

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT PRACTICES FOR QUALITY INSTRUCTIONAL DELIVERY IN SECONDARY EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The paper examined classroom management practices for quality instructional delivery in secondary education in Nigeria. It was motivated by the need for secondary school administrators and teachers to make a total paradigm shift from traditional classroom management practices, which have obviously lost their efficacy in ensuring that teachers and students continually reach their optimum potentials in the teaching and learning process, and for them to move towards the adoption of innovative practices that support the goals and objectives of 21st century instruction. As such, modern classroom management practices such as student-centred instructional approach, active learning classroom management approach, collaborative instructional delivery techniques, and contemporary positive reinforcement practices were meticulously examined, with a view to assessing how their adoption would boost the quality of teachers' and students' performance in secondary schools in Nigeria. The paper concluded that the proactiveness of principals and teachers in innovating and implementing creative approaches to classroom management would bring about students' performance improvement and the success of secondary schools in the country. It went further to suggest among others that relevant authorities like State Secondary Schools Boards and principals of secondary schools in the country should periodically organize professional development programs like conferences and seminars to keep teachers abreast with current best practices in classroom management for continuous improvement of the instructional delivery process of secondary schools in Nigeria.

Keywords: Classroom Management, Innovative Practices, Student-Centred Instruction, Active Learning, Collaborative Learning, Positive Reinforcement, Quality Instructional Delivery.

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INTRODUCTION

The classroom is regarded as the engine room of the school system. It is where the most important goal of the school, which is teaching and learning, takes place. The teacher, who is the leader of the classroom, is therefore saddled with the responsibility of effectively managing the classroom in such a manner that students are taught, coordinated, organized, directed, and supported towards improved performance. This is possible when the classroom has relevant

modern facilities that keep students engaged in the learning process, together with the teacher's employment of innovative management approaches that support learners and help them in optimizing their potentials.

While there had been various classroom management practices in times past, such as the use of disciplinary measures, instructional supervision, supportive feedback, delegation of responsibilities, seating arrangement, among others (Nwankwoala, 2021), these practices appear to have lost their efficacy in supporting students' learning, especially with the societal changes that hallmark the 21st century. The society is now more democratic than it used to be. Students' rights are now being emphasized more than ever before, and teaching and learning is now student-centred. Technology, too, has become the order of the day. Teachers are now more of instructional facilitators in the classroom unlike before when the entire instructional process appeared to revolve around them. As such, pragmatic classroom management can only be ensured through total paradigm shift from the traditional methods of managing classrooms to more innovative practices befitting of a 21st Century learning place.

Contemporary classroom management practices such as student-centred instruction, social-cognitive learning, blended learning, collaborative learning, active learning, and positive reinforcement, among others, are now widely advanced in literature as best practices in classroom management (Nwonkwo & Chika, 2020). Student-centred instruction requires that teachers shift emphasis from themselves to the students. Teachers are now to act basically as facilitators and coaches in the classroom. Information and Communication Technology integration into the instructional process, too, has become the way forward even as the students found in secondary schools today are all digital natives – born into the digital age, with strong affinity for digital learning than for rote learning (Ololube et al., 2013). Computers and digital devices obviously catch their attention and focus more than any other classroom management measure.

Besides, instruction is now oriented towards collaboration than competition, and various forms of positively reinforcing students are also advanced in literature for motivating students to reach their peak in the instructional process. Hence, effective teachers are those who can be innovative enough in their classroom management practices – employing strategies that appeal to students' contemporary learning needs. As such, this paper examined innovative classroom management practices for quality instructional delivery in secondary education in Nigeria.

Instructional delivery, which encompasses all teaching and learning processes and activities that happen in the classroom can hardly be said to have been effective in secondary schools in Nigeria as evidenced by high level of abysmal performance of students in both internal and external summative assessments. Stakeholders from some quotas suspect that the cause of this unwholesome development is likely to be connected with the observation that teachers in these schools are still adopting traditional and obsolete methods of classroom management in a 21st century where various technologically driven and learner-centred instructions have become best practices. The need for paradigm shift in classroom management practices has therefore become one of the most frequent themes in literatures on 21st century instructional delivery, with practices such as student-centred classroom management, technology integration, active learning, collaborative learning and positive reinforcement apparently becoming the most frequently highlighted perceived effective classroom management practices that could yield desired instructional outcomes; hence, the motivation for meticulous

examination of how these practices could bring about quality instructional delivery in secondary education in Nigeria.

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

Classroom Management

Classroom management refers to the orderly and professional arrangement and coordination of classroom activities in order to provide an environment conducive for teaching and learning (Owan cited in Nwankwoala, 2021). It is the application of the principles of management, which include planning, organizing, directing, coordinating, and controlling (Ogwunte et al., 2022; Peretomode, 2013) to the business of the classroom. Classroom in this regard refers to the venue of instructional delivery where teachers meet and interact with learners for the purpose of impacting knowledge. Nwankwoala (2018) described the classroom as the physical venue purposefully designed for the interaction of teachers, learners, and a curriculum; the curriculum being a body of knowledge of instructional experiences that are to be passed from the teacher and instructional materials to the learners (Adio et al., 2021; Alsubaie, 2016). Ahmad et al. (2017) opined that classroom management procedures assume an indispensable part in upgrading learners' learning. Again, Nwankwoala (2018) defined classroom management as all the efforts the classroom teacher puts using the available human and material resources in the classroom to achieve set educational objectives and goals. These set objectives and goals become what are translated into the learning experiences contained in the curriculum to be delivered in the classroom.

Classroom management is a significant part of effective teaching and learning process. Due to an effective classroom management, pupils flourish in a positive class climate and a compassionate environment. From a pupils' perspective, effective classroom management provides them the opportunities to socialize themselves while learning. From a teacher's perspective, effective classroom management involves precautionary discipline and fruitful teaching. Furthermore, classroom management is the process of organizing and conducting the business of the classroom.

Quality Instructional Delivery

Instructional delivery is a generic term for the process of teaching and learning in the classroom. Quality instructional delivery is about effectiveness of the instructional delivery process. The process is said to be effective if it achieves its purpose. This requires that teachers are able to teach effectively and efficiently and students, too, are able to learn appropriately, culminating in improved performance of students and impressive learning outcomes. This is made possible when instructional conditions are favourable. Favourability of instructional conditions according to Nwankwoala (2018) depends on several factors among which are: the class size, availability of instructional materials, conducive learning environment, students-friendly instructional methodology, positive classroom climate, etc. The end product of effective instructional delivery is often desirable students' outcome in the form of their academic performance in assessments.

Lumpkin (2020) averred that effective instructional delivery is achieved through five sequential steps taken by the teacher. Step one involves the teacher previewing the design of the course's disciplinary content. In step two, the teacher communicates information clearly and

specifically to convince and command the listening and learning attention of students. In step three, the teacher leads interactive classes utilizing a variety of instructional approaches interspersed with engaging learning activities. In step four, the teacher reinforces and strengthens learning through the use of a variety of learning assessments. In step five, students take actions by using knowledge and skills learnt. In combination, these five sequential steps facilitate effective teaching and strengthen learning.

Relationship between Classroom Management Practices and Quality Instructional Delivery

Many perceive classroom management as the preservation of order through teacher control (Abdulkareem, 2018; Nwankwoala, 2021; Nwankwoala, 2018; Wadi, 2018). Classroom management is much more than that; it also involves the establishment and maintenance of the classroom environment so that educational goals can be accomplished (Savage & Savage cited in Tahir et al., 2019). As such, several contemporary and innovative practice have been proposed in literature, some of which include: student-centred learning approach, integration of technology into the instructional delivery process, empathetic leadership, active learning, collaborative learning, use of positive reinforcement, gamification, among others (Gacheri, 2019; Kizlik, 2019; Mayeski, 2020; Nwonkwo & Chika, 2020; Tahir et al., 2019). The present study focuses on student-centred approach, technology integration, collaborative learning and positive reinforcement.

Student-Centred Classroom Management Practice and Quality Instructional Delivery

Student-centred approach of classroom management is an innovative classroom management practice of empowering students to take ownership of their learning. This approach takes the focus away from the teacher and places it on learners, knowing that the learners are the reason for which the school exists in the first place. The needs, interest and experiences of students are prioritized. Active learning, where students take ownership of their own learning process, and the teacher acts as a facilitator or coach is the main tenet. It is unlike the lecture teaching method (teacher-centred approach) which has been found to have negative impact on subject teaching and learning (Fufa, 2023; Luka, 2018), and consistently makes students passive rather than active learners, decreases interest and does not promote insightful learning and long-term retention (Ezurike et al., 2020).

The key principles of student-centred classroom management approach include:

- Student autonomy: This involves encouraging students to take responsibility for their learning;
- Active learning: This is about engaging students in hands-on, minds-on activities;
- Personalized learning: The teacher tailors instruction to meet individual students' needs;
- Inquiry-based learning: This involves encouraging students to explore and investigate questions and topics;
- Collaborative learning: This involves fostering student-student and student-teacher collaboration;
- Flexible pacing: This is about allowing students to work at their own pace;

- Real-world connections: By this approach, learning is related to real-life scenarios and applications;
- Ongoing feedback: This involves providing continuous feedback to guide student progress.

Student-centred teaching aims to develop: critical thinking and problem-solving skills; creativity and innovation; communication and collaboration skills; self-directed learning and time management skills; and deeper understanding and retention of content (Fufa et al., 2023).

Technology Integration Classroom Management Practice and Quality Instructional Delivery

Technology integration as a classroom management practice is about the digitalization of the classroom and the use of the digital resources to foster student engagement and for instructional delivery purposes. Petrovic (2021) asserted that “digital classroom encompasses digital devices and websites ensconced in a learning environment”. The idea is to equip classrooms with computers, laptops, overhead projectors, interactive whiteboards and other digital devices which capture and engage students’ attention and participation in the instructional delivery process, and enhance teachers’ classroom management efficiency and the productivity of the teaching and learning processes that take place in the classroom.

Ntuli and Kyei-Blankson (2013) referred to technology integration as the use of various digital and hardware tools to facilitate the process of teaching and learning in and outside the classroom. Dockstader cited in Anyanwu et al. (2022) believed that technology integration is about using computers effectively and efficiently in the general content areas to allow students to learn how to apply computer skills in meaningful ways. Similarly, Kafyulilo (2015) maintained that technology integration is using software supported by the business world for real-world applications, so students learn to use computers flexibly, purposefully, and creatively. Belland (2019) believed that technology integration means using technology to make learning more efficient or effective as well as the use of technology to help students solve problems.

The fact that senior secondary school students rightly fall within the age bracket of digital natives makes the integration of technology into classroom processes a veritable approach to classroom management. Hardly is there any instructional aid that catches and engages students’ attention and gives them the opportunity to interact, participate and engage with classmates and teachers as much as computers and their accessories do. Teachers, too, are able to carry out lesson planning, teach, assess students, provide feedback and develop their instructional delivery practices through instructional technologies. Hence, the integration of digital technology into instructional delivery processes in the classroom promises to be an effective innovative classroom management practice for quality education delivery in secondary education in Nigeria.

Active Learning Classroom Management Practice and Quality Instructional Delivery

Active learning is a participatory instructional approach that combines both theory and practice, ensuring that the students are actively involved in the knowledge management process in the classroom (Ololube, 2015). According to Mohammed and Al-hassan (2023), it is a pedagogical method that concentrates not only on what learners are learning, but also on how they learn. Studies have shown that the transmission of understanding is not achievable by simply telling

students what they need to know (Araujo & Slomski, 2015). As a matter of fact, classroom management objectives, such as control, coordination, effective learning and others, are best achieved when students are made to actively get involved in the activities happening in the class. Thus, in an active learning environment, instead of passively receiving information from the teacher, students are empowered to build in-depth understanding and knowledge in response to chances provided to them (Araujo & Slomski, 2015; Cambridge Assessment cited in Mohammed & Al-hassan, 2023). Active learning requires that students must talk, collaborate, write, reflect, present, problem-solve, and transfer new information (Mohammed & Al-hassan, 2023).

Active learning concept originates from the theory of constructivism, which emphasizes that students build their own knowledge and understanding via social interaction and by connecting new notions and experiences to finding knowledge (Bransford et al. cited in Mohammed & Al-hassan, 2023). There are tons of advantages from implementing active learning strategies inside the classroom. Active learning techniques assist drive learner motivation that moderate's attention and memory consolidation (Cavenagh cited in Mohammed & Al-hassan, 2023). Active learning techniques positively contribute towards students' emotional health in many ways such as increased interest, creativity, motivation to prepare, as well as appreciation for learning (Owens et al. cited in Mohammed & Al-hassan, 2023). In addition, involving boosting skills, enhanced critical thinking competences, higher knowledge and information retention; improved interpersonal skills, implementation of knowledge to new contexts. Active learning promotes a level of intimate understanding that empowers and encourages students. Also, active learning experiences lead to raise levels of students' growth and achievement (Carr et al., 2016).

Stages of Implementing Active Learning Techniques

There are five stages for applying active learning classroom management techniques (the 5Es). These include: Engage, Explore, Explain, Elaborate, and Evaluate stages. These are as explained in Table 1 below:

Stage	The purpose is to:	Active Learning Approach
Stage 1: Engage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Capture learners' interest; ▪ Make explicit links with their background knowledge; ▪ Give them an opportunity to demonstrate their prior knowledge; and ▪ Helps them make connections between prior knowledge and new ideas using 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Background knowledge probes; ▪ Topical/controversial video & associated focus question(s); ▪ Pre-quiz; establishing learning goals ▪ Mind mapping; etc.
Stage 2: Explore	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Deepen students' understanding of key subject contents; ▪ Make them engage with problems and describe them in their own words. ▪ Help them acquire a common set of experiences to share with their peers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Brainstorming; buzz groups; ▪ Corner strategy; jigsaw; ▪ Problems; questions; blog; ▪ Information search; wiki; discussion forum; ▪ Workstations; problem of the day; etc.
Stage 3: Explain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Enable students to make explicit links between content and experience. ▪ Ensure that facilitators provide the concepts and terms already used by the students to develop explanations for the phenomenon they have already experienced. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Brainstorming; buzz groups; ▪ Debate; academic note taking; jeopardy; roundtable ▪ Who wants to be a millionaire; questions; ten-two strategy; discussion forum; online quiz; ▪ problem of the day; etc.

Stage 4: Elaborate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Follow up experiences with explanation ▪ Enable students to apply knowledge/skills to develop a deeper understanding; ▪ Enable students to develop higher order thinking; ▪ Enable students to be able to discuss and compare ideas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identifying similarities and differences; ▪ identifying patterns; ▪ perspective analysis; analyzing errors; academic portfolio; critical debate; ▪ presentations; critiquing; ▪ collaborative projects; etc.
Stage 5: Evaluate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review and reflect on their learning; ▪ Assess new understandings/skills; ▪ Provide evidence of learning; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Self-evaluation rubric; ▪ analyzing errors; problem solving; closing summary; ▪ dialogue journal/work log book; focused listing; ▪ mind mapping; directed questioning; ▪ reflection templates.

Source: Mohammed and Al-hassan (2023), modified by the researcher

Some manifest advantages of active learning classroom management approach were highlighted by Mohammed and Al-hassan (2023) to include: promoting active learning in the classroom; maximizing students' chance in discussion and participation; creating of friendly learning situation; the chance of asking rather than giving explanation; boosting opportunities for the students talking time; increasing students' motivation through several topics which are relevant to them; fostering learners' creativity through authentic tasks; giving students more encouragement and positive feedback; promoting communicative skills and interaction through many tasks (e.g: group work, pair work, speaking, discussion activity, role play, problem solving, etc.); and enhancing critical thinking and brainstorming. These are important aims sought to be achieved through the management of classrooms. As such, the adoption of active learning classroom management practices promises to be a viable innovative classroom management practice for quality instructional delivery in secondary education in Nigeria.

Collaborative Learning Classroom Management Practice and Quality Instructional Delivery

Collaborative learning is an instructional approach that involves students working together to achieve a common goal or task. By this classroom management practice, the teacher emphasizes on teamwork, communication and mutual support among students and when necessary, between students and teachers, to promote learning and understanding. In a classroom that is managed through this practice, emphasis is on collaboration than on competition. Literature (Okwelle & Owo, 2018; Sada & Adamu, 2023) identified the key characteristics of collaborative learning to include:

- Shared goals and objectives;
- Mutual respect and trust;
- Open communication and feedback;
- Active learning and empathy;
- Shared responsibility and accountability;
- Diverse perspectives and strengths;

- Flexibility and adaptability; and
- Reflective thinking and problem-solving.

Collaborative instructional delivery practice in the classroom promises a lot of benefits as a classroom management practice. Some of these benefits include: Improved academic achievement, enhanced teamwork and communication skills, increased creativity and problem-solving abilities, developed critical thinking and analytical skills, improved self-esteem and confidence, enhanced sense of community and belonging, more effective use of class time and resources, and better preparation for real-world applications and challenges, among others (Sada & Adamu, 2023; Yusuf, 2024).

The practice of collaborative instructional delivery as an innovative classroom management approach could be successfully implemented through strategies such as:

- Group projects and presentations;
- Peer-to-peer teaching and learning;
- Brainstorming and mind mapping;
- Jigsaw learning and expert groups;
- Cooperative learning and team-building activities;
- Problem-based learning and case studies;
- Collaborative note-taking and summarizing;
- Group discussions and debates (Mbonu, 2023; Sada & Adamu, 2023; Yusuf, 2024).

Through the implementation of collaborative learning strategies, teachers can create a supportive and inclusive learning environment that promotes student engagement, motivation, and academic success. Collaborative instructional delivery approach to classroom management thus becomes a viable innovative classroom management practice for quality instructional delivery in secondary education in Nigeria.

Positive Reinforcement Classroom Management Practice and Quality Instructional Delivery

Positive reinforcement is a technique to elicit and to strengthen new behaviours by adding rewards and incentives instead of eliminating benefits (Catania, 2011). It is a traditional classroom management strategy that can be innovatively and creatively repackaged in the light of 21st century student realities in the classroom. When done appropriately in ways that appeal to students' fancies and fantasies, it can have a significant impact on student behaviour, motivation, and academic performance.

Some innovative and potential effective ways to implement positive reinforcement in senior secondary schools can include:

- Recognition programs: Recognize students' achievements and good behaviour through awards, certificates, or public acknowledgement;
- Student of the Month/Year awards;
- Honour rolls and academic achievement recognition;

- Positive behavioural interventions and supports (PBIS);
- Teacher feedback and encouragement;
- Peer recognition and feedback;
- Incentive programs: Offer rewards or privileges for good behaviour, academic achievement, or community service;
- School-wide recognition events;
- Personalized praise and acknowledgement;
- Student-led recognition programs

When positive reinforcement practices are effectively implemented in the classroom, literature identifies some benefits that could accrue to the instructional delivery process in the class. Some of these include: (a) improved student behaviour and discipline; (b) increased motivation and engagement; (c) enhanced self-esteem and confidence; (d) better academic performance; (e) positive school culture and climate; (f) improved teacher-student relationships; (g) increased student participation and engagement; (h) reduced bullying and conflicts; (i) improved attendance and punctuality; and (j) preparing students for future success (Lynnette et al., 2021; Tahir et al., 2019).

Lynnette et al. (2021) remarked that it is important for teachers to bear in mind that positive reinforcement must possess some crucial attributes, which include genuineness, specificity, immediate application to the deserving action or performance, consistency, meaningfulness, and appropriateness. By implementing positive reinforcement strategies, teachers can create supportive and encouraging classroom environments that promote quality instructional delivery hallmarked by students' success and well-being.

CONCLUSION

Quality teaching and learning which is evidenced by improved students' learning outcomes remains a core concern of public senior secondary school stakeholders in Rivers State, and one of the this is thought to be achievable is through innovativeness and creativity in the management of the classroom, which happens to be the engine room of the school system. Due to the ever dynamic nature of the instructional delivery process, which proactively responds to changes in the needs of the society, the need for educational administrators and teachers to be proactively innovative with creative classroom management practices that meet students', teachers', and school instructional needs therefore becomes sacrosanct. This paper has been able to explore some of such innovative practices like the adoption of student-centred instructional delivery approach, the use of active learning approach, the employment of collaborative learning techniques and the use of positive reinforcement. The effective adoption of these practices promises to bring about improvement in students' learning outcomes and the success of secondary schools in the country.

Suggestions

Based on the forgoing discourse, the paper makes the following suggestions:

- Teachers of secondary schools in Nigeria should make a paradigm shift from the traditional ways of managing classrooms to innovative ways such as student-centred

approach, technology integration, collaborating learning and positive reinforcement in order to achieve more in the instructional delivery process.

- Teachers should base their classroom management on satisfying students' learning improvement needs. This will make the students the centre of the instructional process.
- The government should equip public senior secondary schools with ICT devices such as computers and other digital devices to foster students' engagement and instructional organization.
- Principals should always liaise with teachers and support them on how they can implement innovative positive reinforcement practices in the classroom for continuous improvement of students' quality learning outcomes.
- Relevant authorities like the Senior Secondary Schools Board should periodically organize professional development programs like conferences and seminars for teachers to keep them abreast with current best practices in classroom management for continuous improvement of the instructional delivery process of secondary schools in the country.

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