

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT AND CONTROL: A PRAGMATIC APPROACH TO ACHIEVING QUALITY ASSURANCE IN SECRETARIAL STUDIES/OFFICE TECHNOLOGY AND MANAGEMENT IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS

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Abstract

Classroom management and control simply connotes how the classroom teacher handles his/her subject matters, instructional materials and learners. It is directly connected with management of human and material resources in order to attain educational objectives as well as societal goals. As important as this course is, in making teaching and learning outcomes effective in classroom situation, many teachers lack the pedagogical skills and techniques of classroom management to impart knowledge particularly in Secretarial Studies/Office Technology and Management programme for sustainable national development. This paper, therefore, is geared towards highlighting the importance of classroom management and control in achieving quality assurance in Secretarial Studies/Office Technology and Management in tertiary institutions. It brings into focus the strategies of classroom management and control in school environment, techniques for sustaining good classroom management and recommends methods for achieving functional teaching and learning outcomes.

Classroom management and control are terms designed to assist education facilitators to bring about effective teaching and learning in a school environment. It is the duty of the teacher to teach as well as ensure that learners learn. For learning to be facilitated, teachers must plan and harmonize available resources to see that sound education is transmitted. Kpalol (2010) opined that education is a veritable instrument for the enhancement of self, the environment and the eradication of all vices and poverty. Education is always seen as the bedrock of progress and development in any nation. It is a sensitive issue and a vital instrument for the development of any society. This is why, every nation takes keen interest in the planning, organization and funding of education for its citizenry. No wonder why the Nigerian government has always taken the bull by the horn in managing, handling and monitoring all systems of her education.

Before the advent of western or formal system of education, Nigerians have had both informal and non-formal types of education, which were not structured, effectively managed or organized. As a result, their progress and development were always slow and restrictive. As years rolled by, a more organized and properly managed formal or western education was introduced. Formal education is disseminated to learners through well structured national curriculum, planned by curriculum experts. These specialists usually plan and harmonize all subjects and experiences which the nation wants the citizens to learn at the various levels of education via the schools. Kpalol (2010) stressed that properly managed formal education enhances quality education and quality education enhances good health care, technology, agriculture, roads, safe drinking water, provision of basic infrastructures and national economy. Educational organization is always geared towards the attainment of the goals of teaching on the part of the teacher and the acquisition of knowledge, skills and values on the part of the learner. These happen during implementation stage in schools. No matter the good plans of curriculum experts, the class teacher's organization and management determine to a great extent the effectiveness of teaching-learning process. The guiding principles of efficient classroom management are the establishment and maintenance of discipline. For teaching-learning to be meaningful and efficient, the teacher needs to manage and control the human and non-human materials placed under his care. These positively influence the learning process of the students.

Concepts of Classroom Management

Management in its broad sense involves the acts of planning, organizing, coordinating and controlling of group activities, using all the resources at hand by one or many individuals, in order to achieve identifiable objectives or benefits. Peretomode (2001) opined that classroom management is a social or interactional process involving a sequence of coordinated events in the classroom which

include planning, organizing, coordinating, controlling and leading in order to use available resources to achieve a desired outcome in the fastest and most efficient way. Good classroom management is a gate way to successful teaching, learning and grasping of items presented by the facilitator. To achieve these benefits, the teacher plans, coordinates, formulates rules and regulations on how to manage, unite the interests and efforts of the learners, as well as the available material resources at his disposal to arrive at some common curriculum goals.

Classroom management does not occur in a vacuum. It involves trainees and trained personnel, who are involved in planning, organizing, directing and controlling the affairs of learners, utilizing various instructional materials, teaching methods and evaluation procedures to make the children placed under their care educationally sound. The National Teachers' Institute (NTI) (2000) stressed that classroom management is the organization of some basic, nonacademic tasks which are necessary for effective teaching as well as learning. Ochonogor and Ajaja (2005) argued that no teacher is so naturally gifted that he cannot benefit from the study of teaching methods and classroom management. Management ordinarily involves utilization of personnel, students, materials, methods and money to accomplish the organizational objectives (Iloh, 2001). The teacher's tasks of organizing and mobilizing all human and material resources to attain stated lesson objectives are through effective classroom management. Classroom management, at times referred to as classroom administration, is the actual implementation of the curriculum planned for the nation.

Onyemarekeya (1996) believed that management involves the organization of certain non-academic tasks that are essential for effective teaching. Therefore, the process of keeping rules, regulations, discipline or order, environmental sanitation, planning, preparation and presentation of lesson for learning is classroom management. No wonder Johnson and Bany (2005) described classroom management as the process of organizing and coordinating the willing efforts of children to achieve their own educational objectives.

Peretomode (2001) opined that classroom management is the application of the processes of planning, organizing, coordinating, controlling and evaluating human and material resources in order to achieve stated educational goals or objectives. Good classroom management according to Peretomode (2001) requires administrative competence and skills. These skills are:

1. Technical skill: This refers to the ability to use the tools, methodologies, process, procedures and techniques of one's specialized field to teach the lesson.
2. Human Skill: This refers to interpersonal rapport between himself, his co-teachers, students and their parents in order to create a conducive learning atmosphere.
3. Conceptual Skill: The classroom teacher's conceptual skill has to do with his knowledge and mental ability to coordinate and integrate the entire interests and activities of all in the class.

Quality Assurance

Almeida (2007) defined quality assurance in any educational institution as that which indicates the pre-eminence and special features that make the institution distinct from other forms of institutions. He examined the nature of quality in education and stated that quality is perceived as the level of achievement or performance and this is linked with the ability to function well in the school environment and to meet the needs of the entrepreneur.

Feldman (2005) enumerated two aspects of quality in education, which are both internal and external. The internal aspect is the implementation of the school objectives while the external aspect deals with the implementation of national objectives, which are prerequisites to the achievement of quality in any educational institution. Bazargan (2005) suggested that quality assurance is the whole process whereby a particular organization is managed to achieve and hence be able to assure quality. Idialu (2007) described quality as standards of something as compared to other things. That is the degree of goodness or excellence. In his contribution, Leigh (2007) opined that teachers' quality means the ability of the teacher to raise students' performance on tests as well as skills, and also work

Classroom Management and Control: A Pragmatic Approach to Achieving Quality Assurance in Secretarial Studies/Office Technology and Management in Tertiary Institutions

well with other teachers and school administrators for the purpose of raising the performance of the students. Quality assurance on the other hand refers to the monitoring and evaluation of performance of the various levels of the education system in achieving the specific goals at each level and overall objectives of the system (Makoju, Nwangwu, Abolade and Newton, 2004). Quality assurance, Peter (2007) opined is a planned and systematic review process of an institution or programme to determine whether or not acceptable standards of education, infrastructures are being met, maintained and enhanced. Quality may also be considered on the basis on how good and efficient the Business education teachers are, how adequate and accessible the facilities and materials needed for effective teaching and learning are, and how prepared the students/graduates are for meeting the challenges of life and for solving societal problems.

Strategies of Classroom Management and Control in Achieving Quality Assurance in Secretarial Studies/Office Technology and Management

For functional teaching-learning outcomes in school and for learners to contribute effectively to national development after completing their Secretarial Studies programmes in tertiary institutions, teachers should possess the following qualities and attributes and apply necessary strategies to enable them perform efficiently and creditably well in the class.

The teacher, a prime leader: A leader is a person or a guide who is in charge or in command of others. A class leader therefore is the head of the class who has an influential voice to conduct or control the learners. Peretomode (2001) opined that the classroom teacher is essentially an organizer and an implementer of plans, policies and programmes meant for specific educational objectives. The teacher as a good class leader must enforce class discipline through proper planning and organization of his class. To bring about conducive class environment, the teacher must maintain good personality, control his emotions and create good rapport between himself, the learners, the school and the public. Adequate preparation by a good class teacher ahead of time brings calmness and reduces stress and fatigue in learning. The class leadership must not only be left in the hands of the classroom teacher or else he will be over occupied by irrelevant things that may hinder real teaching. For easy management and control of the class, the teacher needs to assign duties to his class pupils, such as class prefect, labour prefect and so on.

The teacher as a good planner: Ughamadu (1998) opined that the teacher's classroom planning is choice oriented. This makes the teacher to arrive at decisions that would lead to the building of a programme of learning experiences that could enable the learners to attain pre-specified goals/objectives. The teacher should have long and short term plans for his teaching. In planning his lesson, the teacher should be able to consider the learners' age, interests, needs, cultural factors and the environment.

The teacher as a director: Awanbor and Omoifor, (1998) stated that one of the major responsibilities of a good teacher is to direct and guide pupils towards the attainment of worthwhile experiences for self reliance, growth of the children and national development. The teacher is expected to understand what the activities of each will be by planning and classifying in advance and in sequential order, the topics to be taught, the expected objectives, the likely experiences to be acquired, the teaching aids and methods to be used to drive home the lesson to the learners without stress or boredom. The teacher as a leader of class activities must be prudent and knowledgeable. The class teacher should effectively guide the pupils in order to attain educational objectives. He should determine the needs of the class at a particular time and adopt strategies to meet those needs (Awanbor et al 1998). To lead or direct learners properly in the class, the teacher must encourage activities that require team building, communication, discipline, role playing, and social interaction.

The teacher as a controller of his class: To control the class children and class activities may not need forcible actions such as punishment and scolding of the children, because these could lead to eye-service on the part of children. Cole (2002) established that for effective class control to take place, the teacher must apply four basic control elements which include the under-listed:

- a. Establishment of standard performance,
- b. Measurement or evaluation of performance,
- c. Comparison of actual results against standard; and
- d. From the feedback, corrective actions could be taken where the need arises.

For an all round developmental objectives, Awanbor (1998) stated that it is necessary to set learning standards which address the cognitive, affective and psycho-motor domains of learning.

The teacher as a coordinator/guardian of his class: The teacher has the sole responsibility to coordinate all the educational activities in his class so that the class children and himself will not derail from the established objective of education. Ogonor (1998) stated that the teacher in his class has the responsibility to see that all human efforts and activities as well as interactions are adequately harnessed to attain the established educational objectives of the class. He does these through proper guidance and coordination.

The class teacher as a prudent budget manager: Finance is the bedrock in securing, purchasing and maintenance of teaching aids. So accountability should always be the teacher's watchword. Since school finance is part of public finance, every kobo that comes in or goes out from the class must be accounted for by the teacher. Every teacher is expected to be prudent in his economic responsibility and in his ways of handling the human and teaching materials at his disposal. Nwaham (2008) asserted that teachers' prudence includes his ability to utilize and control functions, services, and resources cautiously and expeditiously.

Teacher as an effective record keeper: Records constitute the bedrock upon which any organization such as the school exists. In every school system, one very important administrative function of the school head, class teacher and other non-academic staff is the keeping of authentic records. It is pertinent to state that recording information is important but keeping them constitute a different ball game altogether. Many people do not appreciate the seriousness in keeping records. Peretomode (2005) asserted that records comprise all the books, files and other documents which contain information relating to what goes on in the class, things which are in the class as well as what kinds of properties the class owns. Class records are documents that contain authentic and vital information on the past and present happenings in and around the class, which can be referred to in future for decision making. Although, teachers are not permanent in any particular class, yet their records and information form basis for class continuity. It involves the teacher collecting, collating, filing and storing of information on every aspect of the class. Records whether statutory or non statutory, are prepared to communicate information to those who need them. Achunine (2008) stated that class records are necessary to communicate authentic and relevant information when needed by the Ministry of Education, Education Boards, parents, pupils, researchers and other public users. Real information from the classroom is a valuable asset in any organization such as the school and classroom, as it enables the school leader, class teacher and educational agencies to plan, control, implement and evaluate the students' class performance and school tone.

Techniques for Sustaining Good Classroom Management and Control

To maintain conducive atmosphere for meaningful and effective learning so as to achieve quality assurance in the secondary schools system in the country, the class must have good discipline which can only occur through good class management and control. The main techniques for sustaining good classroom management and control include:

1. Adequate preparation by the teacher, the mastery of his subject, as well as the provision of adequate and relevant teaching aids.
2. Orderly and sequential arrangement of the children and the class environment.
3. Teaching under a conducive and calm atmosphere devoid of noise and distractions;

Classroom Management and Control: A Pragmatic Approach to Achieving Quality Assurance in Secretarial Studies/Office Technology and Management in Tertiary Institutions

4. The motivation of the students to prevent boredom;
5. The teacher's ability to stand at strategic positions while writing on the chalkboard.
6. Giving clear and explicit instructions in a very clear and audible voice and in a simple language to avoid noise.
7. The teacher must be humorous but not to a fault;
8. Creating good teacher-student rapport by being familiar with them, and possibly mastering their names.
9. Making few class rules and following the rules and regulations without bias;

Summary

The business of classroom operation and management calls for proper preparation, planning, execution, assessment, evaluation, supervision, inspection, record-keeping and self-discipline through appropriate application of teaching methods. It is not just a cut and nail affair because adequate pedagogical skill acquisition is required from the teacher to be able to keep abreast with modern ways of classroom welfare. Incidentally, there is no substitute to it than effective teacher education programme.

Recommendations

Classroom management calls for precautionary measures in the classroom to avoid possible problems or discipline within the four walls. To ensure proper classroom management and control and achieve sustainable quality assurance in secondary school system, the following methods are recommended.

1. Teacher should be observant of each student during instruction to prevent possible break down of law and order.
2. Adopt positive behavior modification policies to reward or punish any class member
3. Always give class work to engage students in order to avoid noise making or staging other types of misbehavior.
4. Maintenance of good teacher/students relationship to encourage friendliness in the classroom.
5. Avoid the penchant to humiliate or ridicule students unnecessarily to avoid embarrassment.

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