

GOOD CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT AND EVALUATION: MAJOR INGREDIENTS NEEDED FOR THE REALIZATION OF QUALITATIVE EDUCATION IN NIGERIAN NURSERY/PRIMARY SCHOOLS

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ABSTRACT

The place of good classroom management and evaluation in the realization of qualitative education of all levels of education in Nigeria cannot be under estimated. When and wherever good classroom management and evaluation are haphazardly attended to by the classroom teacher, failure, indiscipline, porosity as well as stress-packed experiences are the end result. However, teachers who make it a duty to manage their classrooms effectively are likely to attain success in all ramifications at the end of the day. This paper focused on what can be regarded as qualitative education, features of good classroom management and evaluation and the strategic steps that teachers should take so as to maintain good classroom management in order to promote qualitative education at the Nursery/Primary school level in Nigeria.

Introduction

Education has been recognized as one of the major tools needed for personal and national development. However, close to nothing will be learnt if the classroom activities are not well managed. The tone of the classroom will go a long way in determining the pupils' as well as the teacher's output. Good classroom management forms a basic part of qualitative education. When and wherever classroom management and evaluation of learners are given priority attention, pupils are likely to perform excellently. Good classroom management forms a basic part of qualitative education being demanded for in Nigerian society especially for the success of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme.

Qualitative education is characterized by the following:

- the type of education that is "rich" in all ramifications.
- a kind of education where good infrastructural facilities are available in school.
- the education where adequate preparations and provisions are made for professional teachers to handle all classroom activities.
- the education, which allows for broad school curriculum.
- a kind of education where the interest and level of growth of learners are put into consideration by the teacher in all the school activities.
- a kind of education that does not promote or allow vices such as examination malpractices to thrive.
- a kind of education that takes care of the all round development of learners.
- a kind of education which involves the adoption of all social-value-promoting strategies.(Molagun, 2005).

This paper is in line with the incessant cry for qualitative education in Nigeria.

The paper focuses much attention on the classroom teacher who is the pivot of all classroom activities (including the management and evaluation of lessons). Eke (1999) saw teachers as catalysts in the realization of educational goals. Monyoe (1996) expressed that teachers and their input are more important than the quality of equipment and level of financing in education. The importance of teachers in classroom management cannot be underestimated bearing in mind the fact that they are the major interpreters of the aims and objectives of education. Teachers are specially trained and equipped with the teaching and management skills needed for classroom effectiveness. They are also saddled with the responsibility of disseminating the relevant knowledge and skills into tiny kids and other older youths. They are to educate those who can be referred to as uninformed, those whose minds especially at the

nursery/primary level are close to a tabula rasa as described by John Locke a British philosopher (Mayer 1966).

For teaching and learning to have good results, there is a great need for good classroom management. Lack of good classroom management has enormous boomerang effects like porosity of the classroom, indiscipline, poor academic performance and of course, the jeopardization of teachers' efforts.

Classroom evaluation is also one of the core aspects of teaching and learning activities. It is indeed very crucial and a must for teachers to qualitatively evaluate their output, the level of assimilation or understanding of pupils, and the effectiveness of all teaching strategies adopted.

What is good classroom management?

Good classroom management refers to:

- a well controlled class
- a class where discipline is fostered and maintained;
- a class where orderliness is displayed on the part of learners and teachers;
- a class where the teacher does her work systematically and sequentially;
- a class where teachers' duties are carried out "religiously", devotedly and where all activities are well planned, well organized and well presented; and
- a class where motivation for self-discipline is encouraged and rules and regulations are followed with little efforts for compliance from the teacher.(Molagun, 2005).

Good classroom management is not seriously pursued by some teachers today as a result of laziness, laize fairness to work, and several unconventional and baseless distractions invented by such teachers. (Isiaka, 2004; Molagun, 2005).

Factors that aid good classroom management at the nursery level of education

Frobel (1782-1852) a German teacher and a Naturalist with keen interest in nursery/primary education itemised the duties of nursery/primary school teachers which, if followed to the letter will help in the promotion of good classroom management. Some of the duties are:

- to allowing children to learn by doing
- to allow play to dominate pupils' activities at the nursery level of education. This is because children are always having deep interest in such activities.
- teachers are to stay at the background as the child learns by experience. He/she should also ensure that the resources needed by the child are provided and made available to him. When properly exerted, these activities will certainly help to promote good learning among pupils.
- to ensure that play objects suit the ages of learners.
- to guide against rigid discipline for tender age children.
- to ensure that the classroom is made less formal for small kids. Rigidity, formalization which are all conventional approach at the higher level of education should not be displayed by teachers.
- to ensure that chairs, desks or tables of pupils are movable for them to easily move in and out of the classroom.
- to see themselves like a gardener tending a young plant. As a gardener will make provision for all that are needed for a plant to grow well, so should teachers ensure that children are given all that it takes for them to grow well in every direction of life (Mayer, 1966). Other concrete steps that aid good classroom management as

explained by Grant (1973) and Banjo (1985) are:

1. Teachers should master the subjects handled.
2. Adopt simple and workable child-centered methods.
3. Method adopted should allow for creativity, personal involvement of pupils, while play should also be purposeful.

4. Maintain sound disciplines that are commensurate with the level of maturity of learners.
5. Ensure that lessons are not lopsidedly presented, but are well planned, well organized, and presented from known to unknown.
6. Teachers should take note of the two laws of good classroom management in the area of discipline.

- i. The first law is that "prevention is better than cure"
- ii. "Self-control is better than imposed control".

If a trouble is allowed to begin, it will grow worse and what is required for the cure may become drastic. But when troubles are anticipated and preventive measures are taken, it will not arise at all.

For the second law to thrive, teachers are to turn children who are uncooperative and unwilling into cooperative and willing friends. Hence, willingness should be encouraged through incentives, rewards, and commendations, while unwillingness should be discouraged through the use of punishment.

7. Punishments given according to Olatayo (1997), should be: ^a Immediate.
 - Commensurate with the offences committed.
 - Not rigid for small children.
 - Corrective or reformatory in nature
8. Rewards and motivational strategies should be:
 - Continuous.
 - Good enough to spur other children into behaving well or put up their best in the classroom (Clement, 1989).
9. Classroom rules and regulation should not be ambiguous but be made explicit to learner.
10. Religious and moral lessons that aid better classroom management should be taught.
11. Teachers are to be models for learners to copy especially in the area of discipline, punctuality, dutifulness, faithfulness, tolerance. The teachers should use complementary statements, not foul languages that are derogatory or detrimental to the promotion of good child behaviour.
12. To command authority and respect from learners, as stated by Olatayo (1989), teachers should:
 - Maintain his/her dignity.
 - Be consistent; not strict with discipline today and slack tomorrow; he should not show any act of favouritism but should be just and fair to all.
 - He should not allow his emotions to control his actions.
 - He should respect the children and their rights.
 - He should be firm, not uncertain in his decisions. There should not be a situation where children are told what to do apologetically but they are to be addressed in decisive tones showing to them that obedience is expected from them.
 - Punishment and reward should be used wisely.
 - Teachers should be self-critical. He should know himself as Socratic (470-399 BC) an ancient and a renown Greek philosopher emphasized.
 - The teacher should be careful of his/her personal mannerisms. . can make him/her an object of ridicule before the pupils.

Since the efficiency of a classroom management is a measure of the teachers' activities and behaviour Grant, (1973) stressed that teachers should:

- a. Be methodical- to present his lesson attractively. This was also stressed by John Locke (1632-1704) a British philosopher. Haphazardness in preparations and presentations must be prevented.
- b. Routine matters must be well organized e.g. the way textbooks or exercise books or toys or counting objects are distributed; how to go out for break; to toilet,-cleaning of the board; shutting the doors and windows after closing; how and when to answer questions etc.
- c. To show enthusiasm in the presentation of lesson. A teacher who is half-hearted or adopts gloomy approach in the discharge of his/her duty will not attain much success.
- d. To love the children and act as loco parentis
- e. Ensure that there are sufficient chairs and desks for all children.
- f. Suitable temperature should be ensured, since poor ventilation will likely hamper learners' concentration.
- g. Room should be given for relaxation, games and sports. The postulate of plato (427-347 BC) should be put into consideration. He stressed the need to maintain a sound mind in a sound body.
- h. Teaching should not be above the level of growth of the learners. Rousseau (1906) warned that teachers should not hurry children to learn what is very remote to their interest or above their level or growth. Thus, nature should dictate what is taught to the little kids.
- i. Instructional materials used should be bold, bright, legibly well labeled and attractively painted. They are to be displayed when needed and removed immediately after being used.
- j. Learners should be given full opportunity to participate in the lesson.

Evaluation:

It is the act of considering something to decide how useful or valuable it is. Operationally, it refers to the steps taken by a teacher to find out how successful he or she has performed in the discharge of his/her classroom activities and also to ascertain the rate or level of assimilation of the learners.

Evaluation is the procedure taken by teachers in form of tests, assignments, or asking questions on what has been taught or by giving examinations at the middle or end of teaching exercise to establish how much has been acquired by learners. Also, it is carried out to identify areas where there are difficulties, or to find out how effective the methods or strategies adopted for teaching are.

Olatayo (1997) saw evaluation as a medium through which teachers are able to discover the weaknesses of their pupils and thus be able to help them get over such weaknesses. Hence, it is not possible for a teacher to do his/her work satisfactorily without evaluating the work being done and the progress being made by the pupils. Through evaluation, pupils are given a feedback of how they are faring academically and otherwise.

Maintaining good classroom evaluation

Since evaluation of lessons will expose teachers to the level of learners' comprehension and the success of teachers' activities, and also serve as a major avenue for feedback for learners and means through which parents are intimated with their children or wards' performance, it should never be handled with levity. A teacher that teaches without evaluating his/her lesson has not done a complete job. There is always the need to find out whether or not progress is being made in the lives of learners in all ramifications.

The general purpose of evaluation according to Olatayo (1997) includes:

- To reveal to teachers what is happening to each child.

- To motivate learning through furnishing pupils with information concerning success in various areas of the curriculum.
- To furnish teachers with a means of appraising teaching methods, textbooks and other instrumentation of the educative process.
- To provide basis for continuous improvement of the curriculum.
- To give pupils experience in evaluating their own progress.
- To reveal the progress which the schools programme is making towards the achievement of the objectives accepted.

What should be done to maintain good classroom evaluation.

- Evaluation should be continuous.
- It should not be done only after a lesson is presented. Rather, it should often take place simultaneously with lesson presentation, (i.e. as lesson progresses).
- It should not only state the academic performance of pupils but should include every detail of behaviour that the teacher can observe in the child.

The evaluation carried out should reveal differences in aptitudes, abilities, achievement interests and environmental background of learners. All these will help to determine the educational needs of the child later in life.

Factors to be evaluated by the teachers are as follows:

- Child's mental ability;
- achievement in the various areas of curriculum;
- personal and social adjustment;
- growth in attitudes;
- work/study skills;
- growth in self expression; and
- growth in critical thinking etc.

Teachers should equally ensure that questions asked in the classroom are clear enough for learners to understand what is to be done.

Conclusion

Teachers are not a set of workers that can be lazy, folding their arms only to receive their pay packets at the end of the month. They are expected to maintain a good tone of their classroom and to display their best in the discharge of their duties. Though teachers' work is cumbersome, the skills and knowledge acquired during their training will suffice in coping with their classroom assignments. They are well prepared as good managers of classroom activities. Teachers will be good classroom managers and evaluators if some of the points highlighted above are put into use as they face their classroom challenges daily. Discipline should be maintained, rules and regulations are to be affirmed, and class work should be well evaluated. No doubt, a teacher that does these and other strategies given in the course of this presentation will obtain a good feather as a good classroom manager and evaluator. Qualitative education will also be ensured at the Nursery/Primary level of Education in Nigeria.

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