

Important Considerations in the Pedagogy of Teaching and Learning in Contemporary Education Setting

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Abstract

Teaching and learning are core reasons why educational institutions are established in the world over. It is important to note, however, that the quality of what is being taught and learnt hinged heavily on the approaches used in teaching-learning situation. This is a technology age and as such requires a dramatic technological revolution through a well-structured and purposive educational system that encourages development of skills and competencies that are capable of impacting positively on the lives of people in our societies.

This paper therefore suggested best pedagogical considerations to facilitate effective teaching and learning in contemporary school settings would include consideration for the teacher, learner, curriculum and teaching facilities.

Keywords: Teaching, Learning, Pedagogy, Contemporary education setting

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Introduction

Teaching and learning are basic reasons why institutions of learning are established all over the world. The quality of what is being taught and learned rest heavily on teaching approaches. In the past and to some extent in recent time in some countries, Nigeria inclusive, the conditions under which teaching and learning take place can be described to say the least compromising, classes are overcrowded, teachers do not have adequate professional preparation and certification. Facilities in some cases are grossly inadequate and there are curriculum issues. All of these do not allow for the right pedagogy of teaching to be applied in teaching courses to the students in the classrooms.

The age we live in is a technology age, and as such requires dramatic technological approaches through a well structured and purpose oriented educational system that encourages skills development and competences necessary to impact positively on the lives of people in our societies. To achieve these, the right pedagogy of teaching should be employed by teachers so that a more meaningful learning can take place on the part of the students who are expected to pilot the affairs of the nation someday. In this paper, emphasis is not on methods of teaching and learning but about other considerations such as the teacher, learner curriculum and facilities tied to teaching and learning methods and strategies, without which effectiveness would be lost in education setting. The focus in this paper therefore is on the understanding of what teaching, learning and pedagogy mean and to look at important considerations tied to the pedagogy of teaching and learning in the contemporary education setting.

What is teaching?

A layman definition to teaching might suggest “impacting knowledge to other people”. This definition to me is myopic because to understand what teaching is, you need to know the processes and approaches involved. According to Amaele (2003), teaching is the guidance of students through planned activities so that they may acquire the riches learning possible from their experiences. The word “guidance” to me is an important element of teaching in the contemporary education setting. A teacher does not give instruction or lecture on issues, the guides. Students are guided to learn by themselves independent or group task and project work.

What is learning?

There is no absolute definition to learning. People define learning taking into consideration the learning theories and strategies adopted in the course of learning. For example, there are Associationist, Gestalt field theories etc. There are also many learning strategies such as conversational approach, problem-based learning, play-way method, computer and electronics device application flined trip method and so on.

Fundamentally, learning can be conceived as a product of teaching. However, it is not always the case as people learn by accident or through personal experience. Ability of the learner to recall, discriminate, categorize and application are often associated with learning (Watanabe, 1985). A relatively permanent change in behaviour as result of teaching, practice, previous experience, team and project work to me will give a concised definition to learning.

Pedagogy of teaching

Pedagogy deals with the theory and practice of education. It concerns the study and practice of how best to teach. It aims range from the general (full development of the human being via liberal education) to the narrower specifics of vocational education (the impacting and acquisition of specific skills). Methodologies, approaches and strategies of impacting knowledge to learners constitute important components of pedagogy in teaching and learning. (“Analysis of Pedagogy”. Educ.Utas.edu.au).

It is therefore very important to know that it would be very difficult to talk about methods of teaching and learning without considerations for other factors that must be put in place for their effectiveness, the basis for this paper. At this juncture, permit me to give a picture about a typical public primary school for example in some states in my country-Nigeria.

- Most classes in primary schools have average population of fifty pupils.
 - Sometimes, there is only one teacher to a class.
 - Some schools do not have adequate teaching equipment and facilities.
 - Time table for classes mostly is 35-45 minutes.
- The fundamental question, therefore, is how can best pedagogy of teaching be applied under these circumstances.

Basically, Pedagogy means Teaching and Learning Strategy Pedagogy is the art (and science) of teaching. Effective teachers use an array of teaching strategies because there is no single, universal approach that suits all situations. Different strategies used in different combinations with different grouping of students will improve learning outcome. Some are better suited to teach certain skills and field of knowledge than the others. Some are better suited to certain students’ background and abilities. Pedagogy is how teaching learning occurs. Students are not empty vessels to be filled with our expert knowledge they must construct their own understanding through our considered learning experiences.

Advantages

1. Effective pedagogical practice promotes the wellbeing of students, teacher’s and school curriculum.
2. It improves students’ and teacher confidence and contribute to their sense of purpose at school.
3. It build community confidence in the quality of learning and teaching in school.
4. It supports intellectual engagements and connectedness to the wilder world, particularly when technology such as computer web-site and internet are used in learning.

Important Consideration in the Pedagogy of Teaching and Learning in Contemporary Educational Setting

The goal of education in the 21st century is not only to prepare students for jobs upon graduation from schools but primarily to prepare them to face challenges of this life. These challenges could be ecological, nutrition, political economic, aviation, job security social security among others. Today's education prepares global citizens. The following are therefore presented as important considerations in the pedagogy of teaching and learning in the contemporary education setting, if students would be adequately and productively prepared to face the challenges as heightened above.

Consideration for teacher

According to Douglas, teacher plays the primary role as a dispenser of information to orchestrator of learning and helping students turn information into knowledge, and knowledge into wisdom. Culture of inquiry should be applied by the teacher in the classroom. He is therefore an important consideration in the pedagogy of teaching and learning partly because he creates the strategies to ensure effective learning in the classroom.

In recognition of the importance of teachers to apply effective pedagogy of teaching and learning, countries like Switzerland, Japan, Newzealand, Shangai (China) and France have developed cultures of lifelong learning that begin with induction processes that are comprehensive, coherent and sustained (Oladunjoye, 2015). According to him, in the Carlbad school district in New Mexico in the USA, the induction for programme for teachers is focused on teaching teachers how to teach the required benchmarks and standards.

In Nigeria, Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria has the responsibility of ensuring quality assurance in teaching profession by licensing professional teachers. It has been observed that so many teachers in schools in Nigeria do not have professional qualification to teach.

The following are therefore the expectations of teachers in the contemporary education setting:

1. He plays the role of a model.
2. He arouses interest of learners to the subject matter.
3. He ensures that instruction is not teacher-centred but rather student centred (Durkin, 1993).
4. He plays the role of facilitator.
5. The teacher provides learning environment that allows for inquiry.
6. He encourages project method of teaching. This allows for interaction among members of the group through this, collaboration and meaningful learning is made possible.
7. Whatever strategy of teaching that is adopted and depending on the topic or course, the teacher must appeal to the visual, auditory and kinesthetic capacity of the learner.
8. The use of web-site and other technology devices must be used by the teacher in topic delivery and students must be encouraged to use internet facilities in their search for information.

9. Learners diversity should be put into consideration in the course of choosing strategies to teach.

Learners' Consideration

1. The curriculum and instruction should address learners' diversity too.
2. In the classroom, in schools, active learning is promoted where learners work collaboratively with classmate and others around the world (global classroom).
3. Learning is student –oriented to ensure that this happens, learning environment should be conducive.
4. Our goal is to help students become global citizens. This is a technological age and as such, students should be exposed to computers, laptops, internet facilities phones, gaming devices, web etc. My experience with students has revealed that although many of these students today are familiar with these facilities they use them for entertainment purposes rather than academic and knowledge enhancement.

The Learner in the past was a young person who would go to school, spent a specified amount of time in certain courses, receive passing grades and graduate. Today, as emphasized by Merrill & Jennyson (1977), Kellner (2008), learners must be seen in an new context as follows:

1. Learners interest must be maintained by helping them to understand how what is being taught prepares them for life in the real and challenging world.
2. Learners' curiosity must be aroused, which is fundamental in lifelong learning.
3. Flexibility in how learners are taught because learning pedagogy that works for learner 'A' may not be productive for learners "B".
4. We must encourage learners to be resourceful and independent in their learning approach.
5. Application should be more emphasized in teaching and learning. Let learners work in group. Give them task to solve. Here the teacher's role is to guide. Therefore, the choice of teaching pedagogy must recognize the learner because teaching is centred around him. Deviation from this will only result into poor learning. There are a number of students in schools today who have learning difficulties not because they are dull but partly because, the choice of pedagogy being adopted by their teachers are not advantageous to them. They ordinarily would have done well in school if their peculiarities were taken into consideration.

Consideration for the Curriculum

Curriculum is a set of courses and their contents offered at a school. Curriculum in the contemporary education setting was summarized by Kellner (2008) as follows: it is interdisciplinary, project-based and research driven. It is connected to community-local, state, national and global. Sometimes through internet, mobile phones, websites, students collaborate with people around the world in projects. The curriculum incorporate higher order thinking, skills, the use of technology to solve problems.

The classroom is expanded to include the greeter community, students are self directed and work independently and interdependently.

Curriculum is not textbook-driven. Skills and contents are not taught as an end in themselves, rather, students learn them through their researches and application in their project. Textbooks therefore is just one of the learning resources, (Kellner, 2008).

The contemporary curriculum also emphasizes ICT, technology and entrepreneurship. Because so many schools neglect these aspects of the curriculum, particularly, entrepreneurship, many school graduates end up without jobs. This is partly because, they are not jobs and they do not possess entrepreneurial skills to create job and wealth. This shortcoming is pronounced in Nigeria, my country. I am aware that other countries have this problem too Soludo (2006) a former central Bank Governor of Nigeria, stressed that in the knowledge driven 21st century, education must be the key driver of socio-economic transformation and the curriculum of all levels of education should reflect this. In 21st century education, facts and figures are constructed through researches and applications are connected to previous knowledge, personal experience, interest, talents and passion of the 'learners.

Yes, the curriculum of the contemporary education setting is robust and developmental, prevailing conditions in our schools, particularly, schools in some developing countries like Nigeria Cameroun, Niger, etc can not support it. In Nigeria, there are many schools with average class population of more than 50 students, gross inadequacy in facilities and qualified personnel. The question again is, how can you have curriculum of the 21st century under these circumstances?

Consideration for the Curriculum

The proposition in the 21st century education is that without adequate facilities, learning cannot be meaningful, practical and application of theories, concepts, information to solve problem would be elusive. The fact remains that the students require adequate and relevant facilities to do project learning that is recommended in the contemporary education setting. Gambari (2011) pointed out that in order to promote ICT, vocational and entrepreneurship education, in the 21st century education, basic infrastructure and facilities to support effective teaching in this direction should be put in place. Workshops for vocational course should be provided, entrepreneurship centers, studios for Arts and craft, photography are also necessary facility requirements. If all of these are not present in a school setting, how do you teach some of these courses most effectively.

In the contemporary education setting and school system, computers, internet, e-library, studio, workshops, web-sites fields, conducive classrooms, re-agents for laboratory experiments, the laboratory itself, phones, television etc have been found indispensable in teaching and learning to prepare students for lifelong education. All of these have the capacity to support the most appropriate pedagogy a teacher chooses to apply in teaching his students ("Enhancing Education"
(<http://enhancinged.wgbh.org/started/what/forma.html>).

Conclusion

It can be concluded that without proper considerations for teacher, curriculum and facilities, teaching and learning in contemporary education setting will not be effective. And that the choice of pedagogy to be applied in the classroom should reflect these considerations.

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