

TOWARDS THE TRANSFORMATION OF PRIMARY SCHOOL CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT AND ORGANIZATION FOR PRACTICAL REALITY

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Abstract

The classroom is a vehicle for getting pupils from where they are to where they are going in their academic pursuit and lifelong actualization. A conducive classroom therefore becomes imperative, hence the need for a paper on transformation of primary school management and organization for practical reality. The paper delves into the meaning of primary education as well as its objectives, meaning of transformation, classroom management and organization as well as the challenges of effective classroom management and organization in primary schools. It has proffered some solutions that can make classroom management and organization more practical and real and concluded that the teacher must be sensitive to the happenings in the classroom by managing and organizing their daily routines and physical structures in the classroom to maximize learning.

Primary Education subsector of the Education ministry is an important stage of child's education. It is the formal starting point of education in Nigeria although the National Policy on Education (NPE) makes provision for early childhood education. The rest of the education system is built on it, therefore a faulty start can affect the entire educational foundation of the child. With this in mind, transformation of the subsector becomes imperative since change and innovation are content variables required by a society for growth and development.

A stagnated society will suffer inflation, restiveness, diseases, famine, high mortality rate and high level of illiteracy among others. It behoves a society to think of transformation of its system when there are indicators of non-functionality, so as to enable her meet with the changing social economic, cultural and political demands. Suffice here to say that all over the world, education is seen as an instrument for societal change. In Nigeria, education is the instrument par excellence for National Development (NPE, 2013). It is the belief of the Nigerian nation that education is the vehicle that can

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drive the nation to National Development. Based on this, the National Policy on Education (2013) spells out the objectives of primary education as follows:

- a. inculcate permanent literacy, numeracy and ability to communicate effectively;
- b. lay a sound basis for scientific, creative and reflective thinking;
- c. promote patriotism, fairness through citizenship education as a basis for effective participation in the contribution to the life of the society;
- d. mould the character and develop sound attitude and morals in the child;
- e. develop in the child the ability to adapt to the child's environment;
- f. giving the child opportunities to develop manipulative skills that will enable the child function effectively in the society within the limit of the child's capacity;
- g. provide the child with basic tools for further educational advancement including preparation for trade and crafts of the locality. (NPE, 2013).

The essence of these objectives is to prepare the child for life and provide them the opportunity to proceed to secondary school. The primary school classroom plays a vital role in the achievement of these objectives because it is where the activity of teaching and learning takes place. Teachers – pupils interaction takes place mostly in the classroom and it is in the classroom that the teacher is saddled with the responsibility of communication, character moulding, discipline, counseling and exploration with the world among others. Classroom management and organization is critical in effective and efficient instructional delivery because it creates optimistic and favourable atmosphere and environment that permits successful learning. It is against this background that this paper delves into transformation of primary school management and organization for practical reality.

Transformation

Merriam Webster Dictionary defines transformation as the act or process of changing completely or a complete change. It is a marked change in form, nature or appearance. In organizational context, it is a profound and radical change that moves an organization in a new direction and takes it to an entirely different level of effectiveness. It implies basic change of character and little or no resemblance with that past

configuration or structure. It is the act of introducing a new image or a brand new product and or programme.

Transformation is the process of changing from one quality of state to another. This can be applied to an organization or product or services offered by the organization. When related to primary education, transformation refers to the change of pupils character or attitude through learning or the transformation of the institution so that it is better able to provide transformatic outcomes such as learning. Transformation as a definition of quality focuses on process, enhancement, or empowerment of the learners and is linked to the value added to the change.

Harvey (1995) asserts that “quality as transformation is a classic notion”. This means that quality brings about distinction between two or more products or processes or services. In education, transformation is the enhancement of pupils for development of new knowledge and skills that are applicable to the dynamism of the society. Campbell and Rozsnyai (2002) discuss quality as transformation. Quality as transformation focuses on the learners, the teachers and the institution. The better the primary education institution, the more it achieves it’s goals of inculcating in pupils specific skills, knowledge and attitudes which will enables them to live and work in the knowledge of societal expectations. To Watty (2006), transformation is a unique individually negotiated process between the teacher and the learner which leads to the transformation of the learner. Here the learner is seen as a patient, client or raw material which requires a transformation process through the application of teacher’s skills using appropriate methods and implementing practicable and functional curriculum contents.

The Classroom

According to Wikipedia, a classroom is a room where classes are held. Classrooms are found in educational institutions of all kinds from where education training and development are provided. The classroom provides a space where learning takes place uninterrupted by outside distractions. It is a place where pupils learn the various skills deemed necessary and proper for them to achieve success in the global society. Cambridge English Dictionary defines classroom in a school or college as a place where groups of students are taught.

Classroom Management and Organization

Most education reform researchers in Nigeria centre on curriculum content and curriculum implementation among others. Minimal attention has been given to the management and organization of the classroom for effective teaching and learning.

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According to glossary.org (2014), classroom management refers to the “wide variety of skills and techniques that teachers use to keep students organized, orderly, focused, attentive on tasks and academically productive during a class session”. This makes classroom management the teacher’s task and when carried out effectively and efficiently, teaching and learning goals are likely to be achieved. This is why effective teachers tend to display strong classroom management skills such as planning, organizing, directing, coordinating and control of classroom activities so that learning can take place effectively and efficiently.

Classroom Management refers to everything a teacher legally does to facilitate learning. For example, laying emphasis on positive behaviour, facial expression, pupil motivation, respectful treatment of pupils apart from rules and regulation and seeking for compliance.

Classroom Management may appear simple but integrating it into instructions of pupils is a challenging task and requires the teacher’s ability to employ a variety of practical techniques and skills to achieve the overall goals. Citing Emmer and Borine (2016), The American Psychological Approach (APA) states that classroom management is the process by which teachers and school create and maintain appropriate behavior of students in classroom settings with the purpose of implementing classroom management strategies that enhances academic engagement.

While classroom management deals with the routines, classroom organization focuses on the physical environment (Educational Review office, 1998). This involves strategically placing furniture, learning centres and materials in order to optimize the pupil’s learning and reduce distractions. Effective and efficient education has a sense of classroom tempo and student harmony such that they are aware of when an intervention may be needed to prevent problem (Johnson, 1997). Classroom management and organization are interrelated, while rules and routines influence pupils behaviour, classroom organization impacts on the physical element of the classroom in order to make it a more productive environment for the pupils. Classroom organization is physical by evident in a room even if no one is present.

The Challenges of Effective Classroom Management

Teachers especially the neonates are faced with the challenges of effective classroom management and organization. This may be partly because they are not well trained and it may also be because they lack the skills required for classroom management and organization. It also can be due to overcrowded classes as seen in most public primary schools in Nigeria, and to other reasons such as leaking roofs, absence of

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adequate desks or sometimes lack of desks, dilapidated structures, poor chalkboards and lack of other learning materials and aids.

Although the government of Nigeria from 1999 had put in effort in improving physical structures in primary schools due to the introduction of Universal Basic Education (UBE) by President Olusegun Obasanjo, not much has been done as most schools are yet to be reconstructed especially in the rural areas. Although the UBE fund stipulate 70% for infrastructural development such as classroom construction, classroom formation among others, (FGN, 2007), not much has been done in this area.

According to Obasanjo (2007), education does not occur in vacuum, it grows in a socio-political-economic environment and there can be no education without a society. This means that the society provides the larger environment for the school to exist.

Nwadiani (2000), observed that many classrooms are dilapidated, overcrowded, ... and so makes classroom management difficult. Effective teaching and learning takes place only in a well managed classroom. Teachers must have to develop strategies that assist them overcome classroom challenges that classroom management and organization pose. Gregory and Ripski in Sawyer (2014), assert that the strategy for classroom management is defined as “behavioural approach”. This means getting to know the students by the teacher and establishing quality relationship with them such that they can comply to simple classroom rules and regulations. Most teachers do not set clear expectations of the pupils, they lack clear learning goals. Those that set goals are inflexible in their learning goals, while some are very assertive some are over flexible, they are involved in over verbalization to maintain discipline or over praising for encouragement. These are challenging to classroom management. Most teachers do not consider seat arrangement and organization of learning materials as important routine that makes learning meaningful and captivating. In the views of Alabi, Oduwiwe and Fasasi (2012), citing high school, (2000) state that, creating and maintaining stimulating learning environment can be achieved through adequate provision of relevant learning resources. Effective classroom management and organization displays a motivational learning climate which results in safety and peaceful serene for teaching and learning.

Time decision poses challenges in classroom management as many teachers do not pay attention to time before, during and after teaching. Lesson pacing is very crucial, and appropriate use of time makes learning effective. When the time for learning pieces of material are too lengthy, the tendency to lose interest in the topic is eminent and the

information received may not be valued and therefore lost. Disruptive behaviour may set in and create another challenge due to inability to control pupil's behavior and their level of indiscipline.

The climate of the classroom most times pose great challenges to the teacher. A cold climate causes sleep, a hot climate brings about a disruptive behavior and a warm classroom makes learning effective because pupils will be able to pay attention to the lesson at hand. Climatic situations are not paid attention to by teachers most times and this is likely to hamper effective teaching and learning.

Conclusion

Primary Education is the bedrock of the Nigerian entire education system. The achievement of primary education objective is anchored on effective teaching and learning which can only take place in a conducive learning environment of which the classroom is one of it. The appalling situation in most of the primary schools makes teaching and learning uninviting and uninteresting. Provision should therefore be made for creating a conducive classroom management and organization that attracts effective teaching and learning. Teachers should be sensitive to the happenings in the classroom by managing and organizing their daily routines and physical structures in the classroom to maximize learning.

The Way Forward

Classroom management and organization represents the function of the teacher. It is what the teacher does to organize daily learning that makes him an effective and efficient teacher. The following are suggestions that can help the teacher to make his classroom management activities more practical and real:

- set clear expectations of pupils to create classroom standard. When teachers are organized, pupils work hard. The teacher should therefore assess pupils, grade and return their class work and assignment as a routine;
- maintain and implement simple classroom rules and regulations for classroom orderliness and discipline;
- teachers should be consistent in decisions that affect teaching and learning;
- seating arrangement should be routinely organized to suit the lesson to be taught and should ensure the achievement of learning goals and safety of users (pupils);

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- teachers should develop achievable learning goals and should be a bit flexible with their learning goals;
- learning materials should be well organized and displayed for accessibility by the pupil;
- classroom should be brightly coloured with harmonious colour, well lighted and ventilated;
- overcrowded classes should be organized into smaller groups during teaching so as to bring about effective, inclusive teaching and learning;
- teachers should be motivational in the classroom and carry all children along during teaching and learning;
- accurate timing and correct pacing of lesson can make it effective;
- teachers should work around the classroom during class work to access pupils one-on-one so as to identify those who may have some challenges and require assistance.

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