

TEACHER EVALUATION: AN IMPERATIVE FOR TRANSFORMING TEACHING AND LEARNING PROCESS

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Abstract

The idea of teacher evaluation is to get devoted and improved service from teachers in order to effect learner's progress. To this effect, Mayer, Key and French (1965) hold the contrary view that, the utility of performance appraisal is rather questionable, as criticism has a negative effect on performance while praise has little effect one way or the other and defensiveness resulting from critical appraisals produce inferior performance. However, this paper holds that there must be a sort of check on the performance of teachers without which their work will not be done nor done properly. In view of this, the paper therefore is focused on teacher evaluation as a means to achieve the above especially teaching and learning. It involves the examination of the meaning, purposes, importance and better approaches of handling teacher evaluation as well as the provision of some recommendations for its effectiveness.

The philosophical objectives of teaching and learning are the emphasis on the need for effective teaching that leads to effective learning for acquisition of knowledge. This is because knowledge is important to man and so he constantly searches for it. It is the man's search for knowledge that necessitated the idea of teaching and learning because knowledge comes through teaching and learning. According to Ayeni (2005) as man learns and acquires knowledge, so he teaches to share it. For him teaching and

learning go synonymously with living. Teaching is effective when the:

1. aims of teaching are being achieved,
2. desirable changes in behaviour have resulted from teacher-pupil interaction, and
3. goals of education are being achieved through a teaching and learning situation (Ocho, 2005). For this to happen, he maintained that the following conditions must be fulfilled:

1. There are pupils willing and ready to learn.
2. There is a teacher professionally trained for the job and who is properly motivated to teach.
3. There are suitable materials and equipment to aid learning.
4. The place where the teaching and learning are taking place is conducive to learning. In order to achieve the first and second conditions, adequate teacher evaluation is an imperative. This therefore makes teachers evaluation inevitable venture in the education system especially to transform teaching and leaning.

Following this, Okon (2007) refers to teacher evaluation as the periodic evaluation of teachers teaching performance. For Joshua (1999), it involves a systematic collection and analysis of information, on the basis of which decisions are taken regarding the effectiveness in realizing the stated objectives and goals. Contributing to this, Thomas (1988) asserts that teacher evaluation should be more formalized and systematic because it systematically and overly appraises the work of the teachers. Teachers' work to be appraised are of two broad categories so also the evaluation namely formative and summative. Turner and Clift (1988) uphold that formative evaluation is concerned with programme development, the improvement of

practice by identifying strengths, weaknesses, needs and interests while summative evaluation is concerned with the selection, promotion, redeployment and dismissal of the teachers. In this way teachers' major task (teaching and learning processes) can be transformed for better.

To transform is to give a different form, to change the character of, to alter the nature of and to convert (Read, 2010). For Procter (1995), it is to change completely the appearance or character of something or someone so that they become improved. Transformation is therefore the act of changing for the better. Applying this in the area of teaching and learning, transformation implies changing the ways teachers handle teaching and learning for the better. By implication, teachers should teach in a way that will create situations or circumstances that could evoke learning. It is this consideration that has resulted in the resurgence of interest in the teacher evaluation in the education sector. To give credence to this premise Cardina and Roden (1998) and Orustein and Lerine (2006) agreed that to improve the teaching force, effort has to focus on testing and evaluating of pre-service teachers, new teachers' and even the experienced teachers. For them, the reform efforts in many states and local districts in USA have included particular methods of planning and delivering instruction. Thus these teachers, they added are evaluated, in large part, by

their ability to follow these standard methods.

The Purposes of Teacher Evaluation

In line with this, Marland (1987) enumerated the following as the purposes of teacher evaluation.

1. **Knowing of self:** teachers used to obtain feedback about what they are actually doing compared with what they think they are doing.
2. **Curriculum planning:** part of the curriculum planning cycle must include evaluation and appraisal. The appraisal component provides a powerful incentive to undertake through planning.
3. **Professional development:** evaluation provides a teacher with feedback so that he/she can develop professionally-adjusting, improving, keeping abreast with new ideas. It can help to identify specific in-service needs.
4. **General school planning:** for schools to be involved in sound decision making, they need to have in-school evaluation schemes to decide which policies and activities are worthwhile.
5. **Claim for resources-:** to justify claims we might make for resources. Administrators invariably require evaluations of how teachers use these resources.

6. **Accountability:** the community and the parents in particular want more details and evidence that schools and teachers are accomplishing what they profess they are doing. This can also involve removing incompetent teachers.

Similarly, Bolton (1971) and Koerin (1980) as cited in Joshua (1997) listed the following as the purposes of teacher evaluation:

1. Improving teaching, including out of classroom activities as well as classroom instruction.
2. Supplying information for modification of assignment.
3. Rewarding superior performance.
4. Protecting individuals in the school system in legal matters.
5. Validating selection processes
6. Providing basis for career planning and individual growth and development of the teacher.
7. Providing information and basis for personal decisions like promotion, tenure, pay rise, demotion and sacking.
8. Advising students in their choice of course and teachers where such choice is available
9. Providing evidence of the instruction's overall performance for

accountability to legislators, parents and the general public.

Finally, for Wentling (1980) planning, programme improvement and accountability are the purposes of teacher evaluation.

The Needs for Teacher Evaluation

Teacher evaluation is necessary in the education system for the interest of transformation of teaching and learning processes in the following ways.

Teacher evaluation enhances teachers' professional growth and teaching and learning quality towards excellence.

Teacher evaluation helps to find out their peculiar problems vis-à-vis their strengths and weaknesses. In this aspect, Ukeje, Akabogu and Ndu (1992) uphold that it is necessary to rate teachers to find out their special strengths and weaknesses so as to make more efficient use of them in improving the quality of education (and that of teaching and learning specifically).

Evaluating teachers' works and activities continually ensures that objectives set are relevant and attainable and the school curriculum reflects the needs of the society.

It provides a means of control to check on the accomplishment of tasks and identify factors that enhance or prevent their actualization.

It helps to know the teachers who are doing the right thing and who

are not and make adjustments accordingly, example promotion, dismissal and in most cases adequate supervision. In essence, teacher evaluation paves the way for supervision of teachers for excellent work performance.

The essence of teaching is to help the learners to learn efficiently. To achieve this the teachers has to teach effectively using adequate and relevant teaching materials. Therefore teacher evaluation will find out teachers who are teaching without teaching materials and correct them for improvement.

Through teacher evaluation, needed information for improving their services and education system are obtained.

Teacher evaluation provides good opportunity to evaluate their output in terms of input in the education system. Such inputs are: materials that teachers work with, quality of their learners, facilities and resources available to them, the condition under which they are teaching as well as where the learning takes place.

Some Good Approaches to Teacher Evaluation

There are various methods to effectively evaluate the teacher's work and activities in the school for the interest of teaching and learning. Among these methods, the better ones are explained here.

Interview

By this method, information are elicited from the teacher through verbal interaction or oral questions, such information can be about teacher's interest, difficulties at work, ideas on certain issues, etc. Interview can be structured or unstructured in order to give the teacher opportunity to ask and answer questions as the case may be. The essence of question and answer is for better understanding of both the teacher and his interviewer.

Direct Observation

By this method, first hand information related to the teacher's professional responsibilities are gathered through watching him in the classroom teaching. In evaluating through this method, checklist or open ended descriptions can be used. It is advisable to use electronic gadgets like tape recorders so that at the end there will be opportunity to discuss the main issues for self improvement

Competency/Performance Test

In this method, standardized test of competency in the subject area of the teacher and in the instructional delivery (teaching methods) is administered on the teacher at the entry point and at the intervals after entry and practice (Okon, 2007).

Student Achievement Based Rating

By this technique, the teacher is evaluated based on the student examination scores in the subject he teaches them. The idea here is that the

student's poor performance in the examination is an indicator of teacher's poor teaching. On the other hand the students excellent performance in the same examination indicates effective teaching by the teacher. However teacher rating based on students achievement is not 100% valid. In this case Ukeje, Akabogu and Ndu (1992) agreed that student achievement is affected by many factors of which the teacher is only one. For them the type of teacher rating to be used for the improvement of instruction should seek information on things like: personal qualifications, self confidence, adaptability, personal appearance, communication ability, class management, organizational ability, utilization of supplies, knowledge of subject matter and teaching techniques, inter-personal competence, tact, consideration, etc.

Student Rating

By this technique, the teacher is evaluated based on the student rating of the teacher at the end of the term or session. The information about the teacher is gathered based on the questionnaire prepared and administered the students using teacher teaching competency and performance as the criteria. Reacting on this, Okon (2002) upholds that teacher evaluation has students rating as a strong approach but it is hardly accepted by teachers especially in the developing countries like ours on the grounds that the findings lack validity and are not usually reliable.

Teacher Self Rating

Through this technique, the teacher evaluates himself using various checklists as a framework for reflection. The teacher can carry out this using his personal and school standard which is based on the goal setting. This approach according to Joshua (1999), can generate strongly and promote self-reflection and innovation in the teacher (Okon, 2007). For him, it enables the teachers to become empowered, to develop creativity and maintain trust and dignity in their profession.

Conclusion/Recommendations

To effectively transform teaching and learning, attention must be centered on the teacher evaluation with a view to improving their teaching preparation and delivery. To this effect, this paper recommends the following.

Needs assessment must be properly done on every new teacher at the entry point into teaching profession. Okon (2007) added that it is to deal with other competing needs in terms of qualification and experiences.

The teacher's teaching preparation and delivery should be properly evaluated.

Teacher evaluation should be to help him and not to seek a reason to fire him or to delay his salary and promotion. In this regard Ukeje, Akabogu and Ndu (1992) warned that what should be rated is the work done by the teacher and not the teacher. At the

end of the exercise, for them, unacceptable work needs improvement, acceptable ones should be kept up while outstanding work needs special recognition.

As the purpose of rating teachers is to motivate and help them (teachers) work better, there should be frequent problem solving interviews rather than mere observations and ratings. (Mayer, Key and French (1965).

Teacher evaluation should be a cooperative affair between the teacher being assessed and his assessor.

Goals or standards that are realistic in terms of total inputs should be set to make sure that teacher's output are not evaluated in isolation. This is in line with the warning of Ikeje, Akabogu and Ndu (1992) that these inputs and established processes will affect the quality of output to be expected of the teacher and consequently, the standard to be used for evaluating his work. For them any evaluation done arbitrarily without considering this, is not only useless, but dangerous and can generate biases and discomforts in all parties concerned and so reduce the willingness of the teacher to contribute seriously to the common cause.

In conclusion therefore, this paper has successfully highlighted the meaning, purposes and importance of evaluating teacher's works and activities in view of its benefits in the transformation of teaching and learning

process which in turn improves the quality of education. It also presented some of the approaches considered better for teacher evaluation including some recommendations.

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