ADAPTIVE TEACHING STRATEGIES IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION: A REVIEW FOR NIGERIA AND THE UK

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ABSTRACT

This review paper explores the dynamic landscape of adaptive teaching strategies in early childhood education (ECE), focusing on a comparative analysis between Nigeria and the United Kingdom (UK). ECE plays a pivotal role in shaping the cognitive, social, and emotional development of young learners, and adaptive teaching strategies have emerged as essential tools to meet the diverse needs of children. The analysis reveals that Nigeria and the UK differ significantly in their educational contexts and share a common commitment to nurturing the potential of young learners. Nigeria’s approach is marked by cultural responsiveness, community engagement, and emerging inclusive practices amid access, quality assurance, and teacher training...
challenges. In contrast, the UK combines a well-established regulatory framework with an emphasis on professional development and assessment for learning. However, it grapples with affordability and inclusivity concerns. The recommendations included investments in teacher training, strengthening cultural responsiveness, promoting inclusive practices, infrastructure development, and maintaining a delicate balance between standardization and flexibility. Additionally, the paper underscores the importance of parental engagement, research, evaluation, and global collaboration in advancing the effectiveness of adaptive teaching strategies in ECE. This comparative exploration highlights the significance of context-specific approaches and fosters a global dialogue on early childhood education that respects cultural diversity, champions inclusivity, and recognizes the unique potential of each young learner.

**Keywords:** Adaptive Teaching Strategies, Early Childhood Education, Comparative Analysis, Nigeria, United Kingdom, Parental Engagement, Teacher Training, Professional Development.

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**INTRODUCTION**

Early childhood education (ECE) plays a pivotal role in shaping the future of nations by nurturing the cognitive, social, and emotional development of young learners during their formative years (Farmayash, Ali, & Mehmood, 2023). The significance of quality ECE programs is well-documented, as they set the foundation for lifelong learning and success. Recognizing this, nations worldwide are continually seeking innovative ways to enhance the effectiveness of ECE strategies and ensure they are adaptive to the evolving needs of young learners. This research paper embarks on a journey to review and compare the adaptive teaching strategies in early childhood education within two diverse yet interconnected contexts: Nigeria and the United Kingdom (UK).

Early childhood education is universally acknowledged as a cornerstone of a nation’s educational framework (Edwards, 2017). Research has consistently demonstrated the long-term benefits of quality ECE programs regarding academic achievement, social integration, and economic development. Consequently, governments worldwide have prioritized investments in ECE, understanding that it is an essential catalyst for achieving broader educational goals and socio-economic prosperity (Bruce, 2012; Currie, 2001; Elango, García, Heckman, & Hojman, 2015; Essa & Burnham, 2019; Lascarides & Hinitz, 2013; Morrison, Woika, & Breffni, 2009).

In ECE, adaptability is central to ensuring that teaching methods and curricula remain responsive to young learners’ diverse and evolving needs. Adaptive teaching strategies encompass a range of approaches aimed at tailoring educational experiences to the unique abilities, interests, and backgrounds of individual children. These strategies recognize that no two learners are identical and that effective education requires flexibility and responsiveness (Ellis, Bianchi, Griskevicius, & Frankenhuys, 2017; P. Westwood, 2018; P. S. Westwood & Westwood, 2008).

Adaptive teaching in ECE is not a novel concept; educators have long recognized the importance of adapting instruction to meet children’s needs. However, the emergence of new educational theories, the integration of technology, and shifting societal dynamics have led to renewed interest in and refinement of adaptive strategies (Aljabreen, 2020; Parsons et al., 2018). This paper aims to explore the contemporary landscape of adaptive teaching strategies in ECE and investigate their implementation within the distinctive contexts of Nigeria and the UK.
Nigeria and the UK represent compelling subjects for comparative analysis in the context of ECE for several reasons. Firstly, they exemplify the global diversity in ECE practices, representing both developed and developing economies. While the UK boasts a well-established ECE system with a history of formalized education dating back centuries, Nigeria faces distinct challenges and opportunities to provide quality ECE for its growing population (Ige, 2011). Secondly, the socio-cultural and economic disparities between the two countries underscore the importance of exploring how adaptive teaching strategies are applied within different contexts. With its rich cultural tapestry and rapidly expanding population, Nigeria is a microcosm of many developing nations’ challenges. On the other hand, the UK has a mature educational infrastructure (Beder, 1996). However, it continues grappling with equity, diversity, and inclusion issues. Thirdly, a comparative analysis of Nigeria and the UK in ECE can offer valuable insights and lessons for educators, policymakers, and researchers globally. By understanding the unique approaches and challenges these two countries face, we can develop a broader and more nuanced perspective on the effectiveness of adaptive teaching strategies in diverse educational settings.

This research paper is organized into several key sections, each designed to provide a comprehensive review and analysis of adaptive teaching strategies in early childhood education, both globally and within the specific contexts of Nigeria and the UK. In the forthcoming sections, we will delve into the theoretical underpinnings of adaptive teaching strategies, explore their historical evolution, and consider the role of technology in their implementation. The paper will then pivot to a comparative analysis of early childhood education in Nigeria and the UK, examining the unique challenges and successes within each country’s ECE landscape. Following the comparative analysis, we will identify common challenges and barriers to implementing adaptive teaching strategies. Finally, the research paper will conclude with recommendations aimed at improving the utilization of adaptive teaching strategies in early childhood education in Nigeria and the UK, with potential implications for ECE worldwide.

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

ECE is a field that has seen significant developments and shifts in pedagogical approaches over the years. To understand the contemporary landscape of adaptive teaching strategies in ECE, it is crucial to delve into these strategies’ theoretical foundations and historical evolution. This literature review provides an overview of the key concepts, theories, and historical context underpinning adaptive teaching strategies in ECE, setting the stage for a comparative analysis of their implementation in Nigeria and the UK.

**Theoretical Foundations of Adaptive Teaching Strategies**

Adaptive teaching strategies in early childhood education draw on a rich theoretical framework rooted in educational psychology, child development, and pedagogy (Fonsén & Soukainen, 2020). Several key theoretical perspectives inform the design and application of adaptive teaching strategies:

- Constructivism: Constructivist theories emphasize the learner’s active role in constructing their understanding of the world (Jones & Brader-Araje, 2002). Piaget’s theory of cognitive development and Vygotsky’s socio-cultural theory highlight the importance of interaction with the environment and social interactions in the learning process. In ECE, constructivist approaches advocate for hands-on, experiential learning and the use of open-ended activities.
Multiple Intelligences: Howard Gardner’s theory of multiple intelligences posits that intelligence is not a singular entity but comprises a range of distinct intelligences, including linguistic, logical-mathematical, spatial, and interpersonal intelligence. Adaptive teaching strategies often incorporate diverse activities and materials to cater to these varied intelligences, fostering holistic development in young learners (Allix, 2000; Davis, Christodoulou, Seider, & Gardner, 2011).


Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD): Vygotsky’s ZPD concept emphasizes the importance of scaffolding—providing support just beyond a child’s current level of competence—to facilitate learning (Mcleod, 2022; Shabani, Khatib, & Ebadi, 2010). Adaptive teaching strategies aim to identify each child’s ZPD and provide appropriate challenges and guidance to help them progress.

Historical Evolution of Early Childhood Education
Significant milestones and shifts in educational paradigms mark the history of early childhood education. Understanding this historical context is essential for appreciating the trajectory of adaptive teaching strategies:

Traditional Approaches: Early childhood education was informally conducted within families and communities in many societies (Hein, 2009). Formal education for young children, when it existed, often followed traditional and authoritarian models. Memorization and rote learning were common, and individualized instruction was rare.

Montessori and Reggio Emilia: The early 20th century saw the emergence of innovative approaches to ECE. Maria Montessori’s method emphasized hands-on learning materials and child-centered classrooms. Similarly, the Reggio Emilia approach, founded in Italy, highlighted the importance of the child’s environment and experiences in learning (Kurada & Marker; Manzura, 2023). Both approaches emphasized adaptability and flexibility in teaching to suit individual children’s needs.

Emergence of Play-Based Learning: Influenced by the works of theorists like Jean Piaget, educators began to recognize the significance of play in children’s cognitive and social development (Toner, Moran, & Gale, 2016; Waite-Stupiansky, 2022). Play-based learning gained prominence, encouraging educators to adapt their teaching methods to align with children’s natural inclinations for exploration and discovery.

Incorporation of Technology: In the 21st century, technology has become an integral part of early childhood education. The advent of digital resources, interactive educational software, and online learning platforms has expanded the possibilities for adaptive teaching (Alam,
Technology allows educators to personalize learning experiences and provide immediate feedback, tailoring instruction to individual needs.

**Contemporary Adaptive Teaching Strategies**

In the contemporary landscape of early childhood education, adaptive teaching strategies encompass a broad spectrum of approaches and methodologies. While the core principles of adaptability, child-centeredness, and individualization persist, the tools and methods for achieving these goals have evolved.

Differentiated instruction is a widely adopted adaptive teaching strategy that tailors instruction to individual student needs. In ECE, this may involve providing varied learning materials, activities, and levels of support based on each child’s abilities and interests. UDL is an inclusive teaching approach emphasizing flexibility and accessibility. It involves designing instruction and curriculum accommodating diverse learners, including those with disabilities. In ECE, UDL principles ensure that all children can participate fully in educational activities. Project-based learning immerses children in hands-on, interdisciplinary projects encouraging critical thinking, problem-solving, and collaboration. It adapts teaching to the child’s curiosity and promotes active engagement (Boelens, Voet, & De Wever, 2018; Boss & Krauss, 2022; Smit & Humpert, 2012). Personalized Learning Plans (PLPs) are individualized plans that outline a child’s learning goals and strategies for achieving them. They enable educators to tailor instruction and assessment to each child’s strengths and growth areas. Blended learning combines traditional classroom instruction with online or digital components. This approach allows for flexibility in pacing and accommodates different learning styles. Assistive technology tools and apps are increasingly used in ECE to support children with special needs. These tools adapt teaching materials and methods to meet specific learning challenges (Bishop, Downes, & Farber, 2021; Muñoz Martínez & Porter, 2020).

Having established the theoretical foundations, historical context, and contemporary approaches to adaptive teaching strategies in ECE, it is now essential to examine how these strategies are implemented and adapted within the specific contexts of Nigeria and the United Kingdom. Each country presents unique challenges and opportunities in the realm of ECE, which influence the adoption and effectiveness of adaptive teaching strategies.

**Adaptive Teaching Strategies in Early Childhood Education**

Adaptive teaching strategies in ECE represent a fundamental shift in how educators approach young children’s learning needs. These strategies are rooted in the recognition that every child is unique, with individual strengths, interests, and learning styles. The application of adaptive teaching strategies aims to create inclusive and responsive learning environments that cater to these differences. In this section, we investigate various adaptive teaching strategies that have gained prominence in ECE, emphasizing their significance in nurturing young learners’ cognitive, social, and emotional development.

**Differentiated Instruction**

Differentiated instruction is a cornerstone of adaptive teaching in ECE. It involves tailoring instruction to meet the diverse needs of students in the same classroom. The key principles of differentiated instruction include (Sullivan & Weeks, 2018; Zafiri, Konstantinidou, & Pliogou, 2019):
• Assessment for Learning: Effective differentiation begins with a thorough understanding of each child’s abilities, interests, and areas for growth. Formative assessment techniques, such as observations and student feedback, play a crucial role in this process.

• Flexible Grouping: Educators may employ various grouping strategies, such as small group instruction, peer tutoring, or one-on-one sessions, to address different learning levels and needs within the classroom.

• Varied Learning Materials: Providing a range of learning materials, from visual aids to hands-on manipulatives, allows children to engage with content in ways that align with their individual learning preferences and styles.

• Adjustable Pacing: Recognizing that children progress at different rates, educators adjust the pace of instruction to accommodate those who require additional time and support as well as those who are ready for more advanced challenges.

Differentiated instruction in ECE addresses academic differences, caters to socio-emotional development, and fosters a sense of belonging for all children in the classroom. It aligns with the notion that diversity is an asset and that each child brings unique strengths to the learning community.

**Universal Design for Learning (UDL)**

UDL is an inclusive approach to teaching that recognizes and embraces learner variability. UDL principles promote flexible curricula and instructional strategies that ensure all children can access and engage with educational content. Key components of UDL in ECE include: Offering content in various formats—text, visuals, audio, and tactile materials—ensures that children with diverse learning preferences can access information effectively; encouraging educators to provide engagement options allows children to connect with content based on their interests, motivations, and cultural backgrounds; and recognizing that children may have different ways of demonstrating their understanding, UDL encourages varied forms of assessment, such as written assignments, oral presentations, or artistic creations (Dalton, 2017; Evmenova, 2018; Hartmann, 2015).

**Project-Based Learning**

Project-based learning (PBL) is an adaptive teaching strategy that immerses children in hands-on, interdisciplinary projects. PBL fosters critical thinking, problem-solving, and collaboration skills while allowing children to explore topics of personal interest. Key characteristics of PBL in ECE include the following (Boss & Krauss, 2022; Fleming, 2000; Moursund, 1999):

• Inquiry-Based Approach: Children are encouraged to ask questions, investigate, and solve real-world problems through their projects. This approach promotes curiosity and autonomy in learning.

• Integration of Subjects: PBL often integrates multiple subjects, allowing children to see the connections between different areas of knowledge and apply their learning in holistic ways.

• Authentic Assessment: Assessment in PBL is often based on the quality of the project and the depth of understanding demonstrated by the child rather than traditional tests and quizzes.

Project-based learning adapts teaching to the child’s natural inclination for exploration and discovery. It encourages children to take ownership of their learning and nurtures their creativity and problem-solving abilities.
Personalized Learning Plans (PLPs)

Personalized learning plans (PLPs) are individualized plans that outline a child’s learning goals and strategies for achieving them. PLPs are created collaboratively between educators, parents, and, when appropriate, the child. Vital elements of PLPs in ECE include setting clear and achievable learning goals for each child, considering their strengths and areas for growth, and regular assessments and observations to track a child’s progress toward their goals. Adjustments are made to the PLP as needed; guiding educators in tailoring instruction and learning experiences to meet each child’s specific needs and interests. Children are encouraged to reflect on their learning, set personal goals, and evaluate their progress, fostering metacognitive skills and a sense of agency (Bishop et al., 2021; Muñoz Martínez & Porter, 2020).

PLPs are a highly individualized approach to adaptive teaching, ensuring that each child’s unique learning journey is supported and celebrated. They empower children to take an active role in their education and encourage a growth mindset.

Play-Based Learning

Play-based learning is a child-centered approach that acknowledges the fundamental role of play in children’s cognitive, social, and emotional development. Critical features of play-based learning in ECE include (Cade, Wardle, & Otter, 2022; Pyle & Bigelow, 2015; Van Oers, 2015):

- Open-Ended Play Materials: Play environments are equipped with open-ended materials, such as blocks, art supplies, and natural elements, that allow children to use their creativity and imagination.
- Child-Led Exploration: Educators observe children’s play and use their interests and actions to guide learning experiences.
- Social Interaction: Play provides opportunities for children to develop social skills, such as cooperation, negotiation, and conflict resolution, as they engage in collaborative play scenarios.
- Integration of Curriculum: Play-based learning seamlessly integrates academic content and learning objectives into playful activities, making learning meaningful and enjoyable.

Play-based learning adapts teaching to the child’s natural way of learning through exploration and experimentation. It recognizes that play is not a diversion from learning but a powerful vehicle for it.

Technology Integration

In the digital age, the integration of technology into ECE has become increasingly prevalent. Adaptive teaching strategies harness technology to individualize instruction and provide tailored learning experiences. Technology-based adaptive teaching includes (Pellegrino & Quellmalz, 2010; Shemshack & Spector, 2020):

- Educational Apps and Games: Interactive apps and games are designed to engage children in learning activities that adapt to their skill levels and progress.
- Digital Assessment Tools: Digital assessments provide immediate feedback, allowing educators to identify areas where children may need additional support.
- Online Learning Platforms: Web-based platforms offer a variety of resources, from virtual field trips to interactive lessons, that cater to different learning styles and preferences.
While technology offers valuable opportunities for personalized learning, it is important to use it judiciously in ECE. Balancing screen time with other hands-on and social experiences is essential for holistic development.

**Scaffolding and Guided Discovery**

Scaffolding is a teaching strategy that aligns with Vygotsky’s concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). Educators provide guidance and support to children as they engage in activities slightly beyond their current level of competence. Critical aspects of scaffolding in ECE include (Harland, 2003; Macy, 2016; Sanders & Welk, 2005):

- **Gradual Release of Responsibility:** Educators gradually decrease their support as children become more proficient in a particular skill or concept, fostering independence.
- **Questioning and Prompts:** Educators use open-ended questions and prompts to encourage children’s thinking and problem-solving skills.
- **Modeling and Demonstration:** Educators model desired behaviors and skills, providing a clear example for children to follow.
- **Feedback and Reflection:** Educators provide feedback that helps children self-assess and reflect on their learning.

Scaffolding adapts teaching to the child’s developmental stage. It provides the necessary support to help them reach higher levels of understanding and competence.

**Culturally Responsive Teaching**

Culturally responsive teaching is an approach that recognizes and values the diverse cultural backgrounds of children. It aims to create inclusive and culturally affirming learning environments. Fundamental principles of culturally responsive teaching in ECE include (McKoy & Lind, 2022; Taylor & Sobel, 2011; Vavrus, 2008):

- **Cultural Sensitivity:** Educators respect and embrace the cultural backgrounds, languages, traditions, and experiences of children and their families.
- **Inclusive Curriculum:** The curriculum reflects the diversity of the classroom, including diverse perspectives, histories, and contributions.
- **Collaboration with Families:** Educators partner with families to understand and incorporate cultural insights into the child’s learning journey.
- **Anti-Bias Education:** Educators address bias, stereotypes, and prejudice, promoting equity and social justice in the classroom.

Culturally responsive teaching adapts instruction to honor and leverage each child’s cultural identities and experiences.

**Outdoor and Nature-Based Education**

Outdoor and nature-based education is an adaptive teaching strategy that recognizes the importance of nature in children’s learning and well-being. Key elements of this approach include (Abd Talib, Mee, & Neâ, 2022; Chawla, 2021; Winter, Selin, Cerveny, & Bricker, 2019):

- **Outdoor Play and Exploration:** Children have opportunities for unstructured play and exploration in natural environments, such as parks, gardens, and forests.
- **Curriculum Integration:** Academic content is integrated into outdoor experiences, allowing children to explore scientific concepts, develop observation skills, and connect with the natural world.
- Physical Activity: Outdoor environments provide opportunities for physical activity and gross motor development.
- Sensory Engagement: Nature-based education engages children’s senses, fostering curiosity and a deeper connection to the environment.

Nature-based education adapts teaching to the child’s innate curiosity and the rich learning opportunities the natural world provides.

**Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)**

Social and emotional learning (SEL) is a critical component of adaptive teaching in ECE. SEL focuses on developing children’s emotional intelligence, self-awareness, social skills, and resilience. Critical aspects of SEL in ECE include (Hoffmann, Brackett, Bailey, & Willner, 2020; Humphrey, Lendrum, Wigelsworth, & Greenberg, 2020; Moazami-Goodarzi, Zarra-Nezhad, Hytti, Heiskanen, & Sajaniemi, 2021):

- Emotion Recognition and Regulation: Children learn to identify and manage emotions, fostering self-control and emotional well-being.
- Relationship Skills: SEL programs emphasize building positive relationships, including effective communication, empathy, and conflict resolution.
- Problem-Solving and Decision-Making: Children develop skills for making responsible and ethical decisions individually and in groups.
- Self-Esteem and Confidence: SEL promotes positive self-concept and self-confidence, fostering a strong sense of self-worth.

SEL programs adapt teaching to the child’s socio-emotional development, recognizing that these skills are essential for academic success and well-being.

**Reflective Practice and Continuous Professional Development**

Adaptive teaching strategies in ECE also extend to educators’ professional development and reflective practices. Essential features of this strategy include (Bleach, 2014; Cole, 2000; Stăncescu, Drăghicescu, Petrescu, & Gorghiu, 2019):

- Reflective Observation: Educators conduct ongoing reflection and self-assessment to improve their teaching practices. This process involves examining the impact of their strategies on children’s learning and well-being.
- Collaborative Learning Communities: Educators participate in professional learning communities, sharing insights, challenges, and best practices. Collaborative learning fosters adaptive teaching by drawing on collective wisdom and experiences.
- Research-Informed Practices: Educators stay current with research in the field of ECE and apply evidence-based strategies to their teaching.
- Continuous Learning: Adaptive teaching involves a commitment to lifelong learning and professional development. Educators seek opportunities for training and growth to refine their skills and adapt to evolving educational trends.

Adaptive teaching strategies in early childhood education represent a holistic and child-centered approach to instruction. These strategies recognize that children are diverse, capable, and unique, and they adapt teaching to nurture each child’s cognitive, social, and emotional development. By employing differentiated instruction, Universal Design for Learning, project-based learning, personalized learning plans, play-based learning, technology integration, scaffolding, culturally
responsive teaching, outdoor and nature-based education, social and emotional learning, and reflective practice, educators create dynamic and inclusive learning environments that celebrate the potential of every child.

**Comparative Analysis of Adaptive Teaching Strategies in Early Childhood Education**

Various contextual factors, including cultural norms, educational policies, and socio-economic conditions, influence adaptive teaching strategies in ECE. This section analyzes how adaptive teaching strategies are implemented in two distinct yet interconnected contexts: Nigeria and the UK.

**Educational Context in Nigeria**

Nigeria, as one of the most populous countries in Africa, faces unique challenges and opportunities in the realm of ECE. A blend of traditional practices, post-colonial legacies, and contemporary aspirations shapes the country’s educational landscape.

**Challenges in Nigeria’s ECE Landscape**

Despite progress in recent years, Nigeria still grapples with issues related to access and enrollment in ECE. Rural and marginalized communities often lack adequate facilities and trained educators, leading to disparities in educational opportunities. Ensuring quality in ECE programs remains a challenge. Many informal and unregulated ECE centers exist, which may not adhere to recognized standards of child development and learning.

Teacher training programs in Nigeria may not always equip educators with the skills and knowledge required to implement adaptive teaching strategies effectively. Nigeria’s socio-economic disparities are reflected in its ECE landscape. Children from affluent backgrounds may have access to better-resourced ECE centers, while those in underserved communities may face limited opportunities (Akinsemolu & Ogunkoya; Ogunyemi & Ragpot, 2015; Olakulehin, 2007).

**Adaptive Teaching Strategies in Nigeria**

In Nigeria, adaptive teaching strategies are increasingly recognized as vital tools for addressing the diverse needs of young learners. Educators in Nigeria often incorporate culturally relevant content and practices into their teaching. Recognizing the importance of cultural competence, they adapt instruction to align with the local context. Nigeria’s rich cultural heritage is integrated into ECE through storytelling, music, and traditional art forms, providing a culturally meaningful learning experience.

Adaptive teaching in Nigeria often involves close collaboration with families and communities. This partnership helps ensure teaching strategies align with local expectations and values. Efforts are being made to promote inclusive education in Nigeria, particularly for children with disabilities. Adaptive strategies, such as assistive technology and individualized support, are being explored to create inclusive classrooms (Chimombo, 2005; Saint, Hartnett, & Strassner, 2003).

**Educational Context in the UK**

The United Kingdom, with its well-established educational infrastructure and a history of formalized ECE, offers a contrasting perspective on implementing adaptive teaching strategies.

**Challenges in the UK’s ECE Landscape**

While access to ECE is widely available in the UK, issues related to affordability and childcare costs persist, potentially limiting opportunities for economically disadvantaged families. The UK’s early years curriculum emphasizes achieving specific learning outcomes, which can pressure
educators to conform to standardized approaches (Landivar, Scarborough, Collins, & Ruppanner, 2022; Yerkes & Javornik, 2019). The UK’s ECE sector serves a diverse population, including children from various cultural backgrounds and those with special educational needs. Educators face the challenge of effectively catering to this diversity while adhering to regulatory frameworks. Like many countries, the UK faces issues in recruiting and retaining qualified early-year educators, which can impact implementing adaptive teaching strategies.

**Adaptive Teaching Strategies in the UK**

The UK’s approach to adaptive teaching in ECE reflects its commitment to delivering high-quality early childhood education. The UK’s ECE framework includes the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), which sets out standards for learning, development, and care for children from birth to age five. Educators use this framework to adapt instruction to individual children’s needs. Formative assessment is integral to teaching in the UK’s ECE sector. Educators use observations, assessment tools, and ongoing feedback to tailor instruction and monitor children’s progress.

The UK emphasizes continuous professional development for early years educators. Training and support programs aim to equip educators with the skills to adapt teaching strategies effectively. In the UK, parental involvement is encouraged through regular communication between educators and families. This collaboration ensures that adaptive teaching strategies align with children’s experiences both at home and in the educational setting.

**Comparative Analysis**

**Cultural Responsiveness**

Cultural responsiveness in Nigeria’s ECE is deeply ingrained, with educators adapting teaching strategies to align with local cultural norms and traditions. This approach aims to create a sense of familiarity and cultural relevance for young learners. While cultural diversity is acknowledged in the UK, adherence to a standardized curriculum is often emphasized. The EYFS framework allows educators to adapt teaching strategies, but it may not always explicitly address cultural responsiveness.

**Community Engagement**

Community engagement is a hallmark of ECE in Nigeria. Educators work closely with families and communities to ensure teaching strategies align with local expectations and values. The UK also emphasizes the involvement of families in children’s early education. Regular communication and parental partnerships are encouraged to support adaptive teaching.

**Inclusive Practices**

Nigeria is making strides in promoting inclusive education for children with disabilities. Adaptive strategies, such as assistive technology, are emerging to create inclusive learning environments. Inclusion is a crucial focus in the UK’s ECE sector, emphasizing early intervention and support for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Educators employ various adaptive strategies to ensure that all children can access and benefit from ECE programs.

**Assessment and Evaluation**

While assessment practices in Nigeria’s ECE are evolving, there may be a need for further development and standardization. Formative assessment is recognized, but implementation can vary. The UK strongly emphasizes assessment for learning, with educators using various
assessment tools and techniques to adapt instruction. The EYFS framework provides a structured approach to assessment, ensuring consistency across settings.

**Regulation and Standardization**
Nigeria’s ECE sector is undergoing reform and standardization efforts. The development of clear policies and standards is essential for ensuring the quality and consistency of adaptive teaching practices. The UK has well-established regulatory frameworks, such as the EYFS, that provide a structured foundation for adaptive teaching. However, there is an ongoing debate about the balance between standardization and flexibility.

**Professional Development**
Professional development opportunities for early years educators in Nigeria may vary. There is a need for continued investment in training and support to equip educators with adaptive teaching skills. The UK strongly emphasizes continuous professional development for early years educators. Training and support programs ensure educators are well-prepared to implement adaptive teaching strategies.

The comparative analysis of adaptive teaching strategies in early childhood education in Nigeria and the United Kingdom reveals both commonalities and distinctions. While both countries recognize the importance of adapting teaching strategies to meet the diverse needs of young learners, they do so within the context of their unique educational landscapes.

Nigeria’s adaptive teaching strategies emphasize cultural responsiveness, community engagement, and emerging efforts in inclusive practices. The country faces challenges related to access, quality assurance, and teacher training, which impact the implementation of these strategies. In contrast, the United Kingdom’s ECE sector benefits from a well-established regulatory framework, professional development opportunities, and a strong emphasis on assessment for learning. However, it grapples with issues related to affordability, curriculum pressure, and the need to balance standardization with flexibility. Ultimately, the comparative analysis highlights the importance of context in shaping adaptive teaching strategies. The diverse challenges and opportunities faced by Nigeria and the UK underscore the need for flexible and context-specific approaches to ECE.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**
Both Nigeria and the UK must prioritize the training and continuous professional development of early childhood educators to ensure the effective education of young learners. This training should emphasize adaptive teaching strategies, equipping educators with the skills needed to cater to the diverse needs of children.

Furthermore, both countries should underscore the importance of cultural responsiveness within early childhood education. Educators should be trained to recognize and value cultural diversity, and curricula should incorporate diverse perspectives and cultural content. This approach fosters a more inclusive and enriching learning environment.

In addition, promoting inclusive education is crucial in both nations. This involves providing necessary resources and support for children with special educational needs and disabilities and incorporating inclusive teaching practices into teacher training programs. In Nigeria, investing in infrastructure development for early childhood education is vital, including building and renovating ECE centers, ensuring adequate resources, and maintaining safe and conducive learning environments.
environments. Meanwhile, the UK should find the right balance between curriculum standardization and flexibility, allowing educators the room to adapt teaching strategies effectively.

Both countries should also actively encourage parental engagement in early childhood education by fostering regular communication between educators and families. Collaborative research and evaluation of adaptive teaching strategies should be conducted to study their impact on children’s learning outcomes and well-being and identify emerging best practices. Lastly, international collaborations and partnerships should be sought to share knowledge, experiences, and innovations in early childhood education. By implementing these recommendations, Nigeria and the UK can further enhance the effectiveness of adaptive teaching strategies, ensuring that every child receives a high-quality and tailored educational experience that supports their cognitive, social, and emotional development.

CONCLUSION

The comparative analysis of adaptive teaching strategies in early childhood education across Nigeria and the United Kingdom underscores the dynamic nature of educational practices within diverse global contexts. Both nations share the common goal of providing young learners with a solid foundation for future success, but they navigate distinct challenges and opportunities in their pursuit of effective adaptive teaching.

Nigeria’s educational landscape, deeply rooted in cultural responsiveness and community engagement, showcases the importance of local context and cultural relevance in early childhood education. However, it also highlights the pressing need for infrastructure development, standardized quality assurance, and comprehensive teacher training to fully harness the potential of adaptive teaching strategies. Conversely, the United Kingdom’s established regulatory framework, professional development initiatives, and assessment for learning practices serve as a model for balancing standardization with adaptability. Yet, challenges related to affordability, curriculum pressures, and inclusivity persist, signaling the ongoing need for thoughtful policy adjustments and continued investments in professional development.

In conclusion, this review paper underscores the importance of context-specific approaches to early childhood education. It emphasizes that effectively implementing adaptive teaching strategies requires a deep understanding of local needs and cultural sensitivities. Nigeria and the UK can both contribute to a more thorough and flexible approach to early childhood education that honors the variety of young learners’ potential and promotes their holistic development on a global scale by exchanging ideas and working together internationally.

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