

INSTRUCTIONAL QUALITY AND ITS APPLICATION IN NIGERIAN TERTIARY EDUCATION: A CASE FOR APPLIED SCHOLASTIC METHOD.

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Abstract

This paper tried to analysed issues involved in the application of instructional methods in the learning process. This is arisen from the continues public outcry on the calibre and quality of graduates from particularly our tertiary institutions which most often is considered to be very low. Its mode or method of application was also considered. The writers argue for Applied scholastic method because of its workability, practicability and guiding principles which enable the learner and teacher to monitor the progress being made at every stage of the learning process, and where any fault is dictated, measures of correcting same are provided before progressing. It was therefore suggested among others that government and other relevant agencies should ensure the provision of adequate and relevant instructional materials to the institutions, while teachers/lectures should ensure its application appropriately as at when due as suggested by Hubbards and other proponent of Applied scholastic method.

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Keywords: instructional materials, quality, applied scholastics.

The issue of quality education has dominated public space in more than the last three decades especially after independence, when Nigerians began to question the value and quality of education received in our schools particularly tertiary institutions which is the focus of this paper, the worry is that, these had become irrelevant to our needs. In fact, these informed the hosting of conventions and conferences which later culminated into the national policy on education in 1977, revised in 1981,1998,2004,2007 and the current edition was in 2013. This is a document that is currently guiding the entire education system to date,yet no solution appear insight while the public continue to grumble about quality on the hand and about equity on the other hand. The thesis of this paper is to approach the problem from the angle of instructional materials with a focus on application of ‘applied scholastic’ ...to optimize results. The argument here hinged on the fact that through effective use of instructional materials, quality learning can be achieved.

Closely link to the issue of instructional material is how to use them which is the methodology and writers of this paper specifically proposed the application of “applied scholastics method” as shall be seen shortly. Consequently the following questions suffice: what is instructional material? And what is quality in education? How best can instructional materials be applied to achieve maximum results in Nigerian tertiary education?

Clarification of key concepts

Instructional materials:

Orakwe refers to instructional materials as information repositories from the society sourced to transfer the desired information to the learners during classroom instruction¹. In like manner, Agu views instructional materials as those apparatus of teaching which may include textbooks, workbooks, charts, audio visual aids, specimens and other relevant things that will attract students’ attention, and which should only be introduced at the appropriate time by the teacher². Similarly, Aramide and Bolarinwa opined that instructional materials have potentials for enhancing students learning³. Its role in teaching and learning is one of the most important and widely discussed issues in contemporary education policy. Education in this age has become widespread and as such, excessive oral teaching cannot be the key to successful pedagogy.

In the area of civic education, Igu observed that it is an activity based subject and therefore depends on instructional materials are central in the teaching and learning of civic education because no matter the efficiency of a teacher, effectiveness in lesson delivery cannot be guaranteed without use of instructional materials⁵. Esu, Erukoha and Umoren affirmed that Nigerians facilitate learning of abstract concepts by helping to concretize ideas and stimulate learners’ imagination⁶.

Quality: there is no generally agreed definition of this concept, since different definitions of quality are appropriate under different circumstances; but suffice to mention a few: thesaurus states that quality is excellence, conformance to specifications, conformity to requirements, fitness for use, product desirable attributes, and meeting expectations⁷. Armstrong and Patrick rightly hold that the approach of quality as excellence is derived from philosophy and borrows heavily from the great philosopher Plato from his discussion of beauty. According to this view, quality is synonymous with innate excellence⁸. These authors as cited by Kumar, Raju and Kumar observe that the word quality came into existence many years ago, though without any definite definition, but changing from time to time they maintained that many techniques were used to evaluate quality and to monitor production process control charts.

Meanwhile, from business point of view, to measure the performance of a business quality, standard is essential. When we consider the issue of quality education it would be seen that education is the most powerful weapon that could be used to change the world but has continued to encounter some difficulties in terms of assessment especially with the experience in Nigeria. Ruwa has observed that quality education, when applied to teaching and learning in schools, is an elusive concept because the criteria used to judge it are influenced by when, where, for whom and by whom⁹, while Peters as cited in Akinpelu, states that quality is the essential characteristics of a thing which distinguishes them from other things¹⁰; but to place the concepts in clearer

perspective and for the purpose of this paper, we shall rely on Ruwa's position looking at quality education in terms of input and outcomes.

According to this source, pledging quality education from inputs entails measuring issues such as resources, programmes and cost with particular attention to pupil-teacher ration, class size, funding, teacher's salaries, text books, curricular contents and so on. Then reference to the quality education in terms of outcomes are usually measured in academic achievements of students. This aspect is lacking in Nigeria, therefore constituting worry of writers of this paper. Following the analysis of concepts and issues above, one would have simply concluded that solution to this long standing problem is in focus but unfortunately it is still lingering. Writers of this paper therefore attempts direction of "Applied scholastics". Methodology.

As stated earlier, there has been continued concerns revolving around quality of education among Nigerians in last four decades or more. An overview of available literature on the issue of quality and quantity globally revealed that perceptions on educational development vary among developing and developed nations. The desire of most developing nations to have a greater educational development seemed to have focused on quantitative aspects. In Nigeria, as an instance, education is considered as an instrument 'per excellence' for effecting national development¹¹. Thus the major emphasis of Nigerian educational policy and return have been on the quantity of education. On the other hand, educational researchers and policy makers who are influenced by educational developments in the developed countries emphasized the question of quality in education because they are mostly interested in qualitative aspects of educational development. Hence, the debate rages on while meaningfully learning is being truncated and jeopardized.

Furthermore, this continues debate between advocacies of quality and quantity education even attracted researchers and reports including that of world bank 2018 titled 'schooling without learning' the report revealed that the mere presence of physical educational institutions does not necessary results in learning and writers of this paper shares in this sentiment. It warned that millions of young learners in Nigeria and other low and middle income may face the challenges of lost opportunity and lower wages in future and writers of this paper concluded that graduates of tertiary institution continue to suffer same without learning, education will fail to deliver on its promise to eliminate extreme poverty. World Bank report 2018¹². Pointed out that even after several years of schooling. Millions of children cannot read, write or do some basic numeracy. This learning crisis according to the report is widening social gaps instead of narrowing them.

What appears to be clear in the report is that there is an urgent need to align the quantity and quality/infrastructure of education in Nigeria if the objectives of schooling are to be realized. Writers of this paper strongly therefore advocates the adoption of the "Applied scholastics" approach to learning. In its submission, the reports holds that schooling is not the same as learning and that schooling without learning is not just a wasted opportunity but a great injustice. This may be the situation in Nigeria because one can see available public schools from primary, secondary to tertiary schools but there is little or no teaching and learning in reality. While the public is complaining of half baked graduates especially from public schools.

What is applied scholastics?: it is a study technology where a man is able to learn as he can learn and to know that which he has learn. It provides suitable foundation enhancing all educational efforts. This is also a guide to what teachers, tutors, trainers, parents and students can do to improve the quality of teaching and learning in their community and society. Advocate of this method argue that its broad use will achieved a world free from illiteracy where people can learn anything and be anything.

Why applied scholastics?: as early as 1980, Hubbard recognize the failing of the educational system. In answer to this crisis, he began developing an actual technology of learning to which to master any subject. To provide students of every age and educational level with the missing ingredient of much of modern education. The ability to learn how to learn. As mentioned earlier and as specified in national policy document. The end and goal of any society as it addresses the problem of education is to raise the ability, the initiative and cultural level, and with all of these the survival level of that society’.

Main thrust of Applied scholastics theory:

- i. Hubbard s theories on education describe three barriers to learning ‘the first is the absence of mass, pertaining to the lack of physical object relating to a concept i.e if one is attempting to understand the function and operation of a car or a solar system, the printed page and spoken word are no substitute for the object itself. Lacking the object also ... with a word can inhibit all understanding, if the mass of a subject is absent, the student will feel squashed, bent, such of spinning or reed, or bored. This is particularly the case with graduate of quantitative schools.
- ii. The second is a steep or skipped gradient, meaning a necessary previous step, was skipped. Here when the student has not mastered prior skills before proceeding to more complicated or detailed step, the student feel a sought of confusion-reeling-moving or swaying as if they might fall. This is also the case with mass production of students, in most cases, the students in class are seen to far out number that specified in the policy document, so even where student missed a vital and important steps in the course of learning, the teacher hardly notices to talk of correcting the students. Such experience are hardly noticed amongst graduates in the developed nations who normally maintain standard. No wonder we experience high turn-out of half baked graduates from our public schools in Nigeria who are the worst casualties
- iii. The third is the misunderstood word which necessitates looking up unclear word in the dictionary. A misunderstood word is a word which is not understood or a word which is wrongly understood. It can result in the student feeling blank, or washed out, not here, not there and soon and a sort of a nervous upset feeling after. We may not be surprise then that our graduates cannot stand boldly to defend their certificates after graduation. Today, most of our students rely on their phones to read, worst still the use of text message is been transferred during formal writing which is unfortunate because of a lot of errors.

Conclusion: From the analysis of issues involved in instructional materials with respect to the relevant achievement of educational goals. Provision of instructional materials is important but, this aside, it can be seen that mode of application also plays a vital role in the learn process, writers of this paper argue for applied scholastic model with emphasis on the three (3) cardinal principles proposed by Hubbard namely; absence of mass, consideration for skipped gradient

....., clarifying misunderstood word. It is hoped that through this medium, effective and permanent learning can be achieved qualitatively and so development can be enhanced.

Recommendations

- i. Government should ensure the provision of adequate and relevant instructional materials.
- ii. Teachers/Lecturers should ensure the application of the instructional materials as at when due as suggested by Hubbard's theory.
- iii. Students and learners should step up their study habit as advocated by the applied scholastic theory.

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