in class.

| Attitude | Participation | No. of teachers | Percentage |
|-----------------|----------------------|------------------------|-------------------|
| Positive | 4 | 1.0 | 83.3% |
| Negative | 1 | 2 | 16.6% |
| Total | | 12 | 100% |

From table 4.18, shows that children’s attitude may either support or inhibit their intentional cognition and engagement. As Leki (1991) puts it , children have preferences in the way they would like be praised or corrected and this affects their participation. When they were praised or corrected in the way they like their participation grade was at 4. This means that children contributed in a very significant way to on-going discussion and other class activities as well as demonstrated on - going very active involvement. On the other hand ,when children were corrected in way they did not like, their participation was at 1 meaning that they only responded when called upon but did not offer much.

4.7 Results of before and after intervention

Since this is a pretest-post test guard experimental design, the researcher sought to compare the result of before and after intervention. The result are shown in table 4.19.

Table 4.19 Results of before and after intervention

| Time | Method of feedback | Participation | Timeliness | Participation | Content | Participation | Attitude | Participation |
|--------|--------------------|---------------|------------|---------------|-----------------|---------------|----------|---------------|
| After | Verbal | -4 | Immediate | 3 | Task | 3 | Positive | 4 |
| | written | -2 | delayed | 3 | Process | 3 | | |
| | | | | | Self regulation | 3 | Negative | 1 |
| | | | | | self | 4 | | |
| Before | Verbal | -2 | Immediate | 2 | Task | 2 | Positive | 2 |
| | written | -4 | Delayed | 1 | Process | 2 | negative | 1 |
| | | | | | Self regulation | 2 | | |
| | | | | | self | | | |

From table 4.19, it shows that the participation of the after intervention was higher, that is at 37.5% while that of the before intervention was at 21.5%. This shows that after teachers were trained on use of feedback they used more verbal praise than criticism. As Raimes (1983) puts it, praising whatever a child does well improves his\her participation more than any other amount of correction of what that child does badly. Also as Asiri (1996) says, children who receive praise feedback in their classroom, develop a positive attitude towards participation in class and become receptive to suggestions and even seek advice on how to improve their participation in class. The after training teachers also used more of immediate feedback than delayed feedback. Ideally, according to Hattie and Timpeley (1998), feedback should be provided minutes after the learning process for it to be effective. The longer the time gap between the complete of the work and its feedback the less effective it is. On the other hand before training teachers seemed to have used more

of verbal criticism and written feedback. They also delayed feedback which made it less effective. Before training teachers also emphasised on the use of task accomplishment content of teacher feedback as opposed to self and process which have more results when it comes to participation in class.

4.8 Summary of the Chapter Four

The data interpretation focused on the effect of teachers' feedback on preschool children's classroom participation based on the method of teachers' feedback affecting preschool children's participation in class, how timeliness of teachers' feedback affects preschool children's participation in class, how the content of teachers' feedback, influence preschool children's participation in class and the effect of preschool children's attitude towards teachers' feedback on their participation in class in Embu West Division, Embu County. The researcher found out that when teachers use verbal feedback the pupils classroom participation is improved. From the study, the researcher found out that immediate feedback enhanced classroom participation (58.7%) more than delayed feedback. The use of positive comments on children's workbook, enhanced classroom participation as children would avail their books to the teacher for marking so as to get the comments.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter focused on the summary of the study, conclusions and recommendations advanced to address the effect of teachers' feedback on preschool children's classroom participation.

5.2 Summary of the Study

The study sought to find out the effect of teachers' feedback on pre schools children's classrooms participation in Embu west division. The study specifically sought to review the methods of teachers' feedback, attitude of preschool children towards teachers' feedback, timeliness of teachers' feedback and the content of teachers' feedback and their effect on classroom participation. A quasi-experimental research design was selected for the study. A sample size of 171 was selected using stratified random sampling. Research data was collected using questionnaires prepared for teachers, interviews for children and observation schedules for both teachers and children. Information on classrooms participation was collected using rubric form and children's class work books and their test papers. Validity and reliability of data instruments were tested and ascertained. Questionnaires were then administered using drop and pick method in each school, interviews were conducted orally and observation was both active and passive. Inferential statistics were used to analyze data and the result presented in tables.

5.2.1 The Methods of Teacher Feedback Influencing Preschool Children's Participation in Class

The study has shown that 50% of the respondents use verbal feedback and participation was high at grade 4. Verbal feedback was found to be used particularly during class work at questions and answer sessions. 33.3% indicated that they use written feedback during examination and written class work. The participation score here was at 2 showing that children demonstrated sporadic involvement and did not offer to contribute to discussion and other class activities.

5.2.2 The Timeliness of Teacher Feedback Affecting Preschool Children's Participation in Class

The study has shown that 58.3% of the respondents use immediate feedback during class work at questions and answer sessions while 33.3% indicated that they use immediate feedback during oral presentation, peer tutoring and discussion. From the study, the participation score for immediate was at 3 meaning that children demonstrated good preparation, contributed to answering oral questions and also showed consistent on-going involvement. (50%) indicated that immediate feedback is better than delayed feedback. This is because immediate feedback sounds to be more genuine, it is more effective and fulfilling and it motivates and encourages the learner. The study has shown that 33.3% of the respondents use delayed feedback when marking an evaluation work while 25% of the respondents use delayed feedback when the response is incorrect and when returning books after marking.

5.2.3 The Influence of Teacher Feedback Content on Preschool Children's Participation in Class

The study has shown that 33.3% of the respondents use very good as content of feedback on task accomplishment while 25% of the respondents use good or good attempt as content of feedback on task accomplishment. These words acknowledge a good work or good response from the child. The participation when teachers used content on task was at 2 and was highest when they used content on self which was at 4. This means that when children are praised on self, use such words like good girl, great effort they tend to be active in class.

5.2.4 The Effect of Preschool Children's Attitude Towards Teacher Feedback on Their Participation in Class

From the study, 50% of the respondents indicated that if a child constructively engages other children he or she warrant praise for this behaviour while 33.3% of the respondents indicated that if a child completes assignments on time and gets the correct answers the child warrant a praise for this behaviour. From the findings, 41.7% of the respondents indicated that if a child has misconduct like shouting he or she warrant oral criticism while 25% indicated that if a child is disorderly in the work he or she warrant oral criticism. Oral criticism makes the child not to repeat the behavior again.

The study has indicated that 46.2% of the respondents receive feedback from their teachers when they answer questions well while 25.6% of the respondents indicated that they receive feedback from their teachers if they do assignments correctly. The participation was at 4 when children liked how they were being praised or corrected and participation was lowest, when they did not like how they were being praised or corrected.

5.3 Conclusions of the Study

Based on the data, it can be concluded that teachers feedback whether verbal or written influences preschool children's participation. Teachers should use these methods of feedback to enhance children participation in class.

It can also be concluded that teachers' feedback should either be immediate or delayed depending on the prevailing situation. Immediate feedback should be used during class work at questions and answer sessions, oral presentation, peer tutoring and discussion because it promotes proactive interference once participants commit themselves to an incorrect response and it is mostly used. Delayed feedback should be used when marking books or an evaluation work.

It can further be concluded that preschool teachers use words like excellent, very good, good or good attempt as the content of feedback on task accomplishment. The right content of feedback make children to invest more effort or commitment in class.

It can also be concluded that if a child is disorderly in the work, he or she warrants oral criticism which should be placed side by side with with comments of encouragement. Positive teachers' feedback given makes children feel good about themselves and participate in class.

5.4 Recommendations

The study makes the following recommendations for policy and practice in order to enhance classroom participation in pre-schools in Embu west division.

- i. Teachers in preschools should use both verbal and written methods of feedback appropriately to enhance pupils' participation in class.

- ii. The preschool teachers should use immediate and delayed feedback appropriately to promote proactive class participation once participants commit themselves to correct or incorrect response.
- iii. The preschool teachers should use words like excellent, very good, good, good attempt once a pupil has undertaken a task.
- iv. When preschool children misbehave, they should be corrected through oral criticism but with comments of encouragement. That is, the teachers should not abandon constructive criticism but should place it side by side with comments of encouragement.

5.5 Suggested Areas for Further Research

The following areas are suggested for further research from the results of this study

- i. Conduct research on the impact of teacher's feedback on preschool children's classroom participation in other parts of Kenya.
- ii. Conduct an indepth research on the most effective method of teachers' feedback as far as timelines of the feedback is concerned.
- iii. Conduct a research on the influence of preschool teachers' professional qualification on preschool teachers' feedback on children in preschools.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I: Introductory letter

University of Nairobi

P.O Box

Nairobi

Dear Respondent

I am a student of University of Nairobi undertaking a Masters Degree in Education (ECE).

I am carrying out a research on children's participation in class, in Embu West Division. Please complete the questionnaire provided as objectively as you can. Your positive response will be highly appreciated.

Yours faithfully,

JecinterWanjiru

E57/67650/13

APPENDIX II

Questionnaire for teachers

Kindly answer the questions as objectively as you can. The information provided will be treated with uttermost confidence.

1. How do you use praise in your classroom?
.....
2. Which kind of behaviour displayed by children may warrant oral criticism as a type of feedback?.....
3. What type of behaviour are these children more likely to be praised for?
.....
4. What kinds of feedback are you more likely to use when children display effort in class discussions or in answering questions?
.....
5. When do you use praise as form of feedback to children?
.....
6. What type of classroom participation do you apply written comments as a form of feedback?
.....
7. On task accomplishment what content does your response contain?
.....

APPENDIX III

Children's interview schedule

1. When do you receive feedback from your teacher?

.....?

2. How do you like to be praised?

.....
.....

3. What do you always plan to do when you see the teacher's writing on your piece of work?

.....

4. How often are you praised by the teacher?

.....

5. What do you always do in order to earn a teacher's
praise?.....

6. How do you like the presentation of teacher's feedback, long or short?

.....

7. Your teacher has just praised you in front of the class for being smart. Would you display the behaviour that made you be praised again?

APPENDIX IV

An Assessment Rubric Form

Name of the child.....

Table 1.2

| GRADE | Criteria |
|-------|--|
| 0. | Absent |
| 1. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Present not disruptive.• Tries to respond when called but does not offer much.• Demonstrates very infrequent involvement in discussions. |
| 2. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demonstrates adequate preparation and knows basic case or reading• Offers straight forward information with collaboration.• Does not offer to contribute to discussion but contributes to moderate degree when called on.• Demonstrates sporadic involvement. |
| 3. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demonstrates good preparation.• Offers interpretations, analysis of case material (more than just facts).• Contributes well to discussion in an ongoing way.• Demonstrates consistent ongoing involvement. |
| 4. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demonstrates excellent preparation.• Offers analysis, synthesis and evaluations of case material.• Contributes in a very significant way to ongoing discussion.• Demonstrates on going very active involvement. |

APPENDIX V

Observation schedule for teachers

Name of the teacher _____

Observer _____

Date _____

Observation schedule for teachers.

| Features of teachers feedback | Details | Observed | Comments |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Types of teachers feedback | Verbal Praise criticism | | |
| Content of teacher feedback | Task Process Self | | |
| Timeliness of teacher feedback | Immediate Delayed | | |

APPENDIX VI

Observation schedule for children

Name of the school (child) _____

Observer _____

Date _____

| Features of teacher feedback | Details | Observed | Comments |
|---|---------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Types of teacher feedback | Verbal Praise criticism | | |

APPENDIX VII

Training modules for teachers

Introduction

- Feedback is conceptualized as information provided by an agent (e.g. teacher, peer, book, parent, self, experience) regarding aspects of one's performance or understanding.
- Feedback is one of the most powerful influences on learning and achievement but the impact can either be positive or negative.
- The type of feedback and the way it is given can be differentially effective.

How feedback works

- Children are more likely to increase effort when the intended goal is clear, when high commitment is secured for it, and when belief in eventual success is high.
- Children may also develop effective error detection skills which lead to their own self-feedback aimed at reaching a goal.
- Children can seek better strategies to complete the task or be taught them or they can obtain more information from which they can then resolve problems or use their self-regulatory proficiencies.
- Effective feedback answers Three questions
 - Where am I going? (The goals)
 - How am I going?
 - Where to next?