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## Managing the Teacher as a Human Resource for Effective Implementation of Educational Standards

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By

J. P. GBENU, (Ph.D.)  
*Department of Educational Management,  
Lagos State University,  
Ojo.*

### Abstract

*The paper established the basis of educational standards to be revolving around the needs and aspirations of students and society both in the classroom and outside. Educational standards therefore define the knowledge and skills students should possess at critical points in their educational career. Such educational standards must equip the students to compete favourably with their colleagues anywhere in the world especially as there are great challenges today in all human endeavours – social, political, economic, health, cultural, etc. – and the teacher is a major anchor towards the development and implementation of such educational standards even though the paper recognized other stakeholders in the development of educational standards. Seeing the teacher as the right human resource in this regard, the paper suggested the employment of qualified teachers and effective management of such teachers by applying a number of management theories such as Maslow's theory, theories X, Y, and Z, contingency theory, goal setting theory, expectancy theory, reinforcement theory and equity theory among others.*

Today, emphasis is being placed heavily on effective management of human resources at an edge over machines towards goal realization in organizations at any level. Proper management of people especially as it relates to education and training is the basis of the wide differences between the developed and developing countries (Oguntoye and Alani, 1998). Human resource management according to Armstrong (2000) “is a strategic approach to acquiring, developing, managing, motivating and gaining the commitment of the organization’s key resource – the people who work in and for it”. Since organizations operate within societies, their goals and aspirations must run concurrently with that of the societies to avoid conflict. Workers (human

resources) within the organizations must therefore be orientated as to the relevance and uniqueness of their roles and responsibilities within the organizations and societies (which must conform with the societal culture and organizational climate). By and large, every organization must realize that to manage human resources, some principles are fundamental. First, human resources are the most important assets an organization has and their effective management is the key to its success. Secondly, organizational success is most likely to be achieved if the personnel policies and procedures of the enterprise are closely linked with, and make a major contribution to, the achievement of organizational objectives and strategic plans. Thirdly, the corporate culture and the values, organizational climate and managerial behaviour that emanate from that culture will exert a major influence on the achievement of excellence. This culture must be managed, which implies the continuous effort, starting from the top that will be required to get the values accepted and acted upon. Lastly, continuous effort is required to achieve integration – getting all the members of the organization involved and working together with a sense of common purpose so that members can achieve their own goals best by directing their efforts towards the success of the enterprise.

Education has been the bedrock of development all the world over and a major agent of that development within the education industry is the school. In order for nations to meet up with their aspirations and confront the challenges going on in the world today, schools must equip their human resources with current ideas to effectively function. The educational standards set up for the school must be challenging to meet the needs of the students and the society (Olaniyonu, Adekoya and Gbenu, 2008). This implies that what should be the basis of educational standards are the challenges outside and within the school system upon which the teacher as a human resource has an incomparable role to play. It is recognized here that both academic and non-academic members of the school system work together to achieve success, the teacher has been placed in the forefront of all activities because of their efforts towards the development of cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains of the students which are the tools the children will use to develop themselves and the society today and in the future. It is on this basis that the paper examines the roles of the teacher in relation to educational standards and suggests ways to effectively manage the teacher to fit in the world of current challenges so that he can be relevant in their formulation and implementation.

### **Why Educational Standards Matter**

It is necessary to establish challenging academic standards in schools for students so that they face the myriads of problems in the area of economic, social, political, and cultural issues. According to UNESCO (2008), curriculum has to be revised “if they are to prepare youngsters to live in a society marked by explosion of new knowledge in science and technology, by information and communication”. A new

trend now is to specify curricula in terms of outcomes and levels of achievement rather than content. UNESCO (2008) referring to the Education for All) EFA declaration adopted in Jomtien declared that:

Every person shall be able to benefit from educational opportunities designed to meet their basic needs. These needs comprise both essential learning tools (such as literacy, oral expression, numeracy and problem solving) and the basic learning content (such as knowledge, skills, values and attitudes) required by human beings to be able to survive, to develop their full capacities, to live and work in dignity, to participate fully in development, to improve the quality of their lives, to make informed decisions and to continue learning. The scope of basic learning needs and how they should be met varies with individual countries and cultures and inevitably, changes with the passage of time

The implication of this is what should form the basis of every nation's educational standards or system should be the challenges confronting such nation locally and internationally as these affect the students and the society and the schools must be equipped to address these issues. Developing countries in particular must develop educational system and standards that must address issues on health (HIV-AIDS, infant and maternal mortality rates, sickness, polio, etc), long-term economic competitiveness, information technology, politics and culture.

### **The Teacher and Educational Standards**

A competent teacher facilitates the learning of the required knowledge content and the ability to apply the knowledge to the types of situations familiar in classrooms and textbooks. An excellent teacher according to Gardner (1993) however went beyond this and aims at higher order learning that involves the following aspects as well:

- a. learning the ability to apply the knowledge to novel types of problems and situations which may not have been encountered in the textbook scenarios and
- b. learning to learn, that is, to become self directed, independent, life-long learner.

This quality of teacher as described by Gardner (1993) came as a result of his experience that many students who received honour grades in college- level physics courses were frequently unable to solve basic problems and questions encountered in a form slightly different from that on which they had been formally instructed and tested.

Citing a wide variety of examples from subjects ranging from physics and biology to sociology and history, Gardner (1993) demonstrated a serious failure of the modern

educational system in helping students move towards genuine understanding. In his words:

...essentially, the same situation has been encountered in every scholastic domain in which inquiries have been conducted. In mathematics, college students fail even simple algebra problems when these are expressed in wording that differs slightly from the expected form. In biology, the most basic assumptions of evolutionary theory elude otherwise able students who insist that the process of evolution is guided by a striving towards perfection. College students who have studied economics offer explanations of market forces that are essentially identical to those proffered by college students who have never taken economics course.

Therefore, the mental transformation that is called learning on the part of the students can be facilitated by a combination of curriculum design (appropriate objectives, syllabuses, reading lists and modes of assessment) and curriculum implementation (preparation of teaching materials, classroom activities involving the students, design of exercises, assignments, projects and quizzes, feedback to students and final examinations) on the part of the teacher who has the freedom to choose what he regards as the best.

Given the conception of teaching as a learning-triggering activity, it follows that excellent teaching is that which maximizes the chances of learning through the efficient use of the formulation of objectives and syllabuses, handouts, reading lists, teaching materials, classroom activities, choice of modes of assessment, design of exercises, assignments, projects and quizzes, feedback to students and final examinations. All these are within the purview of educational standards which can be maintained and implemented by an excellent teacher. The excellent and competent teacher has a deep knowledge and understanding of the subject matter, is committed to teaching and is hardworking, continually seeks ways to improve, innovate and be up-to-date, has a strong passion for the subject, has a high esteem for teaching, is an inspirational role model to students, empathizes with students and is eminently approachable. These are some of the qualities of a good teacher.

Educational standards therefore define the knowledge and skills students should possess at critical points in their educational career. According to National Educational Research Council (2001), “standards serve as a basis of educational reform across the nation as educators and policy makers respond to the call for a clear definition of desired outcomes of schooling and a way to measure student’s success in terms of these outcomes”. The National Policy on Education (2004) recognizes the roles of the teacher within the education system when it states that “no education system may rise above the quality of its teachers” a statement that made the Policy list the goals of teacher education as:

- (a) The production of highly motivated conscientious and efficient classroom teachers for all levels of our education system;
- (b) Encouraging further spirit of enquiry and creativity in teachers;
- (c) Helping teachers to fit into social life of community and the society at large and enhancing their commitment to national goals;
- (d) Providing teachers with the intellectual and professional background adequate for their assignment and make them adaptable to changing situations; and
- (e) Enhancing teachers commitment to the teaching profession.

These goals call for adequate management of the teacher if he is to contribute meaningfully to developing and maintaining educational standards of the students and the society. Teacher education is recognized by the Policy to take cognizance of changes in methodology and in the curriculum in which case teachers are planned to be regularly exposed to innovations in their profession. In addition, in-service training is part of developmental programmes of the Policy meant to serve as an integral part of continuing teacher education and planned to take care of all inadequacies. Effort towards the improvement of quality education around the teacher has been planned to include the appointment of academically and professionally qualified persons as teachers and headteachers. As a strategy of effective management of the teacher, the Policy recognizes the creation of promotion opportunities to allow professional growth at each level of education.

Invariably, in the process of developing educational standards in any nation answers should be sought to the following questions developed by Marzano (1997) which are pertinent to the growth and development of such country: where will the nation get her standards? Who will set the standards? What types of standards should be included? In what format will the standards be written? At what levels will benchmarks be written? How should benchmarks and standards be assessed? How will students' progress be reported and what would students be held accountable for? National, state and local educators should play an important role in improving students' learning through the development and implementation of standards throughout the country.

### **Effective Management of the Teacher: Useful Motivation Theories**

Motivation theories according to Armstrong (2000) "attempt to explain and analyze how personal and intrinsic factors interact and influence one another to produce certain types of behaviour". It is therefore important for producers of education to understand what motivates teachers and other workers in the industry so that educational standards formulated can be implemented to the letter and reviewed when necessary. A number of these theories are highlighted as follows.

Maslow's hierarchy of human needs (from lower to higher).

## *The Intuition*

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These are termed physiological, security, social, self esteem and self-actualization needs which have to be met if a worker is to function effectively.

Theory X (developed by McGregor to describe how managers relate to subordinates)

1. Most people dislike their work and will avoid it
2. Most people lack ambition and have little capacity for problem solving and creativity
3. Workers prefer direction and avoid taking responsibility and initiative
4. Workers are motivated only by Maslow's lower level needs (physiological and safety)
5. Workers are self-centred, indifferent to the needs of the organization, and resistant to change

Theory Y (also developed by McGregor)

6. Most people meet high performance expectations if appropriately motivated and the climate supportive
7. Most people are creative, imaginative, ambitious and committed to meeting the organization's goals
8. Most people are self-disciplined, can direct and control themselves, desire responsibilities and accept them willingly
9. Workers are motivated by Maslow's higher level of needs (self esteem and self actualization)

Theory Z (developed by Ouchi – the source was the Japanese workplace)

10. Similar characteristics as theory Y
11. Management deems workers as trustworthy and capable of working without close supervision
12. Workers are motivated by self esteem and self actualization
13. Japanese management provides a supportive environment with lifetime employment, consensus decision making and collective responsibility
14. Ouchi compared Japanese organizations (type J) with traditional American organizations (type A)
15. Ouchi theorized that to the extent lifetime employment, consensus decision making and collective responsibility could be incorporated into American organizations and then worker productivity and motivation would improve.
16. Ouchi called this new hybrid American organization, type Z

Contingency theory (developed by Morse and Lorsch)

17. People have a central need to develop a sense of competence. This need continues to motivate even after competence has been achieved

18. Project managers should ensure that there is a good match between team members' skills and their assignments and that the organizational climate is conducive to meeting team members' needs and achieving a sense of competence

Goal setting theory (developed by Latham and Locke)

19. Working towards a goal is a major source of motivation
20. Individuals have an internal desire to achieve goals
21. Clear, specific, concise and challenging goals motivate team members
22. Project participants must be allowed to participate in setting goals, formulating plans and implementation strategies in order to gain participants' acceptance and commitment to meeting project goals

Expectancy theory (developed by Victor Vroom)

23. People think seriously about how much effort they should put into a task before doing it
24. Motivation occurs if there is an expectation of a favourable outcome
25. A person's behaviour is based on the strength of their expectation that an act will be followed by a desired outcome or good performance
26. A person's behaviour is based on their expectation that good performance will be rewarded. The attractiveness of the reward to the individual also influences a person's behaviour
27. Project managers should try to ascertain the most important needs of their team via informal communication and by developing interrelationships with team members]

Reinforcement theory (based on Skinner's behaviour modification theories)

28. Human behaviour is shaped by the previous positive or negative outcomes experienced by a person
29. Desirable behaviour will be repeated if rewarded and undesirable behaviour can be discouraged by punishment

Equity theory (developed by Adams)

30. People are motivated by their desire to be treated equitably
31. People compare their jobs and compensation with those of others on the project. Inequities can influence the degree of effort they exert
32. Inequities can result in conflicts and problems, thus requiring considerable effort from the project manager, functional managers and human resources personnel to resolve
33. Project managers must ensure that all project participants are compensated fairly for their contributions to project success.

These are some of the theories a project manager (in this case stakeholders in the education industry) can adopt towards effective management of the teacher in the discharge of his duties which surround the development and implementation of educational standards.

### **Conclusion**

The development of educational standards is based on the needs and aspirations of students and society with students at the heart of all considerations and the teacher being the pillar that supports the structures of educational standards. In order not to allow the structure to crumble, the teacher must be empowered to discharge his duties effectively. His being empowered requires continuous training on the job and adequate management. Effective management requires the adoption of motivation theories such as Maslow's theory of needs, theory X, theory Y, theory Z, contingency theory, goal setting theory, expectancy theory, reinforcement theory and equity theory. It is by so doing that educational standards cannot only be effectively set but properly implemented and sustained by competent teachers and other major stakeholders in the industry.

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