



EFFECTIVE INFORMATION DISSEMINATION AND COMMUNICATION IN THE CLASSROOM

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ABSTRACT

Information dissemination and communication is a social driver of the learning process. Amongst other roles of leadership, administration and management, it ranks first. This paper x-ray “Effective information dissemination and communication in the classroom”. Information; communication; communication process; elements of communication; effective information dissemination and communication in the classroom; managing classroom for effective information communication; classroom interaction; Integrating ICT in the classroom; channels of classroom communication and learning in classroom; communication styles in classroom teaching and learning; corrective method of controlling for effective communication in classroom; barriers to effective classroom communication; guidelines for improving classroom communication, and benefits of communication in the classroom. Summarily, effective classroom communication is result oriented. The paper therefore, suggests that: Teachers should be adequately trained to acquire communication skills to enable them transmit academic information to the students; the classroom as the production desk of the educational system, should be adequately furnished with electronic instructional materials that will aid communication; thorough scrutiny should be done in selecting and employing only professional teachers to teach; the government and other stakeholders should increase the salary of teachers because of their dexterity in producing quality manpower for the industries; there should be timely supervision of teachers with the aim of improving their capacity for effective delivery.

Keywords: Communication, Dissemination, Teachers, Students, Effectiveness, Information, Administration, Classroom.

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INTRODUCTION

The business of the classroom falls within the teacher's purview of educational duty and responsibility. Teachers are referred to as the administrators who carry out the idiographic functions of achieving educational goals. This platform called classroom is termed "an educational industry" where students are baked to suit the societal demands. Samuel (2010) forwarded that the success or failure of any education system depends to a large extent on the quality and the caliber of teachers who are the interpreters and transmitters of desirable knowledge, skills, attitudes and values in the society. Sequel to this, the productivity of the teacher is judged by student's performance as they graduate into the labour market. Conversely, the professional skill developed by the teacher is a determinant of the quality of students produced.

The need to achieve goals informs the formation of organization all over the world. Goal achievement involves collective effort of members who work together for such shared interest. More so, organizations are hierarchically set up to discharge duties and obligation that will lead to goal achievement. School like any other social organizations, is designed in such a way that enables the downward, upward, vertical and horizontal transfer of information from one echelon of authority to another. Information can effectively be transferred from one segment of the organization or person to another if what is encoded by one person or level is adequately been decoded by another person or level (Schermerhorn, 2002).

Consequently, information passed from one level to another must be professionally presented using an approved means and methodology. Information is a veritable tool which leaders in organizations used to reach productive and valid decision. Therefore, information could be signs, symbols, writings or pictures organized in an understandable manner (meaningful state). Information is organized data that gives meanings to the interpreter. In schools, information could take the form of instruction, commands, orders, rules and regulations that is expected to be implemented or acted upon for the realization of organizational objectives. For result-oriented instructional or administrative process, information generated must be passed from its source to another through an acceptable medium to the prospective receiver at the right time. Information passed from the right source through acceptable medium to the right person or group of persons at the right time and achieving expected result is assumed to be effective (Nwachukwu, 2004).

Information

The concept of information is commonly used by individuals and organizations. It refers to raw data, organized data or major ingredient of a communication channel. Information is a data that has been processed into a form that is meaningful to the recipient which can be used in the present or prospective situation. Hartzel (2006) conceptualize information to mean the content of a communication. The relationship between data and information is defined as that of raw material to finished product. Without data, there can be no information. The analogy of raw material to finished product illustrates the concept that information for one person may be raw material for another – just as finished product from one manufacturing division may be raw material for another division.

In this connotation, students get information as raw material from the teachers. On the other hand, organization gives information to its members as raw material for decision making.

Furthermore, in school, information may be needed by the administrative officer (principal), supervisors, teachers, students as well as educational stakeholders. One amongst the major roles of the principal is to source for and make use of information for school management. According to Eze (2002), the various sources of information are government documentaries (official gazettes, general orders, white papers, law reports, etc.), reference books (dictionaries, directories, almanac), and newspapers, libraries, museums etc. Information given to students are extracted from the school curriculum and decentralized into lesson which is professionally communicated in the classroom (Aghoghoviwa, 2018).

Communication

The word communication is derived from the Latin word “communis” which means “common”. Common means something that happens always, something shared by or belonging to two or more people. Communication happens every day and everywhere between people living together. It is quite difficult for people living together without sharing ideas or feelings. In this context, communication can therefore mean the process of establishing a commonness of thought between the sender and receiver.

Abadom (2005) posit that communication is a chain of events which significant link is a message. In classroom teaching and learning process, the lesson is the object of communication which must be transmitted to the students. Knowledge is customized as learning objectives to be achieved by all the students who sit under the teacher. As a result, such knowledge must be packaged and presented using the appropriate communication techniques and media. Schemerhorn (2002) argue that communication is an interpersonal process of sending and receiving symbols that have messages attached to them. The classroom is the center of instructional interaction. Teachers and students interact with one another during which learning outcome is the ultimate expectation. Babatunde (2009) quoting Laxswell, came up with a simple component of communication as involving: “who says what in which channel, to whom, and with what effect?”

In this context however, communication has equally been described by Baran (2004) as the transmission of a message from a source to a receiver, while Smith (2009) presented it as an interactive process of providing and passing of information that enables an organization like the school system to function officially and for employees to be informed about developments within the system. Simply put, it is passing of meaningful messages from one person to another or group of persons. See figure 1.

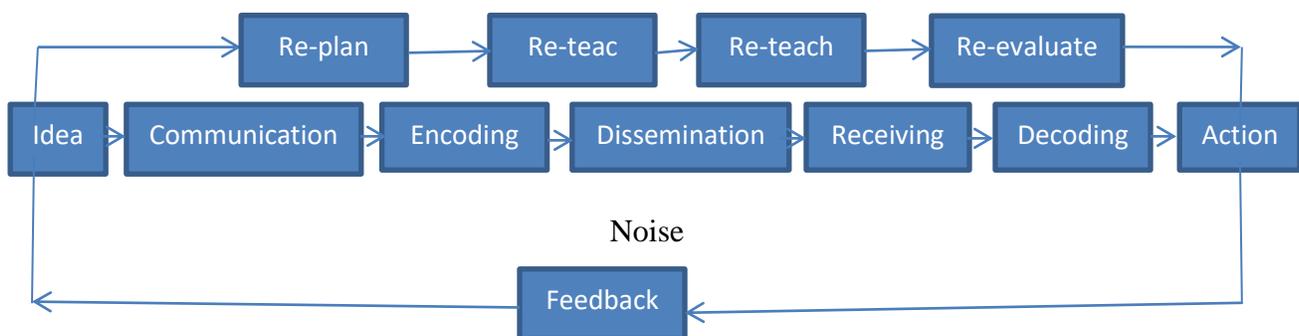


Figure 1: Communication Process

Based on the diagram above, the idea generated from the mind of the sender (teacher) forms the content of the message that he/she wants to communicate to the receiver (students). Encoding is the stage of selecting appropriate words, expression, or symbol designed to send the message. This stage also determines the use of appropriate media: written, oral, or memoranda. The dissemination stage enhances the spread of an intended idea (information) to reach every member concerned. The information is decoded. What is been decoded is what was encoded in the second stage. This explains whether the lesson is understood or not. Whatever hinders or disrupts the communication process for effective comprehension of the sender's thought concept is call barrier to communication. The reaction shows whether the message was properly transmitted or not. The reaction gives the sender a feedback to whether the supposed meaning was grasped or not. Recycling of a lesson becomes an important option when student fails to understand the lesson at the first stage of delivery. The recycling process entails re-plan, re-teach, and re-evaluate. This is done to ensure that misconceived or difficult lesson is better understood by the students.

Elements of Communication

The encoder: The encoder is the initiator of communication. In the classroom setting, the teacher initiates communication. In this regard, a teacher is not just one who teaches. For a teacher to fit properly into the order of classroom activities, such teacher must be adequately trained in the art of teaching the subjects that he/she teaches (Agabi, 2007). The teacher translates the information into a series of symbols, gestures; which would be understood by the receiver.

The tri-dimensional nature of information and communication in organization makes it mandatory for the teachers to possess: (a) Sending skills: This skill required the teacher to have the ability of speaking and writing. The teachers need to be fluent, orderly and audible in transmitting classroom instructional information (lesson). He must be legible in writing to enable students see clearly from any part of the classroom. (b) Receiving skills: Since classroom communication is students centered, the teacher must possess the skill of listening and reasoning. He must exercise patience with students on order to correct or guide them based on the responses they emitted. (c) Non-verbal skills: It is necessary for a teacher to understand and apply some bodily language in the classroom. The teachers need some psychological experience to detect bodily signs or facial expressions and adequately respond to them using his professional knack. Burgoon in (Agabi, 2007) identify four forms of non-verbal communication to include:

- Kinesis: All body movement and postures. These can be used to express interest or boredom.
- Para language: This implies voice quality or tone. In most cases, poor mastery of subject matter may lead to artificial stammer. This often gives more message than spoken words.
- Proxemics: Use of space and proximity in the physical environment of communication. Proximity can be used to connote fear, respect, affection or rudeness between the sender and the receiver of information.
- Chromenics: This means time consciousness.
- Reflection skills: The reflection skill which is an embodiment of reasoning and thought enables the teacher to give the right answer to student's questions as well as planning adequately for the next lesson.

- The message: In the classroom atmosphere, the lesson is the message that needed to be communicated to the students. Abraham (2013) posit that the message is the actual form into which the sender encodes the information. A teacher is effective when his message is understood by his target audience (students). The duration of the lesson must be taken into consideration. In Nigeria, the normal duration of every lesson is forty minutes unless otherwise stated depending on the subject. A planned lesson delivered within specific time using the appropriate techniques and methodology is termed “effective”.
- Students: Students are the central focus of classroom communication. As a result, the choice of lesson, language, and medium of communication must be in accordance with the age and type of students. Student’s response is an indicator or determinant of an effective classroom communication. Students constitute a veritable source of feedback to the teacher on the success or failure of a lesson; and to the school administration on the teacher’s credibility.
- Medium of communication: Nigeria is a heterogeneous country hence the use of English language as the official language. Teachers are meant to master the approved language to enable them deliver lessons accordingly. Appropriate teaching and learning material to drive home the lesson. Some medium of communication used in the classroom include charts, pictures, etc.
- Classroom environment: Classroom environment is a vital factor in communication. These include adequate and specious classroom, enough ventilation, and classroom management. Other constituents of classroom environment that affect communication are noise and instructional material.

Effective Information Dissemination and Communication in the Classroom

The classroom is a part of school building where teaching and learning takes place. It is a room designed for instructional activity. The classroom contains the chalkboard or white marker board, desks, pictures and other architectural designs. The two set of people who interacts in the classroom are the teachers and the students. The classroom is a platform of educational administrative performance. This is where teachers display their pedagogical teaching dexterity.

The classroom is the educational workshop where students are refined to suit the societal demands. The professionalism of teachers is demonstrated by their ability to inculcate values and knowledge through effective communication. Hence the functionality of students is dependent upon the quality of information passed and understood through the delivery of the lesson. The war against mediocrity, illiteracy, ignorant, and poverty are fought through the inculcation of positive behavior in the classroom.

Generally, the teacher performs four roles: instructional, administrative, executive and social roles. Instructional role deals with motivating, an organizing, planning, information, and counseling; administrative role deals with discipline, evaluation, a recording; executive role includes managing and directing; while social role include; co-ordinating, human relation, parents’ surrogate (in-loco parentis).

Fashiku (2017) posited that effective communication in the classroom therefore, is the act of teacher inducing the pupils to interpret an idea or a concept taught in the manner intended by the teacher. For learning to take place among the pupils in the classroom, the pupils must have a clear- cut interpretation of the teacher’s teaching. Thus, effective communication in the classroom involves the encoder (the teacher) and the decoder (the pupils) understanding their interactions.

A good understanding of the principle and process of communication will enable the classroom teacher to have the opportunity of passing his/her pedagogical knowhow and skills across to the pupils in the classroom with ease. The technical duty of the teacher is to teach and the ultimate target of teaching is to achieve learning. In view of this, Samuel (2010) said when this target is achieved, the teaching is said to be effective. Effectiveness could then be deduced to mean the ability to successfully produce required or intended result in any given assignment (Ojiaka, 2014). As a result, one can conceptualize classroom communication to be an activity that is continuous and dynamic. The reactions from the pupils which are observable in their behavior serve as feedback to the teacher. When the pupils respond positively or knowledgeably to the teacher's questions or evaluation, then effective communication has taken place, and vice-versa. The key to effective communication and distribution information is the proper matching of the medium to the message. Always adopt a method that will work for your intended audience.

Managing Classroom for Effective Information Communication

A critical factor that enhances the achievement of educational objective is classroom management. The work that a teacher does here is more than implementing the curriculum. Classroom management is the coordination, planning, directing, controlling, supervising, and evaluating of both the human and material resources to ensure learning achievement. In the words of Nko-tariah and Mba (2010), classroom management as relates to the activities that organize and coordinate human and environmental factors in the classroom so that instruction can take place without disruption. Certain factors within and outside the classroom needs to be put under control for effective dissemination of instructional information. Dimson (2014) maintained that classroom management consists of: checking class attendance, keeping records of class progress, controlling students conducts and activities, improving working conditions, manipulating instructional resources, eliminating any distraction that may occur in the class. See figure 2.

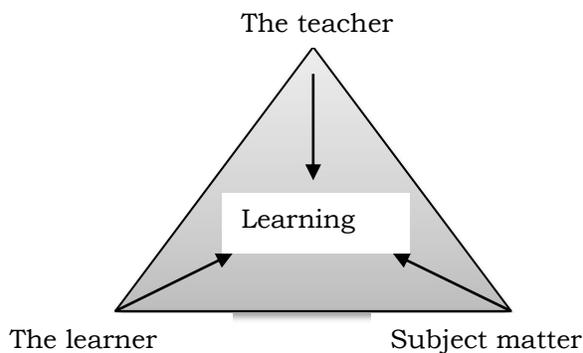


Figure 2: Classroom Interaction. Source: Culled from Dimson (2014).

The teaching-learning process involves interaction between and among the teachers, the learner, and the subject matter. This interaction centers on the learner. The learner's behavior shows the success or achievement of the lesson. The learner is the receptacle where every activity focuses. The understanding of a lesson by a learner implies that educational objectives has been achieved. The subject matters are the contents to be learnt for specific periods. The teacher is the manager

of the whole situation. He plans and organizes the subject matters. Therefore effective teaching involves teaching with passion, motivating, and mentoring students.

The tridimensional nature of classroom interaction process is aimed at making the learners to learn. Classroom management is targeted at using the arrays of techniques and skills at the teachers' disposal to control the material and environmental factors in order to achieve learning (change in behavior). This is what is called effectiveness.

Integrating ICT in the Classroom

Innovation in the curriculum and the trends in societal development have actually embraced the use of information and communication technology in the instructional process. There is a gradual but perceptible process of pedagogical evolution which appears to be taking place in the classroom. This involves both pupils and teachers developing new strategies and ways of thinking in response to new experiences and the lifting of existing constraints.

The incorporation of ICT into teacher's instructional practices allows obvious and dramatic changes in classroom organization and management. Nordkvelle and Olson (2005) averred that teachers use ICT instrumentally in their practice 'to amplify preferred, pre-existing instructional practice.

New approaches must also be compatible with existing pedagogy and be perceived as meeting the instructional need. We might additionally expect sustainable and transferable innovations to be user-friendly, adaptable and applicable to other classroom contexts. Many studies have pointed to the practical constraints operating within the working contexts in which teachers currently find themselves. Indeed, Cuban, Kirkpatrick and Peck (2001)) suggested that the cellular classroom organization, tight time scheduling and departmental boundaries that characterize secondary schools, along with the demands of curricular coverage and assessment, may both inhibit use of technology in classrooms and retard widespread changes in teaching practices. Innovation and adaptation are costly in terms of time; developing effective pedagogy around ICT involves significant input in terms of planning, preparation and follow-up of lessons.

Channels of Classroom Communication and Learning in Classroom

There are two channels of communication that is operational to enhance teaching and learning in the classroom teaching-learning situation. They include formal or informal.

The Formal Channels of Communication

Vertical and horizontal forms of communication are the most common ways of communication flow in the classroom. In the classroom where teaching-learning takes place, vertical communication is the formal method of communication applied by the teacher as the classroom manager in teaching, giving directives, passing instructions to the pupils, and indicating goals for learning to take place among the pupils in the classroom. Vertical communication is a formal channel of communication in the classroom that can either be downward or upward.

Downward communication in the classroom: In the general view of the concept, downward communication implies that people of higher levels transmits information to people at the lower levels of the communication chart. This communication flows from the classroom teacher to the

pupils in the form of direct administration of the lesson, asking questions, giving instructions, and passing order as the case may be. The language here is formal and the tone is specific in bringing about understanding, instructions and relationships in the classroom.

Upward communication in the classroom: Lurenburg and Ornstin (2008) viewed upward communication as pattern of communication that follows the hierarchical chart and transmits information from lower levels to higher levels in the organization. In the classroom setting, upward communication flows from the students to the teacher during and after teaching process. The responses that student generates from the class shows their participation and interaction in the teaching and learning process. This sign is evident in their response and asking of question in the process of the lesson. It also shows that there is improvement in teaching-learning process. On the other hand, Fashiku (2007) posited that it is the channel through which the low ranking, the staff, relay their interest to the management.

Horizontal communication in the classroom: Horizontal communication takes place among the people of the same levels in a given setting. In the classroom situation, horizontal communication takes place among and between the school pupils. This can be in the form of a pupil explaining difficult concepts in a relaxed mood to others without the teacher's involvement. Informal language and interaction occurs. It promotes team work, and it is more effective with the encoder and the decoder.

The informal channels of communication

Informal communication can be very strong and may even take precedence over the formal communication in some cases. In teaching and learning that takes place in the classroom, this can take a form of advice, information, discussion, gossips and rumour otherwise called the 'grape vine'. Informal communications are used to nickname teachers. The inherent problem in informal communication (rumour/gossip) is that it may be detrimental to the attainment of the stated aims and objectives of classroom teaching. The teacher therefore should discourage this among the pupils and for this to be discouraged pupils should promptly be kept abreast of any information that may affect their learning and progress in the class.

Communication Styles in Classroom Teaching and Learning

There are three basic forms of communication in the school. To this end, Nwachukwu (2004) explains verbal and non-verbal communication. Other ones include electronic and mechanical devices of communication.

Oral or verbal communication in the class: Oral or verbal communication involves a face to face interaction between the communicator and the communicatee. The sender and the receiver of the information exchange messages at the same time even if they are together or in a far distance. When used in the classroom, teachers and students talks to one another face to face and obtain the anticipated result instantly. This type of style can be an effective means of classroom interaction between the teacher and the pupils in knowledge acquisition.

Written communication: Written communication is a formal communication that is suitable for record purposes in teaching learning-situation in the classroom. What is been taught can be revisited as compare to oral communication that the communicator may not be able to recast. It occur when the teacher presents his facts and figures on the white or the chalk board while explaining things to the pupils. As opine by Fashiku (2017), it includes chalkboard summary, writing of questions and answers for the pupils, giving assignments and even giving the pupils short notes to copy in the classroom.

Non-verbal communication in the classroom: Most times it is difficult to understand the intention of the speaker and receiver alike especially when spoken words or written signs are not used. It is another form of communication that is very important because the real intention of the communicator is shown through body gestures as the eye contact, facial expression, postures, dress and even physical setting of the classroom.

Visual communication in the classroom: What student sees goes a long way to been registered in their memory. Visual communication is effective in teaching-learning because it helps to match spoken explanation with pictures. It uses pictures, overhead projectors, multisensory communication system, and others as instructional aids. Important facts to note in using this media on the part of the teacher include avoiding over display of distracting pictures to students; use teaching aids which are bold and legible; the color should be relevant to the lesson.

Corrective Method of Controlling for Effective Communication in Classroom

Here are some helps as postulated by Leroy (2016):

- Be patient, friendly and helpful;
- Use simple step-by-step procedures;
- Arrange remedial sessions;
- Find materials adapted to the ability of the slow learner;
- Illustrate concepts in two or three different ways;
- Use many real objects and other aids in addition to the written and spoken words;
- Rely heavily on the chalk board for emphasis and repetition;
- Make each step of a demonstration graphic and obvious;
- Formulate real problem with pupils that arise from their own lazy lives to promote learning of concepts and generalization;
- Enrich the activities with tape recordings, pictures, diagrams, sketches, films, slides.

Barriers to Effective Classroom Communication

Peretomode (2018) itemize barriers to communication to include:

- Difference in the frame of reference (reference group's opinion and values, cultural and social differences);
- Perceptual problem because of differing mental frameworks;
- Semantics and jargon: The semantic barrier is a communication involves use of words. Communication involves use of words or symbols, but unfortunately the same word or

symbol may suggest different meaning to different people. The word fire can mean either a fame or to discharge an employment;

- Inconsistent verbal and non-verbal communication;
- Information overload, where students are overloaded with too many information;
- Number of people involved in a communication process;
- Inappropriate channel of communication;
- Lack of organization and failure to emphasized idea;
- Interruption to the communication process;
- Feeling of personal insecurity;
- Not paying attention: This means failure to listen while the teacher is delivering the lesson

Guidelines for Improving Classroom Communication

- Use clear and concise words;
- Time message properly;
- Check your vocabularies against student's age and qualification;
- Select proper channel and convey your message;
- Ensure that everybody response either in chorus or as an individual;
- Always guide against unnecessary discussion in the classroom;
- Give greater attention to the dullards;
- Engage students in collaborative or group discussion;
- Always recycle difficult concepts or lessons (mother tongue if it will help.)

Benefits of Communication in the Classroom

Information reduces uncertainty: Information changes the probability attached to expected outcomes in a decision process. Good communication gives focus to leadership practices as it serve as panacea for valid decision making. It is a sure way to adequate and correct forecast of organizational predetermined objectives:

- It harmonizes school organizations/classroom decision;
- It helps school organization to be focused;
- It encourages team building and success in reaching objectives;
- It measures dedication, motivation and feeling of belonging in the classroom;
- It maintain good teacher-student relationship;
- It improves performance.

CONCLUSION

Information and communication dissemination remains sacrosanct as far as classroom interaction for learning achievement is concern. Educational information meant for the students are better transmitted through the teacher in the classroom. Information that is to be communicated in the classroom needs to be done by a teacher who is technically skillful in teaching. Unlike those days that teaching was done haphazardly, the technological orientation of the present age and the

global war of excellence demands that classroom communication be professionally based. All the activities that will enhance the achievement of educational goals should be learner centered. Therefore, effective communication in the classroom should be that which involve learner's participation that is feedback oriented. A learner show that he has understood a concept after evaluation is an indication of effectiveness; but when there is misconception in course of communication, a teacher is better advised to recycle for effective communication. The classroom as the production factory of the education system should manage for result, hence effectiveness.

Suggestions

This paper suggests that:

- Teachers should be adequately trained to acquire communication skills to enable them transmit academic information to the students.
- The classroom as the production desk of the education system should be adequately furnished with electronic instructional materials that will aid communication.
- Thorough scrutiny should be done in selecting and employing only professional teachers to teach.
- The government and other stakeholders should increase the salary of teachers because of their dexterity in producing quality manpower for the industries.
- There should be timely supervision of teachers with the aim of improving their capacity for effective delivery

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