

Investigation of science teaching and learning activities in pre-primary classrooms in

Tanzania: a case of Mbeya city

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The study investigated science teaching and learning activities in the pre-primary classrooms in Mbeya City. Specifically, the study sought to identify the science activities proposed and practiced in the pre-primary classrooms, the science teaching methods that are employed by teachers during teaching and learning in pre-primary classrooms and finally, challenges facing pre-primary classrooms teachers when teaching science to young children. The study employed qualitative research approach using a descriptive design. Purposive sampling, stratified sampling and simple random techniques were used to obtain 18 participants for the study. The information was collected through semi structured interview, documentary search and classroom observation. The data were analyzed by using content analysis. The study found that; science activities were rarely practiced in the pre-primary classrooms. Furthermore, the findings revealed that, non-constructive teaching and learning methods were mostly used during science teaching and learning process where the lecture and questions and answers techniques dominated during classroom observation. Lack of enough science teaching and learning materials, insufficient skills and knowledge of science teaching, large class size, shortage of teachers and lack of time were the challenges which faced teachers during teaching and learning process. The study concluded that improving science practice for children needed preparation of professional development programmes for in-service teachers, so as to equip them with necessary knowledge and skills that are essential. The study recommends that teachers should practice science activities and use the constructive methods during teaching. Teachers should also use the local available resources to improvise teaching and learning materials. Furthermore, MoEVT should organize in-service training programmes for teachers and recruit and train more preprimary classrooms teachers. There is a need to investigate the science teaching and learning activities to a larger sample so that the results obtained could be used to improve the science teaching and learning in more pre-primary classrooms in Tanzania.