



TEACHER'S SKILLS/COMPETENCE AND PEDAGOGICAL STRATEGIES REQUIRED FOR EFFECTIVE TEACHING IN NIGERIAN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN POST COVID-19 ERA

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Abstract: The corona virus outbreak made many countries of the world to close down their education institutions in 2020. In Nigeria, schools were closed down, academics activities were suspended and teachers were at home for the period of 6 months before they resumed. As the pandemic persists, this calls for new ways of imparting knowledge/teaching in our educational institutions. The paper discuss some innovative teaching skills/competence and pedagogical strategies required of secondary school teachers to enable them impart knowledge in the post covid-19 era and in any similar emergence situation that may occur. This skills/competence include, constructivism skills, collaborative learning competence, social distance and spacing skills, blended learning skills, customized blended learning model skills, global competence, virtual learning competence, and contemporary education language competence. These teaching skills provide opportunities for teaching and learning to take place without students being compacted in one place. It therefore recommended that: the 21st century pedagogical strategies innovated and earlier recommended should be stressed in teacher-education programs at all levels, every educational institution in Nigeria should have e-library and educational technology workshop and should be used as a prerequisite for establishment of new educational institution, special training programs, seminars and workshops should be organized for all teachers on on-line education at all levels to enable them acquire skills for the contemporary innovative models for teaching and learning among others.

Keywords: Skills, Pedagogy, Strategies, Pandemic, e-Learning, Emergence situation

Introduction:

Corona virus (Covid-19) spread in Africa and Nigeria in particular in February, 2020 like wild fire and began to cause havoc in many aspects of human endeavors including education. At the end of February, alarm began to send on the growing spread of the covid-19 virus, which made the World Bank to establish a multi-sectoral task force to support country's response and coping measures. These could not prevent the spread. About two weeks later, 120 countries closed down their schools. And in March, over 200 countries forced their children to vacate schools to their various homes (World Bank Education Covid-19 monitoring, March 15th, 2020). Nigeria followed suit and closed all her educational institutions in March.

Like other African countries, demand for secondary education in Nigeria is increasing due to rising primary completion rates and a growing youth population. This is as a result of great efforts made by private individuals, organizations and governments at all levels to establish primary schools. Nigerians value education as they see it as instrument for rapid economic, social, cultural and political development. Also, education develops the child's mental, physical, social and environmental skills (Education commission for mastered foundation, 2020). The awareness made majority of Nigerian to enroll their children/ kids in schools. Enrolling their children into secondary schools is an opportunity

where they will lay foundation for academic and entrepreneur skills; and is a place that prepares the youth for the future of work (U.N mastered Card Foundation,2020).

The secondary school students, like pupils and students of other levels of education in Nigeria, were at the peak of academic activities preparing for second term examination and those in SSS III were preparing for external examinations in March before the covid-19 made them to mark time. The situation was exacerbated as the pandemic made students to stay at home for over six months and they were not call to write examinations to graduate and others to continue third term academics and other school activities until August before some states began to re-open their primary and secondary schools gradually, with some guidelines or protocols. Teachers, pupils and students were in the state of dilemma which made academics and non-academic activities not to take place. During that period, many Nigerians suggested that teaching and learning in schools should be done through online. But the question is, did all secondary schools in Nigeria have e-library and other educational technologies? The economic situation of the Country became worst during the pandemic era. The covid-19 contracted economic environments which threatened the ability of the citizens and government not to invest in secondary schools at that time. Many struggled on how they will have three square meals per day. Most teachers do not have knowledge and skills of operation of e-library and other educational technology gadgets. They also thought of the methods and strategies to adopt to impart knowledge on students if the pandemic persisted or subsided. The country was busy on how to prevent the virus from attacking her citizens and providing palliatives for them. The World Bank, United Nation organization, voluntary organizations, countries of the world and some well-to-do people collaborated and battled with the dreaded virus and reduced its rates of spreading, attacking and killing in some parts of the world, while it is still affecting some vital aspects of human endeavors in some countries.

Many countries now are facing other sectors including that of education to wake them from slumber as people know that education is the key to personal development and the frontlines of societies that unlocks opportunities and narrow inequalities and as the bedrock of the informed, tolerant societies, and a primary driver of sustainable development (Antonio Guterres U.N secretary, 2020). They resorted to improving the education sector to make sure that teaching and learning continued as schools resumed in the third and fourth-quarters of 2020. Experience of previous outbreak such as SARS, Ebola, and now covid-19, forced the World Bank to work with countries across the globe on how to prepare, cope and recover from any other unforeseen circumstances. To that effect, educational administrators and policy makers are using this crisis as an opportunity to introduce new learning models that could make everyone to prepare for emergencies and make the system more resilient (Azizi & Stimis2020). Therefore, Nigeria need to collaborate with organizations and individuals that wish to improve her education sector by training secondary school Teachers to have the skills and knowledge of methodologies to adopt in this era and in future (post-covid-19 era). The skills and knowledge will make them to integrate technology into their traditional teaching and learning practices and will provide ongoing-crisis psycho-social support as currently done by other countries across the world (Mugo, K.Odera, N.&Wachira, M.2020).

Then, what are the skills that Nigerian secondary school teachers should have to enable them integrate technology into their traditional teaching and learning practices?

What are the pedagogical strategies to be adopted to make the system resilient?

In outlining and discussing the skills/competence and pedagogical strategies to be adopted, one will begin with the approaches recommended for teaching and learning in the 21st century, the on-line and its new devices and the emerging ones.

The teaching skills and methodologies to be used in post COVID-19 and in unforeseen situations are discussed below.

Competence in Constructivism.

This is one of the 21st Century pedagogical approaches recommended for teaching and learning in education institutions. Teachers need to acquire the skills of been an organizer, a manager, a facilitator,

a collaborator and a democratic leader who should always interact with individual or all students in friendly way to complete their tasks.

In this system, Students are given large projects to complete on their own or and developing system (Zhao, 2020). It is learner centered, the learner is mostly active rather than to be passive (Andrew, 2021). As an organizer and a manager, the teachers assign projects and assignments to students and they should always interact with each student until they complete their works. In a real constructive learning environment, if the learner solved the work given, he or she could come to school to explain or disseminate the work done to his colleagues (Kim, J. 2020). The knowledge could also be shared to colleagues when it satisfied the teacher. In this era, teachers should have these skills and need to be trained on how to teach individual student in a class and in remote areas.

Collaborative Learning Competence

It is also recommended for teaching/learning in the 21st century that teachers need to have the skills. Once the skills are acquired, the teacher will know how to pair students before giving the work to do. This is to avoid been over crowded. In this era, the group could be in 2 or 3. As a manager, the skills teachers need to have are social interactive skills, edu-tech competence, team management skills, and they should always be creative and critical in thinking in attending to each group. The teacher's role is to guide each group as they solve works or projects given to them. The teacher should also be acquainted with electronic learning gadgets as they may sometimes be in distance area to ask for direction and feedback. Students could collaborate with peers from around the globe and can learn from within and from anywhere at any time (Zhao, 2020).

Social Distancing and Spacing Skills

Teachers of this era need to be well trained on how to manage and handle students in their classes especially by staying away from each other in few meters; the class sitting arrangement should be well spaced and number of students as well be limited in the classroom. This is also referred to as in-person instruction with social distance and hybrid model on campus (Carvalho, S & Hares. S. 2020). According to Resources for Teaching Personal and Social Distances in the classroom (2020), pupils or students should be arranged in a circle, ring and bubble measured six meters away from each other with tape. In order to monitor pupils or students, teachers should acquire "behavioural skills". The skills when acquired will make the teachers to monitor the movement, sitting posture, and other reactions of the learners in the classroom. This was mentioned to be adopted in America, Nigeria and other Countries when they began to call students back to schools from August 2020 (Corona virus World Health Organization (WHO) Retrieved 14, October, (2020).

Blended Learning Skills

Due to the poverty level of the people in Nigeria, many students were not provided with e-mail gadgets to study at homes, but with this experience gotten from the ills of COVID-19 that disrupted both academic and extra curriculum activities, it deemed fit that both teachers and students be given training on online education. Blended learning interprets computer assisted-online activities with traditional face to face teaching (talk and chalk) (kim,S. 2020).

When teachers are well trained, they will adopt valuable new dimension to perform their tasks effectively. This system allows learners to work at their own pace and teacher is to fill content gaps. This has been practiced in developed countries and South Africa adopted this during the pandemic era. South African teachers adopted remote learning and teaching that is backed up by dependable skilled instructor (Kim, 2020 & Weimer, 2020). In practice, an application like zoom could be provided to learners by the teachers to open their phones or laptops computers. Therefore, teachers should have constructive and collaborative skills, technological prowess and time management skills. These skills will make the teachers to be competent in organizing instructional facilities in the learning environment for effective interaction with each or all students within a specific period in different locations.

Customized Blended Learning Model Skills

Secondary school teachers in Nigeria need to go beyond having the training of using online- teaching and learning skills. There are some special and powerful pre-installed apps that are designed for education of some students only. Many advanced countries and South Africa in African continent have been adopting the method and is called tehn-blended learning. It is a structured approach using mostly offline app in an integrated or experienced adult mentor or guide (weimer 2020). To tackle some emergence situation in education, South Africa devised a mini personal computer called The “Gamma Tutor™.” It is an offline device pre-loaded with interacting learning material that was specifically designed for South African school condition. This is worthy of emulation by Nigeria from South Africa and other African countries. This is because the Gamma Tutor application offers mathematics concept explanations in eight different languages. Also, it is meant for presenting lessons in video, PDF, or animated power point format – along with glossaries, exam, revision support, translating from English into indigenous languages and many additional teaching support materials. Also, it can be used for interactive teaching online and remote (weimer, 2020). Apart from been an educational technology expert and a facilitator, Nigerian teachers need to be patient and persevered if this is introduced in Nigeria. Nigerian Teachers also need to be familiar with students’ cultural background and their goals. And they need to be dynamic in adoption of new innovation.

Global competence:

Global competency have long been adopted as important abilities for the 21st century but economic level of many Nigerians and attitude of the governments at all levels could not make much attempt on training of teachers and their learners to have global knowledge of continuity and interdependency. Zhao, (2009) earlier pointed that, the world is battling an unprecedented economic crisis and the potentially H1N1 virus. Both battles serve as a jolting reminder that the human race has entered a new era in which geographical and political boundaries can no longer be in isolation. Thus, Zhao that time emphasized that one should have the ability and knowledge to understand global interdependence, global economics, global problems and global conflicts as well as the desire and ability to bring positive changes to the world for all human beings to live in peace and share prosperity.

Therefore, every teacher in Nigeria should be given global knowledge and skills to quickly understand any unforeseen or emergence situation and should be able to control the situation for better living. Giving of global knowledge will as well makes teacher to be smart enough in short sighted actions that are disastrous in the long-term as they are always connected and interrelated with other countries and continents of the world. This could as well make them to quickly think of how to combat any situation that could cause havoc to education sector (Smalley, 2020). They will also have the ability to strategized ways of imparting knowledge to learners in critical period as in the era of the dreaded covid-19. As such, apart from having skills for technological know-how, creative and critical thinking, collaborative and intellectual competence, they should be an explorer and a researcher to be aware of national and international events at all times through networks.

Virtual Learning Competence

This is a paradigm shift in education that Nigerians secondary school teachers need to emulate by acquiring virtual social skills. It will enable them to be capable of having social relations online and ability to use virtual media technologies. Virtual competency is a whole set of knowledge, skills, social emotional capabilities, and wisdom necessary for living, learning, and working in the virtual world (zhao, 2009). Having digital knowledge and skills by teachers would enable them to overcome any physical, psychological, economic, political and social mishap that may affect education sector (Co-creation Hub/Education, 2020). Most teachers in Nigeria were thrown in disarray when Covid 19 virus pierced into Nigeria terrain. Therefore, as e-library and online education is necessary for all secondary school teachers in order to overcome any emergency that will come on their ways. This has been advocated also as one of the 21st century skills for teachers, students and administrators in education institutions and other sectors all over the world (zhao, 2020).

There are different forms of online learning that some combined the basic ingredients such as technology platforms, media modality, temporal arrangement instructional approaches, teachers roles and more such as frequent interactions among students and instructor (zhao,2020). Nigerian teachers need to have good technological learning environments which they will always use for reading, writing, interaction and motivating students. A teacher should make sure that every student's attention is on him, and he should be time conscious and persistence. According to (MCBeath, 2020), when acquired these skills, they can broadcast live or recorded lecture and disseminate to students at a specific times, receiving uniform information from the same teacher at the same time.

The countries that used remote learning and education resources to mitigate loss of learning during Covid 19 era are china, Italy, France, Germany and Saudi Arabia. Mobile phones or television were used in Vietnam, Mongolia. In Singapore, teachers and administrators combined infrastructure and community with the tools and processes that they were familiar with to give distance learning. And in Bulgaria, more than 800,000 accounts were created for all teachers and Parents, and publishers were published to open digital text books and learning materials for grade 1 to 10, two national TV channels to broadcast educational TV (Azizi & stimis, 2020).

Skills of Grammar and Language of Education.

Nowadays, most teachers and instructors in education institutions in advanced countries are abandoning grammar of schooling to language of education for teaching and learning because of the fast changing world and new education technologies that evolved. A teacher should have the ability to use the language of educational technologies, be fast, creative and innovative in thinking and communicate confidently with the leaners in remote areas. The grammar and language are used to give education to learners at a place that they are ready to receive and not only in schools (Zhao, 2020). According to Cox (2019), a teacher need to be adaptive, imaginative and should teach with confident as teaching is mostly taking place in different environments. Most of Nigerian teachers are so conservative that they hardly change to move hand-in-glove with the recent education innovative technologies and their language of teaching and learning in schools and in remote areas. Covid-19 forced Nigerian teachers out of schools which made them to be confused on how to impart knowledge on the learners at homes. They are not familiar with the concepts, meanings, principles, etiquettes, ethics and language of grammar to be used with the modern education technologies for teaching and learning that education could be given at a specific time and in outside schools. Such pedagogical strategies such as peer mentory, social learning, collaborative learning, constructivism and online learning are not adopted in Nigerian secondary schools.

To speak the language of education, we should not be constrained by the existing rules about how to structure time in schools. We should rethink how time can be best used to support learning for it will be a great mistake to replicate school scheduling in online education when schools are closed (Zhao, 2020). Teachers need to be familiar with the skills and grammar that will be used with the modern educational technology gadgets and innovative pedagogies. Therefor they should be organizers, innovators, directors and should be acquainted with the modern education language and grammar as the world changes especially in this era of science and technology

Recommendations

In order to Make Nigerian secondary school teachers and other instructors to impart knowledge to learners in schools and in remote areas in post-covid-19 and when such emergence situation should occur, the following recommendation- are-made;

1. The 21st century pedagogical strategies innovated and earlier recommended should be stressed in teacher-education programs at all levels. This will not take the next generation teachers surprises of how to impart knowledge on students.
2. Every education institution in Nigeria should have e-library and educational technology workshop and should be used as prerequisites for establishment of new education institution.

3. Special training programs, seminars and workshop should be organized for all teachers on on-line education at all levels to enable them acquire skills for the contemporary innovation models for teaching and learning.
4. Educational technology and on-line education should be made compulsory as subjects in secondary school and a course of study in teacher training institutions.
5. Government should come in partnership with experts of educational technology and telecom network operator in delivery of education programs.
6. All secondary schools in the country should have stand-by generator to power their educational gadgets.
7. Government should make policy to accelerate the development and manufacturing of education technology soft and hardware for customized blended learning. That will as well make teaching and learning take place at home in local languages

Conclusion

The experience gotten from 2020 that the pandemic spread into Africa and in Nigeria in particular with its devastating effects on education sectors has shown the important role teachers played in facilitating teaching and learning. Therefore, if the government, policy makers and administrators of education adhere to the recommendations given above, teachers and instructors of secondary schools and other levels of education should integrate technology into teaching and learning in the post-crisis era. It will as well go a long way in making the current practice more interactive and engaging for students and teachers to deliver education mostly in the event of future emergency and in the creation of more modular approaches for teaching and learning in secondary schools.

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