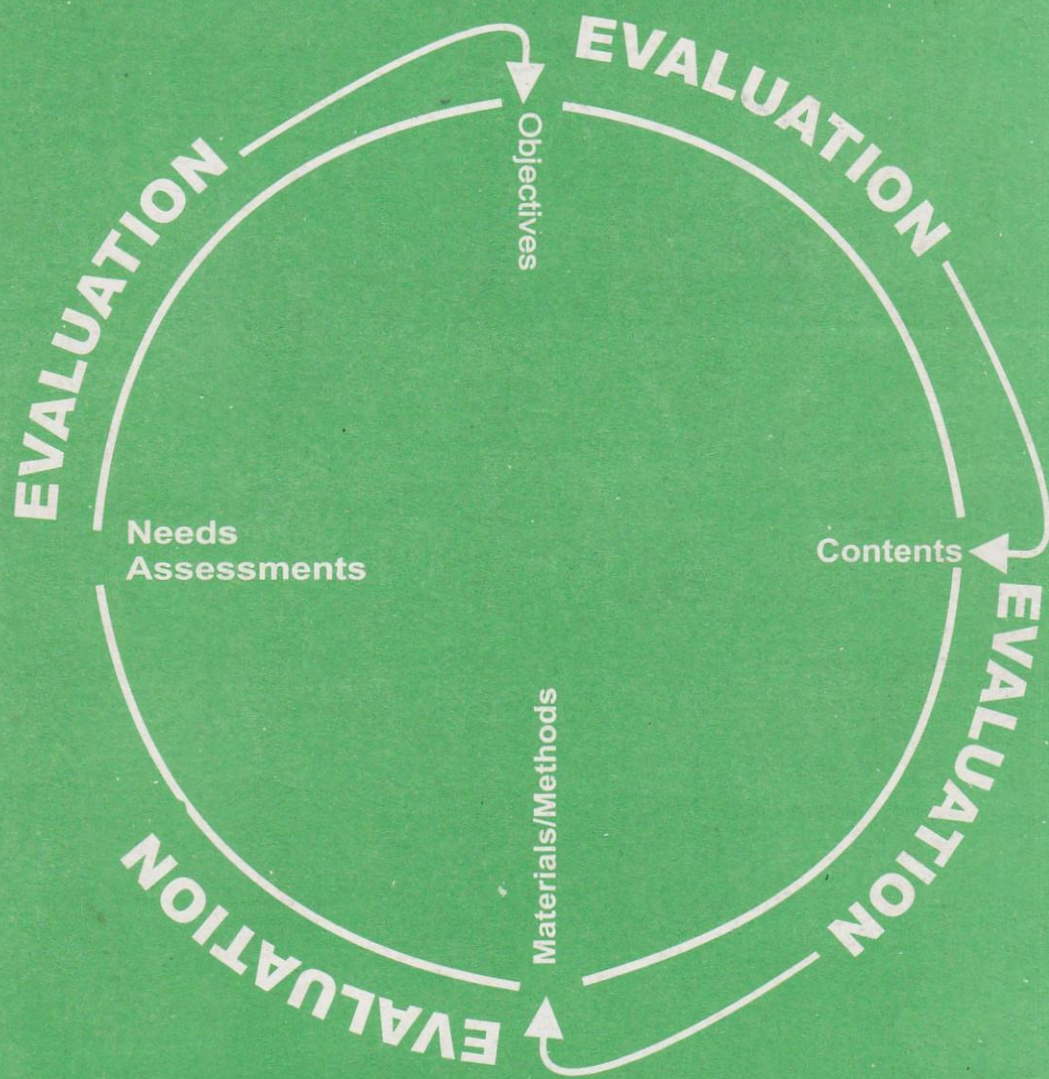


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SUPERVISION OF PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS FOR EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTION: IMPLICATION FOR IMPLEMENTING SCHOOL CURRICULUM IN NIGERIA

BY

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Abstract

The child needs a solid foundation in order to be able to face future educational challenges. Regrettably in Nigeria today, there is an influx of pupils into the primary education system as a result of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) scheme. The enrolment rate indicates an astronomical growth without a commensurate increase in human and material resources. Again in order that the educational system in Nigeria be considered relevant in the global concept, the curriculum has undergone series of expansion to accommodate science and technological courses with little or no competent hands to man these areas. This situation has led to the employment of teachers with little or no professional skill and competencies required in the field of teaching. It is against this backdrop that the supervision of primary school teachers becomes necessary, as it will avail the teachers with the necessary pedagogy that will enhance effective delivery of instruction for the attainment of set educational goals and objectives. Consequently, it is recommended that supervision be considered paramount by school administrators and other education officials. The paper is however of the opinion that democratic approach to supervision as against authoritarian principles will enhance co-operation and effectiveness on the part of the teachers leading to proper implementation of school curriculum in Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

The role of supervision as a vital tool in the achievement of set organizational goals cannot be undermined in any organizational setting be it public or private education, military, business, political, religious or otherwise. It is a form of control during which a superior having assigned tasks to the subordinates, monitors and checks to determine whether or not plans are adhered to, whether or not proper progress is made towards the attainment of set objectives and goals and acting where the need arises to correct any deviation. It is equally a way of ascertaining that there is adherence to the established ethical and attitudinal standards and if not that corrective action is taken. The supervisor oversees, directs activities of the workers and gives instruction on set tasks. Supervising therefore entails the administrator's effort to guide the day-to-day operations of the organization by stimulating, directing and coordinating the workers and their efforts and cultivating good working personal relations such that everyone involved can collectively perform effectively all the functions, which would lead to goal achievements. The implication therefore is that, without thorough supervision even the best programmes set out in a well-structured establishment cannot be effectively executed.

Within the primary school environment however; supervision involves guiding and coordinating the work of the primary school teachers and all who are concerned with the school work such that instruction is effectively delivered and learning facilitated. By planning and devising ways of improving teachers' professional skills, competencies and also releasing their latent abilities on the job through proper supervision, attainment of educational goals and objectives become paramount and curriculum implementation becomes an easy task. The emphasis of this paper however will focus on the need for supervision of primary school teachers for effective instruction. The paper will equally address itself to possible ways of assisting teachers to improve instruction delivery at the primary school level.

EDUCATIONAL SUPERVISION

Educational supervision may be defined as an interactive behaviour system between the supervisor and the supervisee for the purpose of improving learning situation for children. To Nwaogu, (1980) supervision is perceived as the process of bringing about improvement in instruction by working with the

people who are working with pupils. It is thus a process of stimulating growth and a means of helping teachers to help themselves and others in the educational industry.

Eye, Netzer and Krey, (1979) assert that supervision is that phase of administration that focuses primarily upon the achievement of appropriate instructional expectations of educational systems. Mbiti, (1994) describes supervision as the “sensory systems” of an organization giving its positions as one of the basic requirement in administration that involves the tactics of efficient and proper management of personnel. In Dodd, (1988) view, supervision is a way of advising, guiding, refreshing, encouraging, stimulating, improving and overseeing certain groups with the hope of seeking their cooperation in order for the supervisors to be successful in the task of supervision.

From the Dictionary of Education, (1985), it is gathered that supervision is the efforts of all designated school officials towards providing leadership to the teachers and other educational workers in the improvement of instruction. To Nkang, (2002. p. 186). Supervision involves the stimulation of professional growth and development of teachers, selection and revision of educational objectives, materials for instruction, methods of teaching and the evaluation of instruction.

Synthesizing the above assertions present one with a level of congruent with emphasis on the goals and objectives of supervision.

Such as;

- (i) Improvement of Instruction
- (ii) Guiding and Advising Teachers
- (iii) Facilitating Learning
- (iv) Aiding Professional Growth and Development of Teachers
- (v) Fulfilling Basic Objectives of the School

Those areas of congruent are also in line with the principles of modern supervision as summarized by Nwaogu, (1980) to include:

- (a) Supervision is basically aimed at improving learning and teaching, which affords the basis for appraisal of successful supervision and its techniques.
- (b) The entire supervision programme is directed towards accepted purpose thus, effective supervision aim at helping teachers to recognize and accept general educational aims and consciously work towards the realization of same.
- (c) Supervision requires the cooperative participation of all concerned and so, staff should be part and parcel of those decisions that affects them. To this end, intelligent and effective supervision is a genuine cooperative endeavour and skillful manipulation of others.
- (d) Modern supervision strives to utilize the talents and strength of all. It is an established fact that each person is born with certain amount of potentials, which gradually unfolds as one interacts with his environment and so, there is always room for further development. To this end, the supervisor should create positive work environments and opportunities for teachers to experience psychological growth by motivating them to utilize their skills and abilities and contribute to the common cause. The emerging democratic leadership concept recognizes the necessity of releasing and using the potential which resides within various members of the group.
- (e) The supervisor must be well acquainted with the past and present school programmes, (curriculum) the nature and characteristics of staff, students and the community in general before proceeding to make improvements.
- (f) The supervisor should work well with and offer assistance to all and not only the inexperienced or ineffective staff.
- (g) Supervision is a flexible exercise which involves a flexible and adaptative approach towards goal attainment rather than a single approach procedure (authoritarian).
- (h) Supervision backs up the result and the value of change with evidence as such, the supervisor should use his skill in evaluation and his judgment should be rooted in the weight of evidence and logic rather than mere opinion.

- (i) Supervision procedures should result in improved staff morale and job satisfaction. Teachers should be encouraged to develop more staff – confidence, feel more adequate to handle their own problems and experience fuller realization of their capabilities.

In line with the foregone, Denga, (1986) posits thus:

“a supervisor is someone in a position of leadership who possesses the skill and ability to provide a “super-vision” to the school in terms of perceiving desirable objectives, maintaining a balance in the curriculum and rendering help to the teachers regarding methods and other instructional problems that they encounter.” (p. 167)

SUPERVISING THE PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHER FOR EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTION: IMPLICATIONS FOR IMPLEMENTING SCHOOL CURRICULUM IN NIGERIA.

The need for supervising the primary school teacher has become imperative in Nigeria today than ever before given the ever-increasing expansion of the system both in size and curriculum. The astronomical rate of enrolment at the primary level as a result of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) scheme and the urgent need to produce pivotal teachers for the scheme lives one with no doubts that incompetent and low quality teachers will find their way into the primary schools. Again in an ever changing society such as ours, the educational system cannot afford to be static. For education to be relevant in today’s technological world, there is a pressing need for the curriculum to be expanded and updated and appropriate decision taken on what to teach and how to teach it. With the increase in content, there is need for accompanying growth in the number and type of instructional materials such as tape recorders, instructional films and televisions.

In the light of this therefore, changes have been made in the curriculum with a view to bringing innovations into educational programmes but some of these changes are haphazardly and randomly introduced without corresponding preparation in terms of equipment, facilities and competent staff to handle the excess programmes. As the school changes, the pupils, the teachers, the administrators, the programmes of instruction and the mode of impartation must also change alongside in a systematic and positive direction.

To cope with these excessive pressing demands, there is need for an effective supervision of instruction in Nigerian Schools in order to develop and evaluate relevant instructional programmes and techniques for the system.

With the introduction of the 6-3-3-4 systems of education and recently, the Universal Basic Education, there is an astronomical growth in the school system in terms of size, pupils, teachers and infrastructure. The enlarged school population due to the fast rate of expansion in school enrolment makes room for shortage in teacher production. To this end, many teachers who have not been exposed to modern skills and knowledge as regards teaching in the present day school system find themselves teaching in schools. This makes the need for supervision of instruction enormous because these teachers need to be assisted by supervisors who will determine what to teach and how best to teach it. This could be done through workshops, seminars and conferences where modern skills and methods are demonstrated to the teachers during which they can improve upon their skills and methods. Ukeje, (1992) confirms that expansion in school population has not been matched with commensurate increase in financial support such that facilitates previously meant for a certain number of students are now being used by thrice that number. All these problems go a long way to maximize the need for quality control through effective supervision of instruction. To this end, Nkang, (2002) states summarily that the following reasons justify the importance of current emphasis on effective supervision of instruction in Nigerian schools.

- The broad curriculum in Nigerian schools today.
- The changing philosophy of education
- Inadequate facilities
- Shortage and varied qualification of teachers in schools.
- Large number of new and inexperienced teachers recruited yearly.

- Lack of both in-service and professional training for some teachers, which would equip them well for adequate classroom teaching.
- Lack of access to current research, which could help to improve teaching learning situations in schools.

This situation therefore necessitate comprehensive and effective supervision if the challenges of implementing school curriculum in Nigeria must be met. Effective supervision entails that the supervisor becomes conversant with and apply basic modern supervisory approach and techniques in supervising the primary school teacher for the purpose of improving instruction. Modern supervisory approach according to Peretomode, (1991) is based upon democratic philosophy such as;

- (a) Respect of personality and individual difference between personalities and seeking to provide opportunities for the best expression of such unique personality.
- (b) Basing supervision upon the assumption that teachers are capable of growth and accepting idiosyncrasies, reluctance to cooperation and antagonism as human characteristics, just as it accepts reasonableness, cooperation, and energetic activity.
- (c) Providing full opportunity for the cooperative formulation of policies and plans.
- (d) Stimulating imitative, self-reliance and individual responsibility on the part of all persons in the discharge of their duties.
- (e) Cooperatively, determining functional groupings of the staff, with flexible regrouping as necessary and inviting specialist when advisable.

Modern supervisory techniques according to Udeozor; (2003,P:164) include the following: -

- Orientation and induction of new teachers
- Classroom visitation and observation
- Individual teacher-supervisor conference
- All teacher-supervisor conference
- Micro-teaching before the actual classroom activities.
- Supervisors' demonstration of new ideas and methods.
- Organizing educational workshops for teachers on regular basis
- Organizing educational seminars and conference regularly for teachers
- Use of clinical and diagnostic supervision.
- Action research on specific problems of teaching.
- Use of teachers' field trip.
- Study of children with individual problems
- Inter-school visitation
- Use of bulletins, lectures and addresses
- Recommending teachers for in-service course work.
- Directed teaching in educational teaching journals/periodicals.
- Guided references to school libraries.
- Use of study groups or team teaching to discuss common problems.

This paper however will regulate itself to few of these techniques that most enhance effective delivery of instruction at the primary level. Such techniques include the following:

- ❖ Orientation and induction of new teachers
- ❖ Classroom visitation and observation
- ❖ Micro-teaching
- ❖ Workshop
- ❖ Demonstration

(1) Orientation and Induction of New Teachers

Contextually the terms, orientation and induction are synonymously used in describing the process by which the new teacher is fine tuned into the educational organization and facilitating its absorption in order to achieve the educational objectives. Levi, (1989) maintains that the purpose of orientation and induction is to help new comers understand their environment and find their "feet" Orientation and induction should be seen as first step in supervising the new teachers as it will avail them with the opportunity of getting acquainted with the entire educational enterprise and its ethics, hierarchy of authority co-staff and the pupils.

(2) Classroom Visitation and Observation

The duty of a supervisor would be considered incomplete and inefficient without actual classroom visitation and observation. This is because classroom visitation and observation yields the supervisor with concrete feedback mechanism as to the effective or ineffective manner of instruction delivery. Classroom visitation is indispensable in improving instruction at the primary level because it enables the supervisor to observe the planning, lesson presentation, teacher's personality and strength, teacher's interaction and classroom management. Classroom visitation can improve the quality of instruction, method of presentation and facilitates learning through co-operative replanning between the supervisor and the supervisee.

(3) Micro-Teaching

Micro-Teaching is a procedure which provides the supervisor and the teacher with the opportunity of identifying, defining, trying out, describing, analyzing and retrying certain teaching skills without the risk of actual teaching situation. Wiles and Lovell, (1979). Therefore in supervising the primary school teacher for effective instruction, particular cognizance should be given to micro-teaching techniques which aim at equipping the teacher with the requisite teaching skills.

(4) Workshop Technique

Workshop as a supervisory technique usually emerges as a result of observations during classroom visitation, questions and comments raised during conference. The choice of workshop technique in improving instruction at the primary level is very significant because of its unique democratic approach. For instance workshop technique involves; A group of people with common interest working on a common problem trying to find solution to such a problem through group discussion and conferences under close supervision of resource persons.

(5) Demonstration Technique

Demonstration may become necessary if the supervisor observes that some teaching methods or techniques are not being used effectively or that the teachers are ignorant about the use of certain teaching aids and facilities. Here the supervisor organizes a demonstration for the teachers. Demonstration technique is considered as a very effective tool in stimulating and encouraging teacher's growth especially at the primary level.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The quest for the achievement of qualitative education in Nigeria is deeply rooted in qualitative education at the primary level, therefore the provision of an effective supervisory programme at the primary level of our educational system to coordinate all teaching activities would prove a positive panacea to the rising trend of the fallen standard of education experienced in Nigeria today as a result of the haphazard manner to which the curriculum content is implemented. The introduction of the 6-3-3-4 systems of education and recently the universal Basic Education (UBE) scheme, has resulted in astronomical growth in school population with its attendant shortage of teachers resulting in the employment of teachers with little or no professional skills and competencies to effectively deliver instruction at the primary level. Again in an attempt to satisfy the yearnings of Nigeria to be technologically developed, the school curriculum has been expanded to accommodate science and technological courses, vocational and computer

without competent hands to teach this courses. This situation therefore renders effective supervision inevitable for proper curriculum implementation.

Effective supervision entails the use of a democratic approach to supervision as well as adherence to the basic principles of supervision. Again supervisory techniques such as; Orientation and Induction of new teachers, classroom visitation and observation, micro-teaching; workshop and demonstration were considered appropriate at the primary level.

Against the backdrop of the foregoing, the following recommendations are made;

- (1) That government, educational managers and other stakeholders, should ensure adequate and effective supervision of teachers at the primary level. This recommendation becomes necessary due to low quality and qualification of teachers employed to teach at the primary level.
- (2) That in supervising the primary school teacher, democratic approach to supervision be preferred to autocratic or traditional approach to supervision as this will create a conducive environment for both the supervisor and the supervisee to interact.
- (3) That supervisors at the primary level should pay more attention to technique such as; orientation and induction, classroom visitation, micro-teaching, workshop and demonstration because of their simplistic and democratic nature.

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