

## CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT AND CONTROL STRATEGIES: TEACHERS' PATHWAY TO EFFECTIVE CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY

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### Abstract

*This paper discussed the relevance of classroom management and control strategies to a 21<sup>st</sup> century teacher in the curriculum implementation. Specifically, the discussion was carried out under the following sub-headings: introduction, concept of curriculum, concept of curriculum implementation, the concept of teaching, concept of classroom management, classroom management and control techniques, and concepts of classroom planning and organization. The paper has also discussed the strategies to manage students' misbehavior in the 21<sup>st</sup> century classroom among which include: plan ignorance, finger pointing, and call attention, stand still, brief standing, direct engagement, conduct counselling, pretend isolation and report to school authority. Finally, a conclusion was drawn.*

**Key words:** Classroom management, Curriculum implementation, 21<sup>st</sup> century Teacher

### Introduction

One of the greatest attribute of education is knowledge integration. Knowledge is always holistic and not compartmentalized. For education system to strive effectively, a number of bodies of knowledge and disciplines have to come together on a common goal. Education is usually translated in school setting where all hands are on desk, ranging from the curriculum, teachers, instructional methods and facilities, classroom management and control strategies, planning, organization and administration and perhaps, the students who are the major beneficiaries of the entire upper mentioned. For teachers of the 21<sup>st</sup> century to be effective in the implementation of the provisions of positive values, attitudes, skills and knowledge enshrined in the curriculum, they ought to be skillful and resourceful to employ relevant classroom management and control strategies that will address the emerging social issues and students misbehavior

in classroom situation. Employing these strategies will help create conducive learning environment, promote active students participation and strengthen the teaching and learning processes.

### **Concept of Curriculum**

Curriculum is known as an authentic document of plan of action which contains and enshrined all that education entails in the teaching-learning process. Curriculum plans, designs, organizes, develops, promotes and evaluate issues that has direct bearing to education. It contains the objectives, contents, methods and evaluation procedures. Curriculum and education are therefore intertwined, integrated and inseparable with the former complementing the latter. The concept of “curriculum” in education plays a leading role in pointing to the direction of progressive change that reflect the emerging social issues, challenges and educational reforms (Rufa’i, 2018).

In education, it is the curriculum that determines what happens, how it happens, with what it happens and how to be sure that it has happened. To this end, developing and sustaining any idea means to look extensively on it thereby bringing out all issues at stake which can be: of relevance, effects, problems, challenges and providing way forward as solutions. Wiles & Bondi (2020) expatiated that curriculum document in education provides a framework that helps prepare academics and teachers. It helps them to develop and support the focus for understanding the learners and the society. Curriculum establishes practical experiences that are consistent and thoughtful. This explains why no meaningful progress can be made in education if issues and activities are not adequately and appropriately planned, designed, organized and developed in the curriculum.

### **Concept of Curriculum Implementation**

The test of any functional curriculum is whether it can be effectively implemented. There is nothing more practical than a good process in curriculum implementation in the class room situation. The importance of a workable education process has long been stressed in the concept of curriculum implementation. This is in line with the fact that, it is through curriculum implementation that ideas and issues planned in the curriculum could be translated in to action and become meaningful and successful for the overall benefit of the learners and society.

Moreover, Akuma (2019) asserted that curriculum implementation is the actual engagement of students with planned learning opportunities. It is a crucial stage when in the midst of learning activities, the teacher and students are involved in discussions aimed at promoting learning. The teacher in view of this adopts an appropriate method and resources to guide his or her teaching. The students on their part are actively involved in the process of interaction with learning activities and experiences. Offorma (2019) maintained that curriculum implementation is the arrangement of the pre-

planned curriculum through assessment of the facilities, resources and environment to ensure that the planned curriculum is instructionally translated without hitches. Hence, the class room is the teacher's clinic where curriculum implementation finally takes place in the form of lesson delivery on daily basis. Curriculum implementation is therefore a process through which all the relevant curriculum plans and inputs are brought into direct contact with learners through a wide variety of activities so that learning experiences and mastery can be maximized and sustained in the teaching-learning process.

Education system in Nigeria is in dire need of positive transformation especially in the area of curriculum implementation at the class room level. This is basically the responsibility of the teacher. While curriculum experts planned and designed the document, it is the teacher who translates the objectives, concepts and topics in the curriculum into activities that are meaningful to the learners and the society (Kabir & Zakari, 2018).

One should agree with the notion that the entire education system revolves around a functional curriculum with teachers as the sole implementers. It is worthy to note that in many countries of the world (Nigeria included), no education system can rise above the quality of its teachers. This is because, it is the teacher who in the final analysis translates policies in to practice and programmes in to actions. Okam (2019) asserted that, "the teacher is the most important single factor in any teaching-learning process. Teachers are at the hub of any education system. For upon their number, their quality, their devotion and their effectiveness depends the success of the system and no education can be stronger than its teachers."

From another perspective, Ben-Yunusa (2008) lamented that, for any curriculum plan to become fully meaningful, it must be adequately implemented. The way it is implemented influences the degree of success of the education system and the society. "Class room teacher", he added, forms the corner stone in curriculum implementation. He or She is the main force and the last person that ensures that any curriculum is implemented well according to specifications. It is the teacher who decides what to teach, at what time, and why some kind of teaching scheme may have been prepared in advance. The teacher interprets the syllabus and breaks it in to lesson plans; decides on what instructional materials to use; the methodology to adopt; the amount of time to spend on each aspect and space to use. Decisions of this nature determine the pace of success that can be attained in any meaningful instructional process, which will eventually be translated in to societal development.

What could then be made out on these assertions is that the teacher factor, with his or her expertise determines the very success of any curriculum implementation and the entire education process. On the other hand, teacher's incompetency poses a major

challenge in the realization of educational objectives. Teachers are therefore instrumental in the entire education system and the development of any society.

### **The Concept of Teaching**

The word “teaching” refers to the act of transmitting knowledge, skills and other values by a trained personnel to an individual or group of individual learners. It is a process of imparting knowledge and skills to learners by a professional in order to achieve the desired objective (Jan, 2022). Any person who facilitates the transmission of knowledge to others can be categorized as a teacher. Never the less, a teacher is a properly trained, certified, registered and licensed and who has attended teacher training institution and successfully completed its prescribed, rigorous, systematic and validated teacher education programmes in the art and science of teaching his or her subject(s) at a particular level of educational system (Aliyu, 2023). The essence of becoming an effective teacher lies in knowing what to do to foster learning and being able to do it. Classroom management is among many, a distinctive feature required of any meaningful teacher in the teaching-learning process.

The teacher’s effectiveness is usually assessed by his or her ability to use variety of classroom management and control strategies in the instructional process. All curriculum plans involving teaching and learning in school takes place in the classroom. Akpan and Nkan (2022) maintained that classroom is the meeting point for both teachers and students and where curricular activities are implemented. Educational objectives cannot be fully achieved without the use of conducive environment. A good classroom environment facilitates desirable behavior among students and thus, enhancing their academic performance positively.

### **Concept of Classroom Management**

Classroom management is the process of creating a favorable learning atmosphere in the classroom for effective teaching and learning. Skillful classroom management brings about harmony and orderliness in the classroom. It prevents misbehavior by carefully planning and organizing classroom environment, establishing clear rules and procedures, so as to teach effectively. Classroom management refers to the wide variety of skills and techniques that teachers use to keep students organized, orderly, focused, attentive, on task, and academically productive during a classroom interaction (Sohrabi, 2020). When classroom-management strategies are executed effectively, teachers minimize the behaviors that impede learning for both individual students and groups of students, while maximizing the behavior that facilitate or enhance learning. Generally, effective teachers tend to display strong classroom-management skills, while the hallmark of the inexperienced or less effective teacher is a disorderly classroom filled with students who are not working or paying attention (Kabir, 2023).

While a limited or more traditional interpretation of effective classroom management may focus largely on “compliance”, rules and strategies that teachers may use to make sure students are sitting in their seats, following directions, listening attentively, and so on, a more encompassing or updated view of classroom management extends to everything that teachers may do to facilitate or improve student learning, which would include such factors as:

1. Behavior (a positive attitude, happy facial expressions, encouraging statements, the respectful and fair treatment of students, etc.).
2. Environment (for example, a welcoming, well-lit classroom filled with intellectually stimulating learning materials that’s organized to support specific learning activities).
3. Expectations (the quality of work that teachers expect students to produce, the ways that teachers expect students to behave toward other students, the agreements that teachers make with students).
4. Materials (the types of texts, equipment, and other learning resources that teachers use), or Activities (the kinds of learning experiences that teachers design to engage student interests, passions, and intellectual curiosity).

Given that poorly designed lessons, uninteresting learning materials, or unclear expectations for example, could contribute to greater student disinterest, increased behavioral problems, or unruly and disorganized classes; classroom management cannot be easily separated from all the other decisions that teachers make (Mamman, 2016). In this more encompassing view of classroom management, good teaching and good classroom management become, to some degree, indistinguishable.

### **Classroom Management and Control Techniques**

In practice, classroom-management techniques may appear deceptively simple, but, successfully and seamlessly integrating them into the instruction of students, typically requires a variety of sophisticated techniques and a significant amount of skill and experience. While the specific techniques used to manage classrooms and facilitate learning can vary widely in terminology, purpose, and execution; Lemov (2022) has outlined the following techniques to manage and control a classroom:

- a. Entry Routine- is a technique in which teachers establish a consistent daily routine that begins as soon as students enter the classroom, preparing learning materials, making seat assignments, passing in homework, or doing a brief physical “warm-up” activity would all be examples of entry routines. This technique can avoid the disorder and squandered time that can characterize the beginning of a class period.
- b. Do Now- is a brief written activity that students are given as soon as they arrive in the classroom. This technique is intended to get students settled, focused, productive, and prepared for instruction as quickly as possible.

- c. **Tight Transitions-** is a technique in which teachers establish transition routines that students learn and can execute quickly and repeatedly without much direction from a teacher. For example, a teacher might say “reading time,” and students will know that they are expected to stop what they are working on, put away their materials, get their books, and begin reading silently on their own. This technique helps to maximize instructional time by reducing the disarray and delay that might accompany transitions between activities.
- d. **Seat Signals-** is a technique in which students use nonverbal signals while seated to indicate that they need something, such as a new pencil, a restroom break, or help with a problem. This technique establishes expectations for appropriate communication and helps to minimize disruptions during class.
- e. **Props-** is the act of publicly recognizing and praising students who have done something good, such as answering a difficult question or helping a peer. A prop is done by the entire class and is typically a short movement or spoken phrase. The technique is intended to establish a group culture in which learning accomplishments and positive actions are socially valued and rewarded.
- f. **Nonverbal Intervention-** is when teachers establish eye contact or make gestures that let students know they are off-task, not paying attention, or misbehaving. The technique helps teachers efficiently and silently manages student behavior without disrupting a lesson.
- g. **Positive Group Correction-** is a quick, affirming verbal reminder that lets a group of students know what they should be doing. Related techniques are ‘Anonymous’, ‘Individual Correction’, a verbal reminder that is directed at an anonymous student; ‘Private Individual Correction’, a reminder given to an individual student as discretely as possible; and ‘Lightning-Quick Public Correction’, a quick, positive reminder that tells an individual student what to do instead of what not to do.
- h. **Do It Again-** is used when students do not perform a basic task correctly, and the teacher asks them to do it again the correct way. This technique establishes and reinforces consistent expectations for quality work.

### **Concepts of Classroom Planning and Organization**

Moreover, classroom management encompasses planning and organization. Planning for a functional classroom is an important part of teaching, learning and behavior management. Proper classroom planning will keep you organized and on track while teaching, thus allowing you to teach more and manage less. Mamman (2021) opined that, planning requires drawing up a programme or activity in order to achieve some specific goals and objectives in classroom interaction.

How you set up your classroom is an intricate part of classroom planning. Make sure that your desk is where you can see as many students as possible at the same time. You

might want to consider grouping the student's desks together for ease in small-group activities. Think about having an area of the room that can be used for quiet reading or just a general time out. Learners these days are used to being entertained. When planning your classroom, you may want to consider adding technology to your lesson plan. Use an interactive whiteboard to teach lessons and use video clips to enhance your objectives.

It is important for classroom planning to have set rules and consequences. Not only do you know what is going on in this situation, the students also know, and there is no any guesswork. This gives the students one less distraction and helps to keep them focused on the lesson. Classroom planning includes the physical set up of chairs, tables and desks for the purpose of classroom interactions. Hunt (2019) lamented that students tend to prefer more flexible seating arrangements. Teachers are therefore advised to use the varieties of classroom seating arrangements as much as possible. The seating arrangements can be:

- a. Traditional:- this set up typically consists of rows and fixed seating. Usually, students face the instructor with their backs to one another.
- b. Round table:- in this seating arrangement, students and instructors all face one another in a round mannered shape.
- c. Horse shoe or semi-circle:- in this set up, all students face each other while the teacher can sit at the middle and can also move about the classroom.

Classroom organization on the other hand, affects the physical elements of the classroom, making it a more productive environment for its users. How the classroom environment is organized influences the behavior in it. For example, actions as simple as color-coding folders, establishing fixed locations for lab supplies, maintaining folders for students to pick up missed work after being absent and designating specific places for other classroom supplies can have a positive effect on classroom organization and, consequently, on student learning. While these procedures and a multitude like them are simple matters, they nonetheless can be essential components for a smoothly operating classroom.

Classroom organization is evident in a room even if no one is present. Furniture arrangements, location of materials, displays, and fixed elements are all part of organization. Effective teachers decorate the room with student work, they arrange the furniture to promote interaction as appropriate, and they have comfortable areas for working (Bello, 2023). They also consider student needs in arranging the room by leaving space for wheelchairs for easy access of special needs students; having walkways so students can access materials, pencil sharpeners, and the trashcan with minimal disturbance to others; and organizing in such a way as to allow the teacher to freely move around the room to monitor student progress.

### **Strategies to Manage Students Misbehavior in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Classroom**

A contemporary teacher should have the strategies to identify and address students' misbehavior in the teaching-learning process (McMullen, 2022 & Kabir, 2023). Teachers can do this without necessarily being forced to use corporal punishment that has no place in the 21<sup>st</sup> century teaching profession. To manage and control students' misbehavior, the following strategies should be employed:

1. Plan ignorance- some students misbehave deliberately to arouse attention and to send their message or signal. They could easily achieve this objective when the teacher pays attention to them. In this circumstance, the teacher should ignore the individual student.
2. Finger pointing- some students do misbehave in classroom with the notion that the teacher could not notice. In this scenario, the teacher should just point a finger to the direction of the students so as to let them know that nothing escapes teacher eyes and ears in the classroom.
3. Call attention- some students misbehave in classroom believing that the teacher did not notice. In this case, all the teacher needs to do is to call their attention by either calling their names or making reference to their misbehavior without taking further action.
4. Stand still- sometimes students misbehave when they feel the teacher's attention is somewhere else or is engaged in an activity. In situations like this, all the teacher needs to do is to pause and stand still for a while. This will bring to the attention of students that the teacher is watching and is in control.
5. Brief standing- some students may persist in misbehavior even after warnings. In this nomenclature, the teacher should request the student to briefly stand up quietly and politely. Note that, the student is expected to stand briefly and should not distract the attention of other students by blocking their vision to either the board or the teacher.
6. Direct engagement- when students' misbehavior persisted despite several warnings, the teacher should direct a question or an activity that is ongoing to the misbehaving student. Note also that, some students misbehave believing that they are intelligent or have mastered the topic under discussion. In this case, the teacher should engage the student to a more complex activity.
7. Conduct counseling- when students' misbehavior deteriorated after many efforts to address it, the teacher should invite the student for talks. Possibly, there are other factors influencing the misbehavior. The teacher should then counsel the student and or consult other relevant stakeholders as appropriate.
8. Pretend isolation- in situation where students' misbehavior persisted against all odds, the teacher should pretend to isolate the student and politely request the student to go out either to the library or another class only to come back after that particular period or lesson. Note that, this should not continue for a long time as the intention is to draw the attention of the student for being isolated.

9. Report to school authority- after all your efforts to address students' misbehavior have failed, the teacher should report the student to the school authority for further necessary action.

### **Conclusion**

Teacher is instrumental in any functional education system. He or she is expected to not only master and implement the contents of the curriculum, but also plan, organize, manage and control the process of classroom interaction. Classroom interaction implies the process of communicating the lesson that involves teacher and students in a series of tailored meaningful observations, discussions and activities. A 21<sup>st</sup> century teacher should shy away from traditional compliance of rules and the use of cane and corporal punishment that has no place in a modern teaching and learning process. Instead, the teacher should apply the techniques and strategies discussed above for effective curriculum implementation.

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