

Education, Quality Assurance and whole School Evaluation Strategy

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Abstract

This paper discusses the synergy among education, quality assurance and effective evaluation could lead to improved learners' outcomes. It suggests that all education officers who are to engage in school self-evaluation or external evaluation) must be given intensive training in order to effectively support schools for improvement. Since education quality assurance is necessary for school improvement, the leadership and management of schools are encouraged to take steps to institute regular school self-evaluation if not in place already. They should see external evaluators as partners in ensuring school improvement. This will help them to provide the learners under their care quality education that will ensure improved outcomes. The place of teachers in the overall development of learners cannot be over emphasised. The innate abilities of learners may remain dormant if the teacher and indeed leadership and management fail to facilitate their growth through quality teaching and learning.

Keywords: Education, Quality assurance, School supervision, Education officers

Introduction

Quality assurance (QA) is checking the quality of service and taking improvement measures as the process continues. It is therefore process oriented, dynamic and extensive, Bello, (2003). Quality assurance is different from Quality control. Education Quality assurance (EQA) is checking the quality of education open to learners through monitoring, assessing and evaluating according to agreed standards.

The concept of Education Quality Assurance (EQA)

The EQA involves communicating judgments to all concerned. The processes of EQA are guided by the principles of integrity, public accountability and ensuring consistent improvement as viewed by Alele-Williams, (2004). She is of the view that when conducted in schools, the aim is to support them to:

- Know what their standards should be,
- Ask whether they attain them, and
- What they can do to improve in their practice in order to become highly effective.

The importance of EQA in schools

- Promote active participation, support and commitment of all stakeholders.

Guides and compels schools to evaluate themselves at regular intervals.

- Encourage schools to develop the culture of quality consciousness.
- Promotes public accountability and hence minimizes waste of resources.
- Leads to increased cost effectiveness in running the school.
- Ensures consistent improvement of learners when effectively carried out.
- Enhances public confidence in the school. Enaohwo, (2003).

Whole School Evaluation (WSE)

- WSE is the strategy being used to implement the EQA processes and practices in Basic and Secondary schools within Nigeria. It was approved for implementation during the 2007 National Council on Education(NCE) meeting.
- Helps schools to constantly and internally improve the quality of education practices.
- It seeks to evaluate every aspect of school life and work.
- The process is open, comprehensive, inclusive and interactive.

- WSE comprises School Self-evaluation (SS-e) and External Evaluation (EE).
- The processes of WSE enables schools to work together with external evaluators to identify the school's strengths and its areas for improvement. Mckay, J. & Kember, D. (2009).
- The two use the same quality standards, criteria, processes and practices as laid out in the National Education Quality Assurance Handbook for Basic and Secondary Education in Nigeria.
- The Handbook provides all the guidelines on the processes and activities for evaluating schools using the WSE strategy.

The Evaluation Schedule brings out seven (7) Aspects which ensures that the whole school is evaluated using the agreed standards, criteria and processes.

The Aspects are in three broad groups:

Outcomes for learners- Achievement and standards & Learners' personal skills and Participation.

The quality of provision-The quality of Teaching and learning, The quality of the Curriculum and other activities, The quality of Care, Guidance and Safety & The quality of the learning environment Abebe, T. (2014).

The Effectiveness of Leadership and management.

School Self-evaluation (SSe)

The SS-e is an essential part of QA. Just like the EE evaluators, the Head teachers/Principals and other leaders must be trained in their own schools to effectively carry out SS-e to ensure school improvement. SS-e is integrated into the school's routine management system (it is a continuous process). Focuses on the impact of the school's action on learners. The SS-e processes help the school to evaluate and judge the quality of what they are doing and the impact on learners' outcomes. Supports the school in its ability to improve the quality of education for the learners. Enables schools to identify and focus on areas where improvement should be made.

EE is conducted by External evaluators who must have gone through intensive training with practicum lessons to ensure effective conduct of the processes and activities of education quality assurance. The EE validates the school Self-evaluation report with the aim of supporting and challenging schools so they know what their standards should be, ask whether they attain them and what more they can do to improve their practice and become highly effective Arong, F.E., & Ogbadu, M.A. (2010).

Focus on Three Aspects of the School System to Enhance Learners' Outcomes

There are four aspects of school evaluation in order to enhance the capacity of administrators and teachers for continuous school improvement that this paper wants to examine. They are:

- Ensuring quality Teaching and learning.
- Providing quality Care, Guidance and Safety.
- Ensuring effective Leadership and management.
- Ensuring Quality Teaching and learning

Any school worth its name should serve as a fertile ground for learners to fulfil their dream of acquiring new knowledge and skills in addition to moulding their character to develop sound attitude and morals that would help them fit into the society.

What children become in future is to some extent influenced by the teachers directly or indirectly hence the need for ensuring quality teaching and learning in schools.

Although there are other features of teaching that affect learning like; the quality of Curriculum and other activities, Care Guidance and Safety, extent of a conducive learning environment- teachers need to display certain qualities that positively bring out the best from learners. Some of these qualities are highlighted below.

Qualities of the modern day teacher

- Have the ability to set clear objectives that are learner centred with planned steps to achieve them. The objectives must be SMART and focus on new skills to be learned by the learner.

- Highly knowledgeable and up-to-date in their subject areas but do not pretend to know it all. Avoid misleading the learners.
- Encourage learners to practice in order to reinforce learning, make corrections and ensure they feel that if they make mistakes, they will not be ridiculed.
- Promote learners' participation through questioning, discussions and group activities.
- Treat all learners seriously and do not be impatient with them, ridicule or intimidate them when they ask questions.
- Use regular informal assessment strategies in addition to the formal assessment.
- Provide learners with class tasks, goals/requirements to achieve and inform them of progress made.
- Understand that learners learn at different rates and different ways and provide variety of activities, tasks and pace work so that all learners are carried along to ensure they make progress.
- Be a good listener and alert.
- Read and research for fresh insights and relate them to your teaching.
- Work in a shared collegial way with colleagues, be a team player and not a loner.
- Discuss with the previous teacher if you are new to help you with background information of learners, including learners level of progress.
- Teachers who may have a challenge with any topic or subject matter should consult with their HOD or HOS or any colleague who may know the subject matter better before delivering that lesson.
- Know when it is the best time to deliver a particular lesson.
- Prepare the lesson plan with clear learning outcomes and suitable teaching strategies but be prepared to deviate in the course of the lesson if the need should arise.
- Prepare to motivate and maintain the interest of learners during the lesson.
- Use assessment for lesson planning- the level of learners progress is important.
- Use relevant instructional materials that match the learners' level and different teaching methods
- Communicate clearly and be audible while in class so that no learner is left out.
- Manage time well to help learners make progress; have clearly spelt our rules and regulations that guide the conduct of learners.
- Teaching should be challenging to learners and promote high expectations. Encourage critical thinking, independent and collaborative learning which enhance problem solving, communication skills and interactive learning.
- Use homework to consolidate and extend learning, ensure thorough and constructive marking of the work at the right time. Giving feedback to learners is a good motivation for their progress.
- Ensure the comments on learners work is legible and helps to improve learning. Comment like “seen” is not helpful.
- Be a teacher who maintains the confidentiality of learners' personal information.
- Never show or tolerate social discrimination among learners.
- Be familiar with the application of Computer system and communication technology.
- Be neat and well dressed.
- Be a proactive teacher who has initiative that helps the school to run smoothly.
- Be genuine, serve whole-heartedly with utmost dedication, promptness, efficiency and loyalty.
- Be a good image maker of your institution and show respect for constituted authority.

Self-evaluation by teachers

Teachers should evaluate themselves at the end of class lesson; helps a teacher to become better. Ask self:

- What went well?
- What problems did I experience and why?
- What could I have done differently?
- What did I learn from the experience?
- Be honest to yourself.

Providing Quality Care, Guidance and Safety for Learners

The quality of Care, Guidance and Safety is one of the Aspects of quality assurance evaluation in schools. No effective learning takes place when learners are insecure or feel insecure Ukwungwu, J.O. (2008).

It is the responsibility of all staff (teaching and non-teaching) in the school system to ensure quality care, guidance and safety of all learners.

A lot lies on the Head of school and management staff to give leadership and ensure compliance by all. The paper highlights some key points to consider on this aspect of a school.

Key points to consider in ensuring quality Care, Guidance and Safety

- The school provides support, advice and guidance to learners based on the monitoring of their achievements and personal development so they know how well they are doing;
- Encourage learners to live healthy lives and keep themselves safe by deliberate planned programmes;
- Ensure learners know how to respond and feel safe to report issues of violence, abuse and conflict which may affect their access to learning;
- Provide documented school rules with appropriate sanctions for erring learners which are well displayed and made known to all in the school system including parents/guardians;
- Head teacher and teachers supervise learners when not in class;
- School provides adequately for learners with special needs;

- Give extra support to learners from disadvantaged and challenged families to enable them participate fully in the school life;
- Set strategies to encourage learners to attend school regularly;
- Hold well planned open days and encourage parents to attend;
- Provide potable water, adequate and clean toilet facilities for learners;
- Ensure provision of health facilities- sick bay, First Aid Box, with trained personnel to attend to the learners;
- Provide regular awareness/ sensitization programmes on communicable diseases and other health challenges in the society/community;
- Provide a Guidance and counselling unit that support and guide learners to explore their potential and also be free to discuss some social and emotional challenges with the appropriate personnel;
- Involve learners in school work and development;
- Where learners are provided meals, care must be taken to ensure a healthy balanced school feeding;
- Staff are well informed about learners' protection procedures which are fully implemented; and
- Positive methods of discipline are used instead of corporal punishment Campbell, C., & Rozsnyai, C. (2002)

Conclusion**The Effectiveness of Leadership and management in a School**

Each school is expected to have a structure that helps it to run all the daily activities smoothly in order to ensure quality learning

Ekundayo, H.T., Oyerinde, D. O., & Kolawole A. O. (2013) posits that the principal/head teacher and other senior staff make up the leadership and management team of the school.

Other leaders include the learners themselves and some stakeholders like School

Based Management Committees (SBMC) and parents.

Leadership and management must focus on effective utilization of human and material resources for school improvement as the school is where children are guided and nurtured to grow into becoming useful members of the society apart from the home.

This paper will try to provide some key strategies for effective Leadership and management in schools.

Suggestions for Effective Leadership and management in schools by Federal Ministry of Education (2010).

- Develop clear vision and mission statements that are consistent with the specified goals for the level the school operates; relevant to the National Education goals. They must be shared publicly.
- Effectively monitor and improve performance of learners through School Self-evaluation.
- Involve staff and learners in decision-making and setting school goals and reviewing them.
- Have a functional School Development Plan (SDP) with clear priorities and targets to improve quality and standards.
- Analyse and use performance data. Share with other stakeholders for improvement planning.
- Involve parents in working to solve academic and social problems of learners.
- Institute effective committees and staffing structures that help in improvement.
- Principal/head teacher/ supervisors to monitor and supervise lessons.
- Proprietors to empower school leadership to perform their roles effectively.
- Principal/head teacher to empower and motivate Assistants to perform the assigned leadership roles.
- Motivate teachers and learners to keep improving, focus performance appraisal

of staff on improvement and plan for staff development.

- Promote learners and staff welfare and protection (know what to do/report danger); Provision is made for learners with special needs.
- Encourage joint school/community projects and events for the improvement of learning outcomes.
- Leadership and management are to prevent and respond promptly to incidences of violence/harassment/abuse in the school.
- Promote equal opportunities for all learners and tackle discrimination in any form so that all learners can achieve as well as they can.
- Promote the wellbeing of learners through quality care and education
- Appropriate and effective use of funds to bring about school improvement and in line with financial regulations.
- Ensure proper record keeping and use for school improvement.
- Comply with external and internal evaluation reports.

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