



NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA

ECE 222



**Developing Professional
Skills and Competence**
Module 2

ECE 222 (Developing Professional Skills and Competence) Module 2

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Introduction to Module 2 of ECE 222

The first unit tells you the qualities expected of a teacher. It further introduces you to those things you can do to make you the pupils and the general public respect and admire you.

In the second unit, you are going to be introduced to the behavioural job expectations of a teacher.

Unit three discusses some learners' characteristics that must be taken into consideration for effective teaching and learning to take place.

Unit four discusses the nature of child-centred and teacher-centred education. It further discusses their implications for effective teaching and learning.

The fifth unit introduces you to lesson note preparation and why a good teacher should always prepare his/her lesson note.

In the sixth unit, you will learn why teachers and pupils ask questions in the classroom. You will also learn how to ask good questions and answer pupils' questions.

The last unit discusses the importance of self-development and improvement. It also gives some steps on how the teacher can keep up to date in both the curriculum content and methodology of teaching.

Unit I Qualities of a Good Teacher

1.0 Introduction

Every profession has certain traits or qualities expected of its practitioners. In other words, there are certain things which they must do before they can be regarded as skillful, competent and effective. In this unit, you are going to learn what qualities you should possess to become a skillful, competent and effective teacher. All those things that will make you to be respected and liked by the learners and the general public as a teacher will be discussed in this unit.

2.0 Objectives

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- list and explain five personal qualities of a good teacher
- discuss ways of developing the good qualities by individual teachers.

3.0 Main Content

3.1 Personal Qualities of a Good Teacher

Teachers are at the heart of any strategy or efforts that may be put in place to improve the performance of the learners at all levels of education. Therefore, if teachers are to exhibit the skill, competence, creativity and dedication that could enhance the success of the learners, they must possess certain personal qualities. As we have seen in one of the earlier units, the teacher does not teach by words of mouth alone. A teacher teaches with his/her total personality. This includes his physical appearance, attitude and behaviours, mental ability, self-confidence and moral integrity among others.

Let us now discuss some of these personal characteristics and how to achieve them as identified by Afamah et al (1991).

3.2 Neat and Clean Physical Appearance

One of the first qualities expected of a good teacher is that he must be neat and clean always. In his or her appearance, the teacher must present a model or an example of neatness to his pupils. This is probably why people say as is the teacher so are his pupils.

Since pupils generally regard their teachers as their role models, it is necessary for teachers to give them a good model to imitate or copy. If therefore the teacher always dresses shabbily and carelessly, it is most likely that many of the learners will copy him/her. This is because they will think that he/she is doing the right thing.

A teacher who is neat and clean in his/her appearance will command love and respect of the learners, their parents and even colleagues. One of the reasons why teachers are looked down upon in Nigeria is because of the way many of them dress shabbily. Teachers are not the worst paid workers in the country hence they should not appear to be too poor to put on good cloths and shoes. Remember that teachers in the good olden days were always

neat and clean. In fact, they were among the best if not the best or the neatest workers in their communities. They were therefore well respected, loved and admired by all. The teachers then were able to correct pupils who were dirty and often sent them home. It is bad to see teachers with their hairs unkempt, long finger nails, torn shirts or shoes. Above all it is a shame to find teachers with dirty and smelling mouth. Such teachers cannot and will never command the respect of even their learners.

How should a teacher therefore appear in the school? When you were told earlier on that the teacher should be neat and clean, it does not mean she should overdo it. He/she should not appear as a masquerade as a result of too much of make ups. In this way, you do not need to go for the most expensive clothes or shoes before you can appear neat. What we are saying here is that the teacher should appear simple and clean in whatever he or she wears.

For example somebody can wear cloths made from “Adire” and appear neater and more attractive than one who puts on lace or other more expensive cloths that are not clean or neat. So, the teacher can be neat and clean even in the so called cheap materials. What you should note in your physical appearance as a teacher is that you should not distract the attention of your pupils. When you ‘over dress’ or ‘under dress’, you are likely going to distract the attention of your pupils from what you are teaching them. This is not good for the learners as it may affect their moral, social and mental development.

3.3 Moral and Emotional Stability

The way a teacher behaves or reacts to certain issues or things under certain conditions will go a long way in describing the type of person he/she is. Therefore the way a teacher comports himself/herself inside or outside the classroom will affect the public image of teachers and the teaching profession generally. Somebody sometimes ago said that medical students are usually the best behaved students in the University. This according to the person is because you hardly can find medical students particularly in their clinical years participating in protests or riots on campuses. This may be responsible for the high respect and admiration people have for the medical doctors and the profession of medicine.

How then does a teacher cultivate good moral and emotional stability? This is very simple. For example, the teacher must be punctual and hardworking. He must be honest, kind and fair in his dealings with the pupils. He must respect and obey his/her superiors. He must also respect his pupils by not using abusive or derogatory language on them. He/she must not tell lies to his pupils. A teacher who tells the pupils to inform the Head Teacher that he/she has gone to the toilet when in actual fact he/she has gone out of the school is not only telling lies but also teaching the pupils to tell lies.

Above all, the teacher should be able to control his emotions in the face of provocation. He/she should be able to avoid shouting at the pupils or colleagues when they annoy him/her. The philosophy of a good teacher which we should all take to is that a good teacher does not take a rash decision when angry. This means, when angry, the teacher should neither talk nor react violently. As a philosopher once suggested when you are provoked by people’s actions or words do not say or do anything until after counting at least 1 – 10 silently and slowly.

Why is it not good for a teacher to talk or do anything when angry? Provide an answer to this question.

3.4 Resourcefulness

What does it mean to say that a good teacher should be resourceful? There are many teachers in our schools today who do not make use of any instructional materials except the chalkboard and possibly the textbooks in their lessons. When you ask them why, they often complain that the school authorities have not supplied the necessary materials for them to use. Such teachers that are always waiting for the school authorities to supply them with the necessary instructional materials to use in their lessons are not resourceful.

A resourceful teacher will therefore be able to make use of the vast resources in the environment which could be used in his/her lessons. Most of the waste materials in the environment either at home, in the office or in the school can be used to enhance the effective teaching and learning of different subjects in the school. These waste materials do not cost the teacher anything. He only needs to identify such materials and be able to keep them for use in his/her lessons. At times, the learners could even be asked to bring them from home in advance. Such things brought to the school are sometimes a relieve to the parents who may not know what to do with such materials. In many homes, such materials have become a sort of nuisance to them. They therefore gladly release such materials to their children to take to school.

By so doing, a lot of potentially good instructional materials will be available in the class. What the teacher will need to do is to identify which one will be relevant/useful for a particular subject or topic. On the long run, it will be discovered that it may not be necessary to wait for the school authorities to supply most of the instructional materials for use in the school. As we are all aware there are many things to be done in the school. Since available funds are limited, and there are many competing demands, it may not be possible to supply all the needed instructional materials to schools. Even the private schools cannot claim to be able to supply all the necessary materials.

It has therefore become necessary for the teacher to be resourceful by improvising some of the instructional materials for their lessons. This improvisation could be done from the array of waste materials around us. Identify some of the waste materials in your environment that could be used as instructional materials. Ask the pupils to bring any of them that are available in their homes and environments and see how they will respond.

3.5 Self Confidence

A good teacher must have confidence in his own ability. This means that a good teacher must be very sure of his/her own ability. When a teacher is intellectually capable to teach his/her subject in the class with the appropriate methods, materials and techniques, he will radiate self-confidence. This self confidence in his/her ability which is demonstrated in his/her effective and efficient method of teaching will help him to command the respect of his pupils.

Many teachers do not know that their pupils, however, young do appreciate and recognize a teacher who is a master of his subject. When a teacher is good in both the content and methodology of his subject, he will not only be respected and admired by the pupils. He will also stimulate the pupils' interest in that particular subject. Many students have developed either a great interest in or dislike for some subjects as a result of the teachers knowledge and method of teaching. Can you mention a subject you like or dislike as a result of the knowledge/method of teaching it by the teacher?

How then can a teacher develop the self confidence in his own abilities so as to command the respect of the learners? There are many things a teacher can do to become self-confident. The first thing is to keep on reading/studying. According to a popular saying, a candle can only provide light when it keeps on burning. Therefore, a teacher will only be able to give new knowledge/ideas to his pupils if he/she keeps on reading/studying. A teacher like a medical doctor or lawyer needs to keep abreast of developments in his field of specialization. The only way to do this is to keep on reading and studying.

A teacher should know better than his/her learners in any topic or subject he/she is going to teach. In these days of great breakthroughs in knowledge, there are new ideas, facts and principles being generated on daily basis. The only way by which teachers can get this is by reading journals, textbooks and other publications. More importantly now is the use of internet for information gathering. There is no area of knowledge that cannot be accessed through internet.

The other way to develop his/her self-confidence is to improve on his/her academic qualification. This can be done through in-service programmes such as attending workshops, conferences or seminars organized by various institutions and organizations. It could also be by full – time study leave with pay or without pay. There are also many part-time or distance learning programmes which anyone can make use of now in improving on the academic and professional qualifications.

Therefore for a teacher to radiate self confidence in his/her own ability, he/she must keep on learning. He/she must not regard him/herself as Mr. Know all in the class. There is always room for improvement hence the teacher must not be lazy and depend solely on the knowledge acquired in the college or University a couple of year ago.

Research findings have shown those five years after leaving an institution, an individual must have lost about 50% of the knowledge acquired. The only way to keep the knowledge and even add to it is to keep on reading. It is only when a teacher has acquired the necessary experience and expertise in his/her discipline that he develops self-confidence. A teacher that is not sure of his/her ability cannot radiate self-confidence. Invariably such a teacher will not command the respect and admiration of the learners. Such a teacher will not attract students into studying that subject later in life.

3.6 Proven Integrity

The teacher should be a person of proven integrity so that he can command the respect of the learners and members of the community. This simply means that a teacher should not be a person of questionable character. As said earlier on, a teacher should be a model for his her pupils to emulate. This as you learnt in one of the earlier units was why the Missionaries screened the teachers very well before they were even allowed into the teachers colleges.

As a result of the high moral standards exhibited by teachers in those days, they were not only loved and admired but also respected. This also explains why teachers were always nominated to serve in various bodies responsible for the welfare and general development of the communities.

In addition, many parents willingly asked their children to go and stay with the teachers in order to acquire the high moral standards often exhibited by the teachers. In short, we could say that although the teachers in the olden days were not known and respected for

their material possessions but their proven integrity. Find out from your parents, uncles or grandparents how many teachers owned cars or houses in the past.

Are the present day teachers of high moral integrity?

Now let us identify how high moral integrity of teachers can be ensured. The first thing is to screen people well before they are allowed into the teachers colleges. A situation whereby the doors of our teacher education institutions are thrown open to all without any discrimination is not good enough.

Moreover, a situation whereby only the rejected, frustrated, the left over and the never do-wells go in for teacher education programmes cannot help us to have men and women of proven integrity going into teaching. Rather than allow just anyone into teaching, we should screen them for certain qualities which are essential for a successful career in teaching.

This was how the teachers in the 50s and 60s were selected to produce men and women of proven integrity who went into the teachers colleges and invariably the teaching profession. The men and women of shabby character in teaching in recent years is a reflection of the weaknesses inherent in our crash programmes in teacher education. This must be discontinued if we are to have men and women of proven integrity in teaching.

Self-Assessment Exercise I

1. Identify and explain five personal qualities expected of a good teacher.
2. How can any of these personal qualities be developed in teachers?

4.0 Conclusion

In order for teachers to efficiently and effectively perform their roles in the school, they should possess some personal good qualities. Without the personal qualities being highly noticeable in teachers, it will be difficult for them not only to command the respect of the learners and members of the society but also to demonstrate high professional skills and competence.

5.0 Summary

In this unit, you have learnt that:

- A good teacher must be neat and clean
- Morally and Emotionally Stable
- Be resourceful
- Must have self confidence
- Be a person of proven integrity.

6.0 Self-Assessment Exercise

1. Enumerate five personal characteristics associated with an ideal teacher.
2. What personal characteristics would you look for in trying to interview candidates for a teaching job? Give reasons for your answer.

7.0 Reference/Further Reading

Amafah, J.E, Osaghae P.O. & Ekpo E.J (1991). *Manual for Effective Management of Primary Education in Nigeria*. Kaduna Min of Education. (Special Programme Unit).

Unit 2 Behavioural Job Expectations for Teachers

1.0 Introduction

In the last unit, you learnt some of the essential personal qualities of a good teacher. There we identified five of the good qualities a teacher should possess to make him/her competent and effective. In this unit, we are going to continue our discussion on the qualities expected of a good teacher. We shall discuss the behavioural job expectations for teachers. That is those things which are expected of a teacher in his day to day classroom interactions with the learners.

2.0 Objectives

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- list five job expectations of an ideal school teacher
- differentiate between the personal qualities and job expectations of a teacher.

3.0 Main Content

3.1 Meaning of Behavioural Job Expectation

Behavioural job expectations for teachers refer to what teachers are expected to do in the course of their day to day classroom interactions with the learners. They are the specific things teachers can do physically, socially or psychologically to enhance effecting teaching and learning. As you are aware, the purpose of teaching is to promote learning.

Therefore whatever teachers do to help or make learning permanent among the learners is the behavioural job expectation for teachers. Behavioural job expectation can also be referred to as the responsibility, of teachers: let us now consider some of the behavioural job expectations for teachers in the following sections.

3.2 Varying Methods of Teaching

‘Monotony kills interest’ is a popular saying by teachers. This simply means that when a teacher uses the same method or technique of teaching all the time without any change, it makes the lesson very uninteresting. It means such teachers do not know how to vary their methods no matter the subject or topic, the age and ability of the learners or even the particular period of the day, they are teaching.

Therefore, such teachers often discover that their pupils show little or no interest in their lessons. No matter how much the teacher may wish to force the pupils to learn, he/she will just find the pupils not doing well. At the end of the lesson, the teacher may become frustrated and angry with the pupils. He may blame the pupils and even insult them by calling them names such as, coconut heads, lazy drones, and so on.

In order to stimulate his pupils' interest and enrich their learning, the teacher must vary his methods and techniques of teaching. He must realize that when the teacher does everything himself the same way often, the pupils will not learn. Even when the pupils are made to do the same thing all the time, they become disinterested in such lessons. This implies that the teacher must be creative and innovative.

Apart from varying his methods, he should be able to improvise and use different types of instructional materials for different topics or subjects. The use of the same instructional materials for different lessons for many days kills the interest of the pupils in such materials. As you should know, when the pupils lose interest, they will not pay attention to such lessons. The task of the teacher in this regard is that he must get to know what is of interest to the learners and harness it to hold their attention from time to time.

3.3 Effective Communication

One of the greatest weapons of teaching is effective communication. As once mentioned the essence of teaching is learning. However, for effective teaching to take place there must be effective communication. Effective communication is the process of relating well with the pupils in the most suitable and appropriate language. Language is a very powerful, organised and rich medium of communication which distinguishes man from other creatures. Other means of communication by writing and reading are indeed based on the use of language.

In order for the teacher to communicate effectively with not only the pupils but also their parents and colleagues, the following must be taken into consideration:

- The language must be simple and clear: It is necessary for the teacher to talk at the level of the learners. He must be simple and clear in his discussions with the pupils. Whenever he makes a point or asks a question, he should be very simple and clear in his choice of words. This will prevent misinterpretation or lack of understanding of what has been said.
- The language must be polite: Every pupil in the class has his or her own personality that must be respected. The same is true of parents and other colleagues. Since we all like to be respected, derogatory remarks or comments on the pupils should be avoided at all costs. Do not because a child is weak academically and therefore insult or subject him to ridicule in the class. We should therefore follow the popular sayings that if you cannot inflate the ego of your pupils, do not deflate the ego. Be polite in your communication with the pupils, parents and colleagues. That is the ideal thing.
- Communication must be interesting and child friendly: Whether we are using verbal or visual communication, we must try to arouse the interest and attention of the learners. The teacher must exercise good judgment in ensuring that whatever he is to communicate to the learners are not only well presented but also well organized and well-timed. The teacher as said earlier on must understand the nature, needs and interests of the learners in communicating with them. Each learner must be treated in his own special way.

3.4 Fairness and Firmness

All the pupils in the class should be treated equally. As much as possible, you should not show special interest love or hatred for any particular pupil. In class tests, assignments or

examinations, the teacher must be fair to all. There should be no favoritism for any particular child. Everyone must be treated on his/her own merit.

In the same way, every teacher should be firm. You should not be making rules you cannot enforce in the class. It is indeed better not to make rules than to make rules that cannot be enforced. When you are enforcing the rules, you must be fair to all. Do not enforce rules for one group and relax it for another. You must be seen to be just in all that you do so as to command the love and respect of the learners. Remember also that it is better to make a few rules that can be enforced than to make many rules which you as the teacher may even forget.

3.5 Motivation and Encouragement

As a good teacher, you must be ready to motivate and encourage your pupils to greater heights. Even when it is obvious that the learners are not doing well you can still use your good knowledge of individual differences among the learners to encourage them. As we learnt earlier on, it is not good for teachers to frustrate their learners or demoralize them with their words, actions or inactions. Always motivate them to greater efforts.

There are two types of motivation. These are intrinsic and extrinsic motivation:

Intrinsic Motivation: This can also be referred to as internal or self-motivation. This occurs when a child decides on his/her own to do something like reading a book not necessarily with any force or pressure from anybody. He does it out of interest. Okoye (1981) has suggested that we should resort to intrinsic motivational conditions that are conducive to learning. There are many ways by which we can help and encourage our students to develop self – interest in their studies. Can you mention one or two ways of doing so?

Extrinsic Motivation on the other hand is the externally imposed motivation. This could be from the teachers or parents in the form of rewards and punishments. For instance, a child that reads because he will be punished if he does not read may not really learn anything in the process. Let us take another example of a teacher who promised to give pupils who do certain things well may find that the children may not do well next time if there is no gift or prize.

We all know that motivation is necessary, including the extrinsic, but it should be done with care. As suggested earlier on we should let the pupils see the joy and satisfaction inherent in self-motivation. Therefore, as much as possible, we should encourage self-motivation (intrinsic) and discourage extrinsic motivation.

3.6 Giving and Marking Assignments

The giving and marking of assignments is one of the great responsibilities of school teachers. The purpose of assignments is to give the pupils more practice on whatever they have learnt. Assignments also help to keep the learners busy at home and to find out things on their own. Research findings have shown that children who are given assignments are marked regularly do better in specific school subjects than those that are not given at all or those that are given assignments but not corrected by the teacher.

There are many teachers who give assignments to their pupils either in the class or as home work for the sake of doing so. In other words, some teachers do it to while away the time or because their boss or parents of the pupils want it. As a result, such assignments are never graded or marked with the necessary corrective feedback to the learners. This is not good at all as the purpose of giving assignments will be defeated by doing so. Here are a few things you should know about assignments.

- Assignments can be given as a follow up work on what has just been learnt in the class. In this case, the learners are given more practice on what they have learnt in the school. The advantages of this type of assignment are many. Try to list some of the advantages.
- Assignments can also be given to prepare the learners for a new topic. In this case, the learners are given a sort of home work to prepare them for a new topic to be learnt or discussed in class. All the teacher does here is to challenge the learners to find out certain things by themselves. This is necessary because as noted by Wilson (1978), the teacher must be concerned with providing experiences and opportunities from which the pupils learn for themselves.

Whatever the nature or type of assignment, one thing is clear, and that is to enhance pupils learning and knowledge. However, whenever the assignment is given, it must be marked. If for whatever reason a teacher knows he cannot mark any assignment, it is advisable not to give such assignment to the learners.

One other thing to note is that a teacher should not give too many assignments which he may not have the time to correct. Give a few but relevant assignments at a time and do not give assignments as punishment to the learners. Many teachers often give too many assignments to their students as a means of punishing them for one offence or the other. This is a wrong use of assignments and it should not be engaged in at all by the teacher.

3.7 Keeping Accurate Records of Pupils Performance

Record keeping is one of the greatest and most important responsibilities of a good teacher. Records are necessary because they provide the necessary indices for the assessment of pupils' performance and the school. It is also an important index for planning for the future progress of the child. This makes the accurate keeping of records of pupils' performance very essential for the teacher.

In addition to the pupils' performance, there are some other vital records that must be kept by each teacher. In other words, there are different types of records to be kept by teachers for the efficient administration of education let us briefly enumerate some of the records.

School records can be categorized into two. These are:

The statutory records: which are records that should be kept in all schools as stipulated by law. They include the following:

- Admission register
- Attendance register
- Continuous Assessment records

- Log Book
- Punishment Book
- Diary of Work
- Lesson Note
- Time Table
- Time Book.

The non-statutory records: These are records that are not compulsory under the law for teachers to keep. However any school that feels they are needed to enhance their administration can keep them. They include the following:

- Staff Records
- Accounts Records
- Inventory Book
- Minutes Book
- Visitors Book etc.

You can find out the uses of these records and who keeps or completes them in the school.

Self-Assessment Exercise

1. What do you understand by job expectations of a teacher
2. Identify five job expectations of a teacher.

4.0 Conclusion

The behavioural job expectations of a teacher refer to the responsibilities which a teacher has to discharge in the school to enhance teaching and learning. The job expectations are different in a way from the personal qualities of a good teacher discussed in the previous unit. In the last unit, we discussed the characteristics which a good teacher must possess.

On the other hand, we have in this unit examined some of the responsibilities of a teacher in the school. These responsibilities must be performed skillfully in order to promote effective teaching and learning in the classrooms. The personal qualities of the teacher may however affect the behavioral job expectations.

5.0 Summary

In this unit, you have learnt the responsibilities of a teacher which must be discharged diligently and skillfully in order to promote effective learning in schools. These responsibilities or job expectations include:

- Varying method of teaching

- Effective communication
- Fairness and firmness
- Motivation and encouragement of learners
- Giving and marking assignments
- Keeping accurate records of pupils performance.

6.0 Self-Assessment Exercise

1. What are the job expectations of a teacher?
2. Explain with relevant examples the differences between the personal qualities or characteristics of a good teacher and the job expectations of a teacher.

7.0 References/Further Reading

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Unit 3 Learner Characteristics and Teacher Interaction

1.0 Introduction

In the last two units you concentrated on teacher characteristics which can make them more efficient and effective in their teaching. It is also necessary for you to learn some of the characteristics of the learners that must be taken into consideration for effective teaching and learning to take place. Specifically, you are going to learn in this unit some student characteristics and teacher interactions.

2.0 Objectives

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- list some of the students characteristics that can affect the teaching and learning process
- explain how any of the characteristics could be adequately taken care of by the teacher.

3.0 Main Content

3.1 Learner Characteristics

Teaching a group of learners from different backgrounds is a big challenge to teachers. According to Katz cited in Berns (2004), teacher – student interaction is specific and limited in that it relates to school matters. Teachers must exhibit impartiality toward individual learners as their scope of responsibility is toward the group. Therefore, the relationship between the teacher and students which in turn affect the teaching and learning process include gender, ethnicity, parental background, learning styles and disability. Let us now discuss each of the characteristics as much as possible.

3.2 Gender

Research has shown that the teacher-learner interaction differs according to the gender of the learners. As noted by Berns (2004), it has been found that when children request attention, teachers generally respond to boys with instructions and to girls with nurturance. Similarly, girls receive more attention when they are physically close to the teacher whereas boys are given attention from a distance.

He went further to assert that boys receive considerable criticism for failing to obey the rules while girls receive criticism related to their performance. These have been found to affect the performance of children in certain school subjects particularly as from the secondary school level. Do some pupils therefore perform better than others in certain school subjects as a result of the type of attention received from their teacher? Try to find out the answer to this question.

You must however note that as a professionally trained teacher, you must foster assertive and affiliative skills in both girls and boys. There should be no special or preferential treatment of the pupils on the account of their gender. You should also watch out for

certain aspects of the school curriculum or textbooks that are gender stereotypes. There should be no particular skill or activity specially reserved for either the boys or girls alone. All pupils should be given equal opportunity to perform.

3.3 Ethnicity

One of the greatest social problems in Nigeria and possibly in other parts of the world today is ethnicity or what some people refer to as racial or tribal sentiments. The classroom has not been spared of this dangerous and inhuman factor.

Sometimes either consciously or unconsciously, teachers and learners bring the ethnicity factor into play in their attitudes, motives, behaviours and interaction patterns. Although this may not be too pronounced at the primary school level, it is often exhibited at the upper levels of education. The moment a student is not from the particular ethnic group where the institution is located that student is looked down upon, or discriminated against in many ways. Have you experienced such a thing before? How did you feel then?

As a teacher, you must note that it is your role to help implement the philosophy of Nigerian education which gives equal opportunity to all citizens irrespective of their background. You should help to build on our affirmation that our national strength and unity come from our diversity.

You must therefore be sensitive to all the variety of customs in your class by listening to and respecting the views of all the pupils. This can go a long way in helping the pupils to learn to be tolerant and respectful of others. You must mind your language particularly in your questions and how you attend to pupils questions. You will learn more about how to handle pupils' questions later.

3.4 Parental Background

Parents differ in their educational, social and economic status. Some are highly literate and first class professionals, while others may be artisans, farmers, petty traders and so on. Research findings have shown that parents, background often affect not only the academic performance of the pupils but also their socialization. If you are teaching in an urban area, you must have had the privilege of having pupils from the different backgrounds in your class.

As a professional teacher you have to treat all the pupils in your class equally. You may be tempted at times to feel more favourably disposed to one or two pupils as a result of their relatively 'good' background. Do all you can to resist the temptation and place all of them at the same level? Except for the purpose of giving the individual learner the special attention that he or she needs as a result of special disability or ability, they must be treated equally. What you learnt in the last two units should ring in your ears always that a good teacher must be friendly, kind, just, firm and fair to all. This is a teacher's motto for all seasons.

3.5 Learning Styles

Children have preferred ways of learning just as teachers have their own preferred ways of teaching. While some children like working in groups, others like listening to lectures and others like individual work. Research findings have suggested that children develop their

learning or cognitive styles based on the socialization they received in their homes and peer groups.

Therefore, some children have analytical cognitive style while others exhibit a holistic concrete social approach to learning. The latter group of learners, often referred to as field dependent, works well in groups and perceives things in terms of the larger context. On the other hand, the analytics who are also referred to as field independent learners relate well to impersonal, abstract information independent of the context (Berns 2004).

Since children learn differently, it is recommended that teachers should adapt their teaching styles to meet the needs of their learners. This is saying here that the individual differences of the learners must be taken into consideration. This is not the type of differences we talked against in the discussion of gender, home, and ethnic differences. It is a matter of doing things that will promote effective learning for each child.

As a professional teacher, you should do whatever is possible to ensure that all the pupils are helped to realize and develop their potentialities. No child should be held down, or made to go at a rate too high for him/her. Every child must be allowed to go at his/her own rate.

3.6 Disability

The United Nations General Assembly has adopted certain declarations as the rights of the child which all member Nations including Nigeria have endorsed. One of the rights of the child in the declaration is the right to special care of handicapped. This is in addition to the right that every child is entitled to free education at least up to the primary level. Individual countries also have special laws to protect all children including the handicapped.

There is a greater awareness now than in the past on the need to send all children to school irrespective of their physical conditions or disabilities. Although, there are special schools for the handicapped, yet not all towns and villages have them. This implies then that you will always find children with one form of disability or the other in your class.

Although you may not find pupils with total blindness or deafness, yet this does not rule out the possibility of having those who are partially deaf or blind in your class. In addition you may find other categories of disabilities among your pupils. The question now is, how do you handle such children so that they could also be assisted to develop their potentialities like the normal children?

As mentioned in the last section, you must take the individual differences of each learner into consideration in order to assist them. You must have probably heard the popular assertion that there is nobody who is not educable and there is ability in disability. The problem is for the teacher to find out how best to assist the individuals to learn.

The first thing for you as a teacher is to identify the children with disabilities in your class. For example, it is easy to identify pupils with hearing difficulty or those with short or long sightedness. When a child is always turning aside to you to hear well or always coming from the back seat to look at what is written on the chalk board, you easily identify the problem here. In this case a rearrangement of their sitting position in the class may solve the problem.

There are however more complex disabilities which could be mental, emotional or social. In such cases, you may have to modify your teaching methods and environment to suit their particular disabilities. Hallan and Kauffman cited in Berns (2004) have suggested how the teaching environment can be modified to include the following:

- Individual instruction where children abilities rather than prescribed academic content provide the basis for teaching techniques.
- Adaptation of the curriculum to various learning styles, whereby visual, auditory and tactile learners are motivated to succeed.
- Collaboration with various professionals whereby services such as medical, physical, and speech therapy and counseling are provided.
- Peer tutoring whereby children with greater abilities help those who are in need.

In some of your courses, you will learn the various methods of teaching and special education. However, it is necessary for us to note here that the children with disabilities should not be placed in restrictive environment as much as possible. When such children are in your class with the normal children, you must provide the appropriate interactive activities which make them feel accepted.

In a way, this encourages cooperation, particularly when you allow them to work in small groups. When children work together in groups with both disabled and non-disabled, they learn problem solving techniques and to constructively work with others. Children without disabilities can reinforce certain behaviours in children with disabilities and vice versa.

You as the teacher can also through your direct instruction provide an opportunity for close social interaction in the class. Therefore as your learners receive instructions from you, you also learn to be sensitive to their needs, interests and problems. Above all, both the teacher and the learners develop communication skills which in the long run promote self-confidence, self-esteem and better academic achievement.

Self-Assessment Exercise

1. Mention five learner characteristics that may affect classroom interaction
2. Why should teachers not discriminate against the learners on the basis of their characteristics?

4.0 Conclusion

Learners vary in terms of gender, ethnicity, home background, learning styles abilities and disabilities. You as a teacher should not discriminate against the pupils on the bases of their characteristics. It is your duty as a teacher to provide the opportunity for equal chances for close interaction among the learners and with you. They must also be given equal opportunities to develop their hidden talents and potentials.

5.0 Summary

In this unit you have learnt the characteristics of learners and how they affect the teachers' interaction with them. You have also learnt how the teacher should handle them so as not

to discriminate against any learner on the basis of their characteristics. The characteristics discussed here are:

1. Gender which deals with whether a learner is a boy or a girl.
2. Ethnicity which is about the particular tribal or ethnic group a learner comes from e.g. Hausa, Ibo or Yoruba.
3. Parental/Family/Home Background. This deals with the academic, economic, political or social background of the learners parents.
4. Learning styles which refer to the preferred ways of learning by children. Some children have analytical cognitive styles while others have holistic concrete social approach to learning.
5. disability which refer to the physical mental, social or emotional state of the learner which is not normal. There are various degrees of disability among school children which may not be enough reason for the teacher to discriminate against them.

6.0 Self-Assessment Exercise

1. Explain the five major characteristics of school children.
2. How should a teacher interact with the learners so as not to discriminate against them on the basis of their characteristics?

7.0 Reference/Further Reading

Berns, R.M. (2004). *Child, Family, School, Community: Socialization and Support*. (6th ed.). Belmont: Thomson Wads Worth.

Unit 4 The Teaching Learning Process

1.0 Introduction

In the last unit, you learnt the general philosophies of teaching and learning. In this unit, you are going to learn the types of relationships that exist between the teacher and the learners. The implications of such relationships to effective teaching and learning will be discussed.

2.0 Objectives

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- explain the concept child – centred and teacher centred education
- discuss the implications of each mode as they affect teacher-learner relationship for effective teaching and learning in schools.

3.0 Main Content

3.1 Teaching and Learning

Whenever the learners do badly in their studies, it is often assumed to be their fault. In other words teachers are often quick to say that the pupils are not serious, they are lazy and so on. Rarely could teachers find faults in their own teaching. Although, the causes of poor performance or failure among learners are complex, yet one could say that poor performance by the learners tend to indicate that something is wrong with the child's capacity to learn as well as the teaching provided.

Therefore, it could be said that good academic performance is a product of effective teaching and learning. Effective teaching and learning on the other hand is a product of good teacher – pupils relationship in the classroom. In other words the types of relationship or interactions that go on in the classroom to a great extent determine the learning outcome of the learners.

In one of the units in Module 1, you learnt that teaching is a conscious or deliberate effort on the part of a more experienced person to impart knowledge into a less experienced person. Now, let us find out what learning is and the conditions necessary for learning.

Learning is generally defined as a relatively permanent change in behaviour as a result of experience. In this regard, the change in the behaviour of a drunkard cannot be regarded as learning since such a change in behaviour is not permanent. On the other hand we can say that learning has taken place in the case of a student of Music who could not play the piano on his first day in the Department of Music.

However, after attending the Music lectures where she was taught how to play piano, and is now able to play it, we can say learning has taken place. This is evident in the fact that the student can repeat the action – playing the piano if asked to do so. The drunkard after a few days could even be embarrassed if asked to repeat what he said or did when he was drunk. Therefore we can say that a learnt behaviour can be reproduced voluntarily.

The experiences which according to Akinbote (2005) lead to learning include reading, playing and observing. Such experience may be acquired individually or in groups. Thus we can say that learning involves activity on the part of the learner as a result of motivation. This now brings us to the conditions necessary for learning to take place. There are three of such conditions for us to discuss briefly here:

Readiness/Maturation: Readiness is a very important condition for any meaningful learning to take place. This implies that learning will take place only when a person is ready or mature enough for the particular thing to be learnt. For example, you cannot teach a child to write, sing, jump or drive until he is mature enough or ready for it.

Motivation is necessary for learning because in life, there must be things serving as incentives or drives which force people to do certain things. Sometimes, students must see some value in or need for what they are doing before they can really learn. There must therefore be some motivation for the learners in the classroom since motivated learners learn better than the unmotivated ones. See our discussion in Unit 2 on the types of motivation.

Activity is the third condition for learning to take place. This is because activity helps to generate interest which on the other hand promotes meaningful and more permanent learning. Research findings have shown that people, children, and adults alike, learn better and faster when they are actively involved in the learning process. We must however note that such activity must be interesting, relevant and purposeful for it to promote learning.

3.2 Teacher – Pupil Relationship

The teaching and learning activities that go on in the classroom revolve around the teacher and the pupils. This is why the type of relationship that exists between the teacher and the pupils to a large extent determines whether or not learning will take place. According to Ridgeway (1976), a good relationship with the pupils is the most significant single element in satisfactory teaching.

Apart from the personal rapport with individual learners, the general way by which the teacher interacts with the class is another crucial factor in the teaching learning process. For the purpose of our discussion here, we shall simply classify the teacher – pupil relationship into what is popularly referred to as learner centred and teacher centred education.

Learner/Child-Centred Education: Akinbote (2005) citing Evans has described child/learner centred education as the sort of education which places the learner at the centre of the teaching and learning process. This actually regards the child as not only the centre of attraction but also an individual with inalienable rights which must be respected by the teacher.

Essentially therefore, the child centred education believes that education should stem from the nature of the child. Education should not be imposed on the child. This is why the advocates of child-centred education have always asserted that the child's education must be in accordance with the stages of development. As you must be aware, children at different stages of development vary in their needs, interests and abilities.

What then is involved in the classroom practice of child-centred education? As you have just been told, the classroom practice of child-centred education suggests that as much as possible, the nature and interests of the child should form the basis for the teaching and learning process. That is, the learner must be actively involved in the learning process. This will involve his natural curiosity, his sense of creativity, self-expression, and the desire to work and play with others.

The teacher in devising or selecting his methods of teaching must take these developmental needs and interests of the learners into consideration. He should be a guide rather than a dictator. The learner's involvement in the teaching and learning process is of great importance and should not be taken lightly. The teacher must really harness the child's interest and experience into his teaching methods. The advantages of the child-centred education are many. Can you just mention and explain any two of them?

Teacher-Centred Education: As the name suggests, this is the opposite of child-centred education. This is a situation where the mere acquisition of a body of knowledge and skills by the learners are stressed more than anything else. The teacher here is an authoritarian and mounts some pressure on the learners to work. He may sometimes apply some force or artificial incentives in his desire to make the children learn.

The individual differences among the learners are usually not taken into consideration. The child is usually blamed for his failure or poor performance in school. In the teacher-centred approach, the child is regarded as lazy and careless and will not do anything unless he is forced to do so. This approach in education is gradually becoming unpopular particularly at the pre-primary and primary education levels.

Whatever the level of education, this approach to teaching and learning is becoming very unpopular. It does not encourage the good relationship between the teacher and the learners. As a result, it does not enhance effective learning since the learners are not usually actively involved in the process. The modern day conscientious teacher should therefore avoid this approach to education. Teachers should now acquire the good skills which will make them to teach effectively and efficiently in a world which is now moving towards the application of the democratic principles in every aspect of life.

3.3 Creating a Learner Friendly Classroom

A learner friendly, classroom environment is one which is favourable to the child and makes him free, happy, and healthy and ensures his harmonious and sustainable well-being, growth and development. The classroom environment can be categorized into the social and physical environment.

The social environment refers to all the interactions that go on between individuals and groups in the class. This could be between the teacher and the learners or among the learners. The physical environment on the other hand refers to all the tangible things that could be seen, touched, used or manipulated in one way or the other. These include the instructional materials, the chairs and tables, the school building and other facilities.

When all these social and physical surroundings are adequately organised and made attractive, the learners feel welcome and happy. In other words they become more alert, self-confident and ready to learn. This is why the teacher should do everything possible to make the classroom a happy and beautiful place for the learners. The attitude of teachers should promote cordial relationship in the classroom. There should be freedom for the

learners to work and play with others. The learners need practice in social competence such as respect for others, mutual cooperation with and assistance to one another as well as self-criticism. These and other skills are best developed in a friendly classroom environment.

When the teacher acts as a guide and friend and not as a master or dictator, there is a social interplay which leads to the formation of appropriate attitudes and values among the learners. Since the teachers, values and attitudes are evidenced in their actions and choices, they must ensure that every educational strategy used promotes positive attitude toward the school and the society, through their professional skills to motivate the learners.

In the same way, the physical environment in and out of the classroom must be good enough to stimulate the learners' innate desire to explore, manipulate and be creative. As you were told in one of the earlier lectures, the teachers' ability to improvise will go a long way in motivating the learners.

The teacher should not always wait for the school authorities to supply everything. You as a teacher can through your resourcefulness enrich not only your teaching but also the classroom. Environment that welcomes the learners will not only make them more alert, self-confident and happy but also stimulate their curiosity, and activity.

These are some of the essential characteristics of children which have been found to contribute greatly to their effective learning. Most of the failure and school – drop – outs among school children could be traced to the unfriendly classroom environments. It is not all the cases of poor academic achievement that are due to the low level of intelligence of the learners.

This therefore implies that the teaching and learning process must be learner – centred. The role of the teacher in a learner-centred teaching and learning situation is crucial to the achievement of the goals and objectives of education. The teacher must respect the views and opinions of the learners and provide a friendly environment for their optimum development.

Self-Assessment Exercise

1. Explain what you understand by learning
2. What are the essential conditions necessary for effective learning?

4.0 Conclusion

The teaching/learning process that places the learner at the centre of all activities in the school is known as child centred education. The child should be an active participant in the whole process. This is the only way by which the learners can be free, happy, creative and well developed individuals.

5.0 Summary

In this unit, you have learnt that:

- Teaching is a conscious effort on the part of a more experienced person to impact knowledge to a less experienced person.

- Learning is a relatively permanent change in behaviour as a result of experience.
- The three conditions necessary for effective learning are (a) readiness/maturation (b) motivation and (c) activity.
- Learner – centred education promotes better relationship between teacher and learners than teacher centred education.
- A friendly classroom environment is one which makes the learner free, happy healthy and ensures his/her harmonious growth and development.

6.0 Self-Assessment Exercise

1. Explain the differences between a learner – centred education and a teacher centred education.
2. What is a learner – friendly classroom environment?
3. Enumerate the components of a learner – friendly environment.

7.0 References/Further Reading

Akinbote O. (205). *An Introduction to Teaching*. In Press.

Dodd, W.A. (1978). *The Teacher at Work*. London: Oxford University Press.

Unit 5 Planning to Teach

1.0 Introduction

In the last unit, you learnt the types of relationship that exist in the classroom, and their implications for teaching and learning. In this unit, you are going to learn the practical steps to effective teaching that can bring about effective learning. You will also learn how to prepare a good lesson note.

2.0 Objectives

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- explain the reasons why a teacher should plan his lessons well
- identify the steps involved in lesson preparation
- write a good lesson note.

3.0 Main Content

3.1 Importance of Effective Planning

To plan is simply to make adequate arrangement beforehand about any intended project or activity. As noted by Akinbote et al (2001), planning is an important aspect of any human endeavour. Therefore, no appreciable progress or success can be achieved without adequate planning. This is particularly true of teaching which is aimed at changing the behaviour of the learners.

3.2 The Scheme of Work

The teachers' preparation or planning for teaching starts with the scheme of work. The scheme of work is the breaking down of the syllabus into weekly or daily learning experiences which the individual teacher would like the pupils to follow in a logical order. The advantages of having the scheme of work include the following:

It helps to bring the syllabus to the level of the pupils. That is, it helps to fit the syllabus into the needs, interests, experience and environment of the learners. Since the syllabus is too general, it is not designed for the whole country as in the case of the primary school or a number of countries as in the case of the West African Examination Council.

The scheme of work helps to organize the work in a logical suitable and easy to teach and learn way. If you want to teach what is in the syllabus directly to the pupils, you may find it difficult to stimulate the interest and secure the attention of the pupils. As you learnt in the last unit, you need to secure the interest and attention of the learners for effective learning to take place.

The scheme of work also ensures that the syllabus is covered within the available time. This therefore ensures that no aspect of the syllabus receives too much or too little attention.

In addition, the scheme of work ensures the continuity of work in cases where for whatever reasons, a succession of teachers have to teach the particular class during the session. This is because the incoming teacher will be able to see what has been done and what the next topic to be taught is.

Individual teachers or a group of teachers may prepare the scheme of work for their class or their subject. Whatever the case may be, there are some factors to take into consideration when preparing the scheme of work. These are:

- The syllabus: The areas covered and the order in which they are to be arranged.
- The class: the age, ability, needs, interest and the environment of the learners.
- The time available: The number of periods per week and the number of weeks per term must be taken into consideration.
- The available materials such as text books and other instructional materials.
- The season of the year. This is necessary because there are certain topics that are best taught at a particular period or season of the year.

3.3 The Lesson Note

The lesson note refers to the visible and comprehensive plan of the work to be done in a lesson by the teacher. It indicates the unit of work as interpreted from the scheme of work to be covered in each period which may vary according to the level of education. Some teachers often find it difficult to write their lesson notes because they are lazy. They often claim to have been teaching the same topic or class for years hence they know everything they want to do off head. This kind of argument is not acceptable in teaching. Let us now consider some of the reasons why a good teacher should always prepare his lesson notes.

First, lesson notes help the teacher to limit himself to the most important and relevant facts to be presented to the learners. If there is no adequate planning, the teacher may include a lot of irrelevant facts which may either make the lesson not only uninteresting and boring but also makes the teachers work disorderly.

It helps the teacher to select the most appropriate method and materials for the topic to suit the age, interest and ability of the learners. It also guides against time wasting since the teacher must have allocated definite time to every stage of the lesson.

The lesson note helps the teacher and the pupils to work towards a particular goal or objective. Therefore at the end of the lesson, the teacher would be able to assess the success or failure of the lesson.

Finally with the lesson note well prepared, the teacher should be able to make use of the appropriate method, materials and questions at each stage of the lesson. The success or failure of any lesson to a large extent depends on the level of preparation made by the teacher. If a teacher prepares a good lesson note, it is most likely that he will have a good lesson. In fact, a teacher's competence could be determined from the type of lesson note he has prepared. This is why every teacher must ensure that they take time to be thorough in their lesson note preparation. Let us now go into the actual lesson note preparation.

3.4 The Actual Lesson Note Preparation

As you have just learnt in the last section of this unit, the lesson note is a must for every teacher. The success or failure of any lesson depends on the thoroughness of the lesson note preparation by the teacher. Although there is not yet a method of lesson note preparation that could be regarded as the best, yet there are some acceptable guidelines for a good lesson note preparation. We shall now discuss the general procedures involved in lesson note preparation.

The lesson note can be classified into five important parts. These are:

1. The general information section. This includes name of the school, class, date subject, topic, objective, instructional materials, entry behaviour and others. What to include in this section depends on what is required from the teacher. As an example, as a student teacher, you might need to include your matriculation number and name. You should be able to mention some reasons why this section is necessary for inclusion in the lesson note.
2. The second part is the Introduction. This could bear a separate sub heading in the lesson note. The step I of the presentation stage could also be used as introduction. Whichever way, the introduction helps the teacher to explore the learners experience, interest and ability. The lesson could be introduced in different ways depending on the learners, the subject, topic and the teacher. It is possible to use questions, stories, songs, pictures, a news item or any other thing that could be of interest to the learner. What is important here is to secure the interest of the learners. So, anything that could stimulate their interest provided they are relevant, morally and socially acceptable may be used.
3. The next stage is the Presentation. This is sometimes referred to as procedure or development by some teachers. It is here that the teacher presents to the learners the body of knowledge or information for that period. The teacher must also indicate in steps what the pupils and teacher's activities are. The teacher displays the most appropriate method of teaching the particular topic here. There are three things which must be taken into consideration in the writing of this presentation stage of the lesson. These are:

The subject matter: This refers to the body of facts, principles, information or knowledge to be taught and learnt.

The methods and steps of presentation: The teachers and learners activities have to be specified. The questions to be asked and in what order are to be shown.

The use of instructional materials must be indicated. It is not necessary to list the instructional materials in the first section of the lesson note without really specifying how they are to be used. The presentation stage is an appropriate stage for the teacher to clearly demonstrate how the materials are to be used during the lesson.

The fourth stage is the evaluation or what is sometimes referred to as the conclusion. The teacher here tries to revise the lesson and assess whether the stated instructional objectives have been achieved or not. The evaluation of the pupils could take the form of oral, written or practical activities.

The last stage in modern day lesson notes is the assignment. This is where the teacher gives the pupils some assignments or home work to do. It could be a follow up work on what has just been learnt in the class. It could also be a form of preparation for the next lesson. Whatever the purpose, it is generally regarded as a good means of keeping the learners busy at home.

3.5 Writing the Instructional Objectives

The statement of instructional objectives is an important aspect of the lesson note. This is why we have to give it a special attention here. In the lesson, it is necessary to state right from the beginning what you intend to achieve. If you do not state the objectives at the beginning of the lesson, you will find it difficult to evaluate your lesson. As a result of the importance of the objectives in a lesson note, we shall now try to discuss some of the principles involved.

Behavioural Objectives

As you learnt in one of the previous units, learning is a relatively permanent change in behaviour as a result of experience. Therefore, for you to ensure that learning has taken place in the pupils, you must find out if there is any change in their behaviour. That is to find out whether the pupils have been able to do or say certain things they could not do or say at the beginning of the lesson. This is why the objectives of your lesson should be stated in behavioural ways.

Therefore, the first thing to do in the statement of your instructional objectives is to start the statement in terms of what you expect at the end of the lesson e.g.

At the end of the lesson, the pupils should be able to ...

The next thing is the choice of words to describe what you expect them to be able to do as a result of your teaching. That is, you must use; action verbs'. These are verbs that describe observable behaviours in the learner. The following verbs in group A should be used while those in group B should be avoided while stating your objectives. As noted by Akinbote (2005), the verbs in group A indicate observable behaviour which can tell anyone whether or not the objectives of the lesson have been achieved.

A – Mention, identify, list, explain, calculate, construct, suggest, define, differentiate, describe etc.

B – Understand, learn, know, appreciate, enjoy, grasp, believe, think, have faith in and advise among others.

As you can see, those in group B are too general or ambiguous to be easily measured. For example, how does a teacher measure how for the learners have enjoyed the lesson, understood the lesson or know what has been taught in the lesson. It is difficult. Therefore the verbs in group A should be used since they describe the specific action expected of the learners and these can be measured.

Self-Assessment Exercise

1. Why does a teacher need to plan his lesson ahead?
2. Explain the scheme of work and the factors to consider in its preparation.

4.0 Conclusion

Adequate preparation is necessary for success in anything we are doing. A teacher needs to prepare adequately for his lessons in order to achieve the desired goals. The planning of work for the teacher begins with the scheme of work preparation. It helps him to break the syllabus into teachable units. The scheme of work also helps the teacher to prepare his lesson notes in a way that will meet the needs of the learners. There can be no effective teaching without a carefully planned lesson note.

5.0 Summary

In this unit, you have learnt the following:

- Effective Planning is essential for success in whatever we are engaged in.
- The scheme of work helps to bring the syllabus to the level of the
- Learners.
- In planning the scheme of work, the syllabus, the class, the
- available time, the available materials and the season of the year must be taken into consideration.
- The lesson note is the comprehensive plan of the work to be done by the teacher in a particular lesson.
- The five sections in the lesson note are – the general information, the introduction, presentation, evaluation and the Assignment.
- Instructional Objectives must be stated in purely behavioural form.
- Only action verbs should be used while stating the instructional or lesson objectives.
- The objectives should be stated in terms of the expected changes in the behaviour of the learners.

6.0 Self-Assessment Exercise

1. What do you consider the lesson note to be essential for the effective teaching and learning process?
2. Discuss with examples factors to be considered in the planning of scheme of work.
3. Explain the five sections involved in lesson note preparation using specific examples.

7.0 References/Further Reading

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Unit 6 Teachers and Pupils Questions

1.0 Introduction

In the last unit, we discussed the lesson into preparation. Specifically, we discussed the reasons for the preparation of lesson notes and the sections involved. We also discussed instructional objectives and how to state them. In this unit, you are going to learn the teachers and pupils' questions and how to handle them.

2.0 Objectives

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- explain why teachers and pupils ask questions in the classroom
- identify the types of questions asked in the classroom and explain how to handle them.

3.0 Main Content

3.1 Questions in the Classroom

Probably the most important characteristics of children are curiosity and enquiry. All children possess them in varying degrees. In their desire to satisfy or put these innate tendencies of this into action, children ask questions. They start to do this ever before getting to the school.

Unfortunately however, this important natural desire of children to find out things through questions is often, killed or suppressed in the school. Thus in most of our classrooms, there is little or no signs of the development of the intellectual curiosity of the learners. The teachers are always there to fill the empty mind/heads of the children with knowledge.

Such teachers probably forget that children already know a lot of things before coming to the school. It is thus in their attempt to add more to their knowledge or clarify things that are strange or not clear to them that children ask questions.

What we find in most of the classrooms is that only the teachers ask questions from the pupils. In many instances, such questions by the teacher are badly framed, irrelevant or not well timed. At the end of the day, the learners only receive the knowledge to memorize and reproduce it for examination purpose. This is the old idea associated with the teacher – centred education discussed in the last unit.

As you were told in the last unit, teachers are now moving away from the teacher – centred to learner centred education encourages the teacher to develop the intellectual curiosity and the spirit of enquiry of children. In other words, the learners are to be encouraged to ask questions and explore their environment.

Therefore, in order to promote good interaction and effective communication in the classroom, there should be questions from both the teachers and the pupils. The two types of questions in the classroom are the teachers' questions and the pupils/learners questions.

Before we discuss these two types of classroom questions, it is necessary for us to note the following factors as identified by Dodd (1978).

- Not all pupils have the same tendency to ask questions or enquire.
- Not all pupils are satisfied by the same answers.
- Teachers conduct their lessons in different ways and the type of questions and the way of asking them vary from one teacher to the other.

Whether these factors vary from individuals to individuals and from day to day, or not, it is clear that questions are asked in the class on daily basis.

3.2 Teachers Questions

Teachers ask different questions for different purpose in the classroom. This therefore means that each teacher develops his own style of questioning that benefits the learners. However, not all teachers know how to ask good questions. While the experienced teachers may be able to ask extempore' question, the inexperienced teachers may not be able to do this successfully.

Extempore questions are questions not planned or prepared beforehand. They are asked as the situation warrants. The experienced teacher may sometimes even ask poorly framed and carelessly posed questions.

In order to help you frame good questions and pose them properly, we will discuss the general principles or guidelines for questioning with you now. Before then, let us briefly consider the importance of questioning by the teacher in his/her lessons.

- Questions help the teacher to draw out the learners experience at the beginning of the lesson. As you are aware lessons should begin from known to the unknown. Teachers' questions at the beginning of the lesson therefore help to focus on the particular aspect of the learners' experience that is going to be relevant to the topic or lesson. When the teacher through the answers provided by the learners is able to find out their level of knowledge about the new topic, he will know exactly how and where to introduce the new topic.
- Another importance of teachers question is that it helps to arouse the interest of the learners. The teacher must use questions wisely in order to arouse the learners' interest. When the learners show interest in the lesson right from the beginning, they are likely going to pay attention to the lesson. The teacher will however need to keep on asking well framed and well posed questions to sustain the interest and attention of the learners to the end.

Thus, as once observed by Wilson (1978), the extent to which the questions asked at the beginning of a lesson appeal to the learners' interest will often determine its success or failure. In other words, when teachers ask questions that are of interest to the learners at the beginning, they are most likely going to pay attention to the lesson. At the end of the lesson, effective learning must have taken place.

- Teachers questions during and at the end of the lesson help to keep the interest of the learners alive thereby sustaining their attention to the end. Questions at the end of the

lesson help the teacher to evaluate his teaching. That is, the teacher will be able to find out whether or not the stated objectives of the lesson have been achieved. This helps him to take a decision on whether to proceed to the next topic or repeat the whole lesson or a part of it.

- You must bear in mind that the teachers' questions at any stage of the lesson do not need to be oral. They could be written on the board or even typed out on paper. This now brings us to another importance of teachers' questions. The question helps to keep pupils at alert. When the teacher does all the talking and the pupils are made to be docile recipients of knowledge, they may lose interest. Some may be doing some other things or even be sleeping.

In other words they may not pay attention to the teacher. To avoid this situation well-constructed and well posed questions help to keep the pupils at alert since they will be active participants in the lesson. Moreover, anyone could be asked a question at any time.

- Finally we can add also that questions help to lead pupils to make observation and draw conclusions. For instance, in a social studies lesson on the aspects of our culture, the teacher can bring different materials from different cultures and ask them to identify the materials. e.g., their names, uses, where they come from etc.

Let us now outline the general guidelines for questioning by the teacher. These are:

1. The questions should be short and clear. Do not ask multiple questions at a time.
2. Avoid questions demanding only yes or no answers. Rather, ask questions that could generate deep thinking from the learners. Thus, questions beginning with What, How, When and where are the best in provoking pupils thinking.
3. Avoid rhetorical questions such as Do you understand? Is that clear? Etc. Such questions only require affirmation as pupils rarely say no to such questions.
4. The teacher must show interest in the question and the answer. Do this by planning some of the questions in your lesson note. Do not ask questions to punish anybody.
5. Inform the class before posing a question how you want them to answer your questions. For instance, may be they must raise up their hands, wait until they are called upon or answer at once.
6. Questions must be evenly distributed in the class. Do not concentrate on a particular section of the class or the brilliant pupils alone. Make sure that all the pupils in the class are given equal opportunities to answer questions. however, in doing this the teacher must encourage the weak ones by asking them the most simple questions.
7. When asking questions, you must first pose the question, pause for a while and then call upon a pupil to answer. In this regard, it is better to call each pupil by name. It is not good to call the name of a pupil first before asking the question. Why is this not good?
8. Ask your questions in a clear voice so that everybody can hear you clearly.
9. Do not always repeat your questions. This is to train the pupils to pay attention and listen well.

10. When pupils answer your questions, let them know whether or not their answers are right. If the answers are wrong, try to provide some reasons why they are wrong and give them the chance to try it again. Whatever happens, do not answer your own questions. If they do not know the answer to a question, it means something is wrong. It is either the question is not clear or it is too difficult.

3.3 Pupils Questions

As you were told at the beginning of this unit, one of the things children love to do always is to ask questions. However, too often children are discouraged in different ways from asking questions. In the African culture it is even regarded as bad manners for children to ask too many questions from the elders.

In the classroom, some teachers do not encourage their pupils to ask questions. Some are afraid the pupils may ask questions they cannot answer. In some cases, they do not want the pupils to interrupt their lectures while others find their pupils questions annoying and irritating. There are some reasons why pupils ask questions. Pupils may ask questions for the following reasons:

- To clarify certain facts or information that are not clear to them.
- To find out new facts, information or knowledge about anything.
- To test the teacher's knowledge or his ability to control his temper.
- To gain recognition, attention or to become popular in the class.

Whatever the reasons why pupils ask questions, they all need to be dealt with firmly but also as friendly and as kindly as possible. Now let us discuss how to handle pupils' questions.

When pupils ask relevant and intelligent questions on the topic you are teaching them, you can do the following:

1. Do not first answer the questions directly. Just throw the questions to the whole class. There may be pupils who know the answers to the questions. If there is no one to answer the question correctly, you may reframe the questions in a way that will make it clearer or simple. In some cases, you may even use other questions to lead them to the right answer. The teacher should rarely try to answer the pupils' questions directly.
2. If you are not sure of the correct answer to the question of the pupil, do not attempt to cover your ignorance by giving them the wrong answer. That is not only dangerous but it is also unprofessional. Therefore, what you should do here is to tell them you do not know the answer and that you will find out. You may even give it to the whole class as an assignment. You must however get the correct answer by all means possible and tell them in the next class.

Where pupils ask silly questions to test you or gain recognition/attention in the class, you have to be firm in telling them you will not tolerate silly questions. Do not provide any answers at all. Take the necessary corrective measures to prevent a repeat of such irresponsible questions. In some instances, you may simply ignore the question or simply look straight into the face of the one who asked the question. Look at him/her for a moment and then continue with your lesson.

As much as the teacher should encourage the pupils to ask question, she should not tolerate indiscipline in any form. Once the pupils know you do not tolerate indiscipline in any form. They will avoid asking silly questions in the class. This however does not mean that the teacher should resort to being wicked and unfriendly in his reaction to such question. Every question must be treated on its own merit.

Finally, it must be said that when the class is asking good questions, it must be encouraged. Teachers should also avoid answering their own questions. They must not form the habit of repeating all the answers given by the pupils. Why is it not good to do that?

Self-Assessment Exercise

1. Why do pupils ask questions in the class?
2. Explain five purposes served by teacher's question.

4.0 Conclusion

Questions are necessary for effective teaching and learning to take place. Teachers and pupils ask questions for various reasons. When questions are asked, they should be answered. However, it is not good for a teacher to answer his own questions. It is also not good for him to always repeat his questions or the pupils' answers.

5.0 Summary

In this unit, you have learnt that:

- Curiosity and inquiry are the natural ways by which children seek to satisfy their thirst for knowledge.
- Children should be encouraged to ask intelligent questions.
- Teachers should learn to prepare their questions before the lessons begin.
- Questions should be clear, short and provocative.
- The Teacher should not always repeat his questions or give the answers himself.
- Questions should be evenly distributed in the class.
- Silly and irrelevant questions aimed at testing the teacher or gaining attention/popularity should not be entertained.

6.0 Self-Assessment Exercise

1. Explain five factors teachers should take into consideration when asking questions from the learners.
2. How should a teacher treat pupils questions that are:
 - Intelligent and relevant to the topic?
 - Too difficult for the teacher to answer?

- Just to gain popularity in the class?

7.0 References/Further Reading

Wilson, J.M. (1978). Questions and Questions in Dodd, W.A. (Ed). *The Teacher at Work*. London: Oxford University Press.

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Unit 7 Keeping Up-To-Date in Teaching

1.0 Introduction

In the previous units of this module, you have learnt about the teacher in the classroom. We discussed in the different units the qualities of a good teacher, the behavioural job expectations for teachers, the teaching learning process as well as questioning and questions in the classroom. In this unit, you are going to learn how the teacher should keep up to date in his professional skills and competence.

2.0 Objectives

At the end of this unit, you should be able to

- explain the two major tasks of the teacher
- suggest how teachers can keep on improving on their professional skills and competence.

3.0 Main Content

3.1 The Teachers Tasks

The task of the teacher is two-fold. The first one is to grow in the ability or capacity to use knowledge which they have. This means that the teachers should always demonstrate their skills and knowledge they have acquired in their day to day interactions with their pupils. Their ability to do this efficiently and effectively depends on their experience. The ability to make good use of the experiences acquired from their pupils will go a long way in demonstrating their capacity to use their knowledge well.

Teachers must therefore be adequately trained to make them acquire the necessary professional skills and competence. Without this initial professional training, it may be difficult or even impossible for them to grow in their capacity to use the knowledge. As you must have known, you can only give what you have. If teachers do not acquire the necessary knowledge and skills while in training, it may be difficult for them to give their best.

The second task of the teacher is to acquire new knowledge and relevant skills. This is a great and challenging task of the teacher. The explosion of knowledge is on a continuous and regular basis. Teachers must therefore be able to keep abreast of developments not only in their areas of specialization but also in the methodology areas. There are many areas of knowledge where new discoveries and developments take place daily. These areas where knowledge continually increases for the teacher to catch up with include the following:

Psychology: This is an area of study where knowledge as a result of intensive research activities, much is now known about the nature of the learners. We must remember how psychology has revealed to us what we can do with respect to the needs, interest, ability and problems of children at different stages of life.

The increase in the body of knowledge in psychology of learning requires every teacher to be up to date. There are new findings on the nature of learning, causes of difficulties in learning, and how the learners could be helped.

All these continuously evolving theories about the child and how he could learn better are challenges to the teacher. The ideas of great educators on teaching and learning should be properly interpreted and applied by the teacher.

The works of Jean Piaget, Jerome Bruner, Benjamin Bloom and a host of others are yet to be effectively applied by teachers. As a teacher, you should realize that these great educators and psychologists do not necessarily give direct advice to teachers. Although they may offer some suggestions on how best to go about the application of their ideas and theories, yet there are still much to be learnt by teachers on how best to apply them to the practical classroom situation.

The Changing Curriculum: As you will soon learn, if you have not done so, the curriculum is not a once and for all affair. That is to say, it is continually changing. There are new knowledge areas, new materials and methods which teachers need to understand. In these days of high technological advancement, the teacher is faced with changing curricula. Since the school curriculum has to change with time in order to accommodate new developments, needs and interest of the society, the teacher has to keep on updating his knowledge.

The different educational technology devices cannot replace the teacher. Since learners find them interesting and helpful in learning, teachers must master their use in order to enhance their teaching.

Changing Social Situations: As human beings are always changing in all ways, the teacher is also faced with the challenges of handling different social cultural and economic backgrounds of the learners. The acquisition of relevant knowledge in these areas enhances the teacher's tasks in and outside the classroom. If the teacher remains stagnant in his knowledge about societal changes, he may not be effective in his teaching. If he does not know how to make his classroom stimulating for all categories of learners, he may find it difficult to be effective in his teaching.

Changes in Methods of Teaching and Evaluation: Research findings are always providing new ways and opportunities for improving the teaching and learning process. This means that teachers must always maintain contact with developments not only in their areas of specialization but also in the professional aspects of their work. They must be current with the new methods of teaching and evaluation. They need to have a broad knowledge which covers other areas or levels outside their immediate concern.

The modern day teacher does not need to be too conservative and dogmatic in his attitudes, belief and practices. While he needs to conserve or preserve the good aspects of the past, he must be open minded enough to modify not only the methods but also the knowledge component of the curriculum. It is only when teachers are able to recognize the need to accommodate new ideas and new ways of doing things that they may be able to teach effectively. That means the teacher has to keep on reading and learning all his life. According to Ridgway (1976), the idea of life – long education is especially significant in the case of those who teach others.

3.2 How to Keep Up to Date

There is a popular saying that for a candle to provide light, it must keep on burning. In the same way, for a teacher to keep on impacting relevant knowledge, to others, he must keep on acquiring knowledge. The question we would now try to answer in this section is, how does a teacher keep up – to – date?

Since we all agree that a teacher needs to be up to date in both the content area of the curriculum and the methodology of delivering it, there are many ways of achieving this. The teacher is an important key not only in the socialization of the child. He is also the key to educational change. If the curriculum is improved upon and all the school facilities and materials are adequately provided, without good teachers who are ready to learn, not much will be achieved in the teaching and learning process.

In one of the earlier units, you learnt the characteristics of a good teacher. One of them is that he must be ready to learn all his life. The one way by which the teacher can keep abreast of developments in his profession is to keep on learning. How does he/she keep on learning? He can do this by:

3.2.1 Reading

The print is one of the most important media of information dissemination of our time. Millions of works are printed in books, journals, magazines, and newspapers every day. Even the computer heavily depends on the power of letters to reach out to millions of people daily. Therefore, anyone who wishes to be up-to-date in his or her chosen profession cannot avoid reading.

As for the teacher, new knowledge either in the curriculum content or in the methodology areas is continuously evolving. The new knowledge can only be found on the pages of journals, books and magazines which are kept waiting for readers in the library. Similarly, the internet is full of new knowledge on any aspect of human endeavour. In short, there is nothing you want to know more about that you will not get through the Internet.

In short, we can say here that there is no excuse whatsoever for any teacher to claim ignorance of new developments in his field. We may however agree that most teachers in our rural areas may not have access to the library or internet facilities. We may therefore appeal to the relevant authorities to make such facilities available in the rural areas. The local communities, the Parent Teachers' Association, Various Association and Philanthropists could come to the aid of teachers. The government alone cannot provide these facilities.

There are many of our Business men and women and politicians who are even richer than the local or state government. The money they waste on less important things could be used to provide library and internet facilities to all the rural areas. Even if it is made available only at the Local Government Headquarters, teachers can still go there to make use of them.

We must at the same time advise teachers to cultivate the habit of reading. Their reading should not be limited to their pupils' textbooks or newspapers. Many teachers who even have the library and internet facilities in the urban centres do not make use of them. Sometimes, they do not even know such facilities are available and when they know, they do

not use them out of indolence. You must keep on reading to fill your mind with new ideas and new ways of doing things.

3.2.2 Learning from their Pupils

Modern methods according to Ridgway (1976), have encouraged teachers to learn with and from their pupils. The teacher as we mentioned in one of the units is not Mr. Know all. He must have the sufficient humility to acknowledge that there are many things which he does not know or better ways of doing things.

Some of the learners may be more exposed to the library and internet facilities than the teacher. Such pupils may often come to the class with better information/knowledge of a particular thing. They may even know better, faster or the easier way of doing certain things. In such situation, the teacher can allow the pupils to tutor their peers while the teacher also learns from them.

3.2.3 In-Service-Programmes

There are different modes of in-service-programmes teachers can benefit from: They include:

Study – leave with pay: This is where a teacher after some years in teaching may wish to go in for a higher qualification. For instance, an NCE teacher who wants to go in for a degree programme may wish to do it full time. In this case, the employer could grant him study leave with his salary paid for the period of study. He will however need to sign an agreement bond to serve the employer for a specific number of years before he could resign or retire.

The study-leave without pay: This is a situation where the teacher goes for a higher qualification in teaching without receiving salary. He will however be reabsorbed into his teaching position after the completion of the course. The teacher could also be placed on a higher salary scale commensurate with his present qualification.

Part-Time/Distance Learning: In recent years, there are many opportunities for teachers to keep on improving themselves. There are many institutions now in the country that offer part – time programmes. The Open University of which you are a student is a good example. The teacher in this type of programme does not have to resign or leave his job for a full – time course. He can now keep on teaching and doing a higher degree at the same time. The programme may come up on week – ends or during long vacations. It may even require the students receiving lectures through the television, radio or internet.

The major advantage of this mode of study is that it does not give room for long absence between husband and wife. In the past we have heard about people losing their wives or husbands to others as a result of the long separation from home. We have also heard about men not allowing their wives to go for further studies because of the fear of their being seduced or suited by their teachers or others while in school.

Seminars/Conferences/Workshops: These are short programmes aimed at improving on specific skills and competences of teachers. It could be organized by the federal, state or Local Government as well as Government Agencies, Non – Governmental Agencies and International Organization. Mention some of such agencies.

From the discussion of the in-service programme, you will see that teachers more than ever before now have better chances of improving themselves and keeping up-to-date. Unfortunately, as a result of laziness, many teachers often fail to avail themselves of such great opportunities. Such teachers are those that are often complaining that there are no materials; the pupils are not good and so on. When next you see or hear such teachers, you will know that they are the lazy ones.

On the other hand, we should not forget to remind the school authorities whether public or private, that they need to motivate the teachers. Many school heads or proprietors do not show interest in their teachers' education. When some teachers apply for permission to attend one course or the other, they are often told to resign.

Teachers are at the heart of any effort made at improving the quality of education in any society. Their commitment, competence and professional skills should enhance through the continued support they receive to improve themselves. In this regard, they need the support and cooperation of all to keep them up to date. The more up to date the teachers are in their curriculum content and methodology areas, the more skillful and effective the teaching and learning process will be.

Self-Assessment Exercise

1. Explain the two major tasks of the teacher.
2. Why do teachers need to keep up-to-date in their profession?

4.0 Conclusion

Teachers can only be effective and efficient in their teaching by keeping up-to-date. Teachers can only be up-to-date if they keep on improving themselves. They can keep on improving themselves by reading, attending conferences workshops and seminars or through full time or part time in-service programmes. The candle can only give light when it keeps on burning. Therefore, teachers must be encouraged and supported by all to help them acquire the necessary skills and competence.

5.0 Summary

In this unit, you have learnt the following:

1. Teachers tasks are two fold
 - acquiring the necessary knowledge and skills for teaching.
 - Keeping up-to-date in the curriculum content areas and the methodology
2. Knowledge continually increases in the following areas:
 - Psychology
 - Curriculum
 - Society
 - Methodology

3. Teachers can keep up to date by

- Reading
- In-service programmes such as fulltime studies part-time and short term programmes.

6.0 Self-Assessment Exercise

1. Why does a teacher need to keep – up – to date in his profession?
2. Explain the different ways by which teachers can keep-up-to date.

7.0 References/Further Reading

Berns, R.M. (2004). *Child, Family School, Community: Socialization and Support* (6th ed.). Belmont: Thomson Wadsworth.

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