

**EDUCATIONAL
COUNSELLING
AND
EVALUATION**

Readings in Honour of
PROFESSOR E. ADENIKE EMEKE



**Adams O.U. Onuka
Monica N. Odinko**

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Educational Counselling and Evaluation

(Readings in Honour of Professor E. Adenike Emeke)

Edited by Adams .O. U. Onuka and Monica N. Odinko

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First Published 2015

ISBN: 978 - 52620 - 8 - 4

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Published by
Institute of Education,
University of Ibadan and
Initiative for Excellent Research Output (IFERO) Ibadan.

Printed by
Esthom Graphic Prints, Mokola, Ibadan.
Tel: 07030298365

Educational Counselling and Evaluation
- A book of Readings in Honour of
PROF. E. ADENIKE EMEKE

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EFFECTIVE CLASSROOM TIME MANAGEMENT

Odinko, Monica N.

Introduction

This paper advocates the adoption of certain practices that will give practising teachers greater control over the use and allocation of their primary resources time. Before one starts to engage the learners, it is worth considering how best to interact with them. To achieve this, one should therefore, perform a simplistic task of drawing a plan of how one would spend ones time while carrying out such interactive classroom activities for a suitable long period of time (for about a week). Such activities termed 'simple' since all it requires from the teacher is to draw a simple plan which features the tasks to be carried out during the teaching-learning situation.

Effective Time Management in a Classroom

Effective Time Management in the classroom refers to ways practicing teachers plan their instructional delivery activities in order to ensure that such activities are productive with minimal waste of effort within the specific time allocated for such tasks as they apply to their daily routines. It is also about controlling the use of ones most valuable resources (time). The absence of classroom time management schedule by teachers could be characterised by last minutes rush in lesson plan preparations for submission to either the school section heads or the officials from the Ministry of Education who may visit the school unannounced. This practice may lead to uncoordinated as well as unproductive teacher-learner interaction during teaching-learning situation. Further, this can lead to stress and reduction in pupils' academic performance.

Poor time management could be attributed to of over confidence especially to teachers who do feel that they have been in the system for a very long time performing such activity. However, one should not lose sight of the fact that what works for one set of learners may not work for another (for instance when a teacher

is posted from nursery section to primary section or teacher working with a new set of learners in a new academic year may be because such a teacher performed excellently in the previous year may not hold water). This is because the curriculum contents at these levels are different. Secondly, classroom interaction patterns at these levels are also different. Thus, to ensure that developmentally appropriate approaches are used, the teacher is expected to plan his strategies to suit the children he or she is working with. Thus, Classroom Time Management can serve as a tool for the systematic ordering of one's classroom activities. Thus, classroom time management is a set of tools which allow the practicing teachers to:

1. eliminate wastage,
2. be prepared for teaching activities,
3. monitor teaching and learning process and progress,
4. allocate time appropriately to each step or task to be carried out, as well as
5. plan each lesson/daily activities effectively.

It is imperative that a teacher plans his or her classroom activities because of limited time at the teacher's disposal. This is important because the number of children a teacher is assigned to and the rate at which children at primary level work through activities invariably leaves very little time for thorough completion of any given task. Thus, to ensure that children kept under our care gain maximally from school related activities, teachers need to plan how to use the limited time allotted to them. Planning and establishing a daily and weekly routine can help reduce stress. The routine should take into consideration both the children's need and that of the teacher. These basic routines should lead teachers to decide among alternatives which include;

1. what to focus on,
2. why those decided should be focused on,
3. how to undertake them,
4. when to undertake them, and
5. outcomes of such activities.

For instance, it has been observed that in Nigerian primary school settings (especially at the lower basic), majority of the teaching and learning materials provided for the children are kept in the head teacher's custody. It is essential that all resources are easily accessible to the teacher and also freely accessible to the children at all times. Such arrangement not only enables the children to be independent at activity time, but also ensures that they can be totally responsible

for such materials thus, giving the teacher some time to perform other tasks. These issues if highlighted could help the teacher make conscious efforts to specify alternatives and how to make priority decisions before the teaching-learning exercises commence. However, for a teacher to effectively manage ones classroom, the teacher should follow the basic principles of classroom time management.

Basic Principles of Classroom Time Management

1. Develop Your Lesson Plan Before Teaching

Lesson plan is the breakdown of activities to be carried out by the teacher during the course teaching a topic. It should include expected behavioural objectives to be attained by pupils, teaching aids needed, assessment questions and evaluation. While developing a lesson plan, it is important that the teacher assess what your pupils already know, time available as well as the number of tasks that need to be accomplished. Always keep the classroom lively. The teacher should ask him or herself such questions as: 'Are the pupils fond of writing class assignments or do they have difficulty participating in class discussion (teacher-learner questions vs. learner-teacher questions)? If the answer is 'yes' to the former, the teacher should prepare more test items. The extra time it takes to get a discussion going or waiting for learners to ask questions will affect your planning for the class. Try to experiment with allowing time for individual writing in response to a question instead of always maintaining a discussion. Better still; consider making use of time-control activities such as group work, role-playing, class assignment or take home assignment. Be that as it may, prioritise your chosen task to ensure that you cover all the identified stated objectives. Further, remember the other time demands (administrative issues, personal demand from learners, attention from colleagues, etc) and make provisions for them.

2. Define your Objectives for Each Lesson and Try to Remain Focus on Them.

The behavioural objectives are those statements or expressions of what the teacher expects the learners to accomplish or achieve at the end of a particular teaching learning activity. It is the short term educational goals which are expected to be accomplished by the teacher and learners after each teaching and learning activity in the classroom. Statement of instructional objectives into behaviours offers teachers the opportunity to plan their instructions and also guide students in their study. It also aids effective assessment of learning because behavioural objectives provide the teacher with specific information about what is to be measured. It also serves as an eye opener to the teacher while deciding on the

development and selection of measurement instrument. Two issues must be taken into consideration while formulating educational objectives. They include: considering what is **possible** to attain (to be determined by content area and time) and what is **desirable** to attain (to be determined by societal values, its usefulness, its importance, etc.)

During instruction, tests or other evaluation instruments measure progress and provide feedback on changes which should be made in the learning situation. This process is an essential part of instructional planning, time management and class control. This helps the teacher to remain focused and not deviate from the outlined stages during teaching-learning processes, thus not waste the limited time on issues not related to the content area being discussed.

For a teacher to ensure that he/she did not bite more than he can chew while stating the objectives of a unit of instruction the acronym **SMART** should serve as a guide. This means that the stated objectives must be:

- **S- specific,**
- **M- measurable** within the time specified for the lesson,
- **A-achievable** within the time,
- **R- realistic, and**
- **T- time** bound.

One major effect of a teacher's failure to state the instructional objectives is that it may give room for the teacher to digress from the teaching-learning activities thereby sacrificing the time meant for exposing learners to the unit of instruction to other irrelevances. Objectives are the behavioural changes learners are expected to exhibit after being exposed to some instructional process. Teachers are expected to have this spelt out during planning of the instructional activities before the normal teaching begins.

An objective which is well stated should have four basic components, known as ABCD

- A- it should have an **audience** (learners)
- B- it should indicate the expected **behaviours** to exhibit
- C- it should also state the **conditions** under which the expected behaviour will be expected to occur
- D- it should state the **degree** of standard which specify the criteria of acceptable performance-description of how the learner must perform to be considered accepted

Examples:

- i. In a computer lesson to be taught, the teacher can state one of the objectives thus: At the end of this lesson, given a computer, the learner (audience) should be able to open Microsoft Word and type a page (expected outcome) within two minutes (condition) without making mistakes (degree of standard).
- ii. Also, this can also be derived for a topic in agricultural science lesson: given a bean seed, or corn seed, a learner should be able to conduct an experiment to show that water, light and good soil are necessary for germination.

This shows some element of commitment by the stakeholders (teacher should teach, school or parent) should provide enabling environment by ensuring that needed learning materials are available.

- 3. Getting Out of the Way:** During planning, remember to include situations when you should step aside and let the pupils take over. This calls for the teacher being responsible for the classroom dynamic. This indicates that the teacher should give room to flexibility (of methods, classroom structure, lesson plan) to respond to the demands of individual learners or groups of learners in the classroom. They need a sense of belonging, to feel they have a place in an environment they belong and that they are important. This could be achieved by assigning some responsibilities to them which they are in total control. This gives the teacher room to perform other tasks.
- 4. Assess Your Time:** Assessing time demands that the teacher should review the tasks, units to be taught, lessons to deliver, etc even if he or she has taught the lessons or come across the tasks before. If the teacher has identified evaluation test items to administer on pupils, care must be taken to ensure that the teacher attempts the tests first. This will allow the teacher to identify potential problem areas and plan your lesson accordingly. Getting this sorted would reduce the time you would have wasted doing this in the cause of instruction. Also, take into account other demands such as the need to review assignment or remediation from feedbacks on the learning processes because this aspect ensures that learners attain mastery of the content they were exposed to before progressing to another topic. Further, remember to include time for questions into your lesson plan. Estimate the time each will take (preparing learners for assignment or class works) and divide each task into steps. This can enable the teacher identify which task demands less time than others.

3. Incorporate Pupils' Activities

During planning, the tendency for the teacher to allocate most of the lesson time to her/himself alone may be there and this may affect the learners. Thus, during planning, care must be taken to distribute the tasks to include learners' activities. Such activities should be based on the objectives of the lesson and attainment must be monitored through measurement, assessment and evaluation which should be included in the teaching plan. The teacher should ensure that the task is completed successfully (considering the behavioural changes expected from the learners). This simple method allows you to monitor learner's progress as well as your teaching effectiveness.

4. Use of Class Rules and Responsibilities

Another key element in what could help the teacher manage his class effectively is ensuring positive behaviour policy based on rights, rules and responsibilities, with emphasis on the children taking control of their own behaviours within the classroom environment. Each class should draw up its own set of rules which the teacher discusses with the whole class and conspicuously pasted on the wall so that everyone knows what is expected of them (especially from primaries 3-6). This independence and responsibility can be achieved in a variety of ways. For example, the children go to the toilet without asking for permission by placing their name card in a movement chart; a 'no noise making chart' is a visible reminder for children to work within the agreed sound level; A 'who' is responsible for 'what' and 'when' charts inform every member who to meet with respect to certain activities.

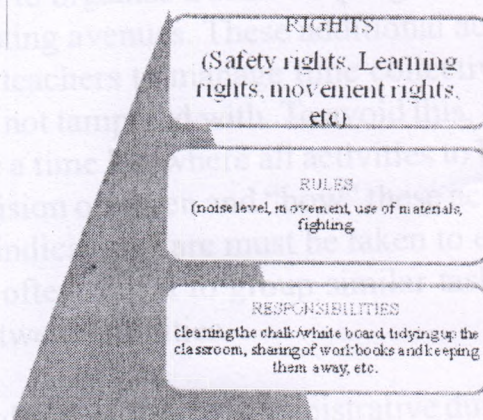


Figure 1: Chart depicting elements of right, rules and responsibilities.

Factors that can affect Teacher Effective Classroom Time Management

Time Waste Disposal

Most times, teachers are expected to operate within given curricula, within given administrative structures, etc. These factors within the teaching situation limit more or less what a teacher can do. That is for example enough evidence from research that time is one of the most powerful determinants of the cognitive achievement (Bloom, 1964). Therefore, the amount of time which the teacher has at his or her disposal to interact with the pupils could determine to a large extent his effectiveness in achieving what he or she set out to achieve with respect to the learning outcomes of the pupils.

Teacher classroom time schedules has been planned at the macro level (by the school administration, State/Federal Government Education Boards) by giving time when school activities should start in a term, how long a term should last, how many minutes is expected to be spent teaching a lesson (school time-table). Thus, it is now left for the teacher to have a micro time plan at the individual level. This should be in form of lesson plan where expected activities during the lesson are sequenced.

Performing Other Functions

There are various sources of time waste. The most common are social in nature: telephone calls, colleagues dropping by to have a chat; school authority engaging the teacher in administrative functions, among others. It has been observed that a good proportion of our lesson times are usually wasted in non-academic related matters. For instance, morning or afternoon (during lesson periods) spend debating or planning how to carry out an inter house sports competition; hours spent debating on how to organise a send-off programme for a colleague among others are all time wasting avenues. These additional activities could be reduced naturally by allowing teachers to manage time collectively or individually such that lesson periods are not tampered with. To avoid this, the school administration should always prepare a time log where all activities to be carried out in a term or year are outlined. Decision on when and "how" these activities will be carried out and for how long are indicated. Care must be taken to ensure that lesson periods are not affected. It is often useful to group similar tasks together to avoid time wasted in changing between activities.

Large gains can be made by assigning administrative duties to administrative staff rather than engaging classroom teachers to perform such duties at the expense of the time meant for teaching. If there are tasks which could be done by

administrative personnel and the administration feels that they are not competent enough to carry out such tasks effectively, such personnel should be trained on how to perform such tasks and monitor compliance instead of pulling the teachers out of their duty posts.

Doing the Work of Others

Another source of waste with respect to time management is the tendency of one to help other colleagues with theirs. Now, in the spirit of open and harmonious work environment it is obviously desirable that one should be willing to help colleagues out-but check your work schedule and decide how much time you spend on your own work and how much you spend on others. For instance, if you spend a morning checking your colleague's lesson notes or diaries, then that is waste. Such duties should be performed by the administrative staff (Headmaster, Headmistress or section heads). Teachers should spend their time having quality interaction with the learners.

Poor Classroom Environment

The learning environment in this paper is viewed as the internal conditions of the classroom, which encompasses the amount of space provided, the level of conduciveness of the classroom areas provided, adult-child relationship and the child friendly nature of the classroom setting. It is suggested in Nigeria that there should be a minimum of 35 square meters of indoor space for each child in the pre-school classroom environment (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004). However, most times this is not obtainable in most schools. This can play a role in teachers' inability to adjust their classroom structure (putting children into groups, discouraging children sitting in rows facing the chalkboard and the teacher, having different sections for different activities – reading corners, arts and crafts, etc). In addition, indoor equipment materials and furnishing are usually not made available and in enough quantity for the children and their teachers. These materials, if well provided, would influence the classroom design, have an impact on the overall planning of physical space and on children's learning. Care should be taken to ensure that the resources provided reflect the cultural experiences and traditions of the children and their families. Primary school classroom environment should be organized in a way that would empower the child to learn on his or her own at any given time by providing opportunities for exploration, play and practicing life skills.

Lack of Adequate Material Provision

Many educators and researchers (van 2003; Montessori,1912; Katz 1987) believe that material provision at this level of education should be central to the

nursery/primary school environment. This gives pre-school children first-hand experiences. However, such materials need to be wide ranging, both indoor and outdoor with natural and manufactured objects. The National Association for the Education of Young Children confirmed the importance of direct first-hand interactive experience in their position statement on developmentally appropriate practices in early childhood programmes (Helm and Gronlund, 2000). The role of the teacher is to understand the educational values of all the materials provided for use in the classroom and to become sensitive to the right time to use them to present work tasks to learners. The resources provided according to them, should be kept in low-level storage furniture so as to allow children to choose items they need independently, stored in containers, labelled with pictures and words, so that children can tell what is inside and easily return them after use. The implication for this type of arrangement is that children can learn at their pace. They can also extend their learning with or without the teachers' help since the materials are always available and within their reach. It makes learning an engaging and fun activity and aids learners to develop an imaginary picture of numerals in their minds, which leads pupils to increase computational dexterity in the future.

Large Class Size

One of the reasons why the National Association for the Education of Young Children in the US recommends the regulation of adult-child ratio is the assumption that teachers with too many children are unable to have sensitive, responsive interaction with the children in their care (National Association for Education of Young Children, 1998). On logical grounds, it's likely that the greater the number of children in class, the more time teachers will spend on procedural and domestic matters such as taking the registers, lining children up and sharing of writing materials and marking, and dealing with domestic matters such as toileting, accidents, and conversely the less time teachers will spend on instruction and interacting with individual children. Teachers could be more sensitive and responsive in their interactions with children when there are fewer children per adult. It is believed that large class sizes affect teaching and learning and are particularly aware that larger classes could have an adverse effect on the amount of teacher attention on individual children. The implication of this, based on teacher perceptions is that the number of pupils in a class could affect the quality, the kind of teaching methods used and the extent to which the teachers could bring in what they felt is the best practice for helping the pupils at this level learn.

Other problems associated with time wastage are:

- inadequate training of teachers
- poor teaching method
- poor teacher motivation (by the government)
- use of negative reinforcements
- lack of good communication skills

Conclusion

If the teacher prepares his or her lesson well (plan), deciding evaluation question as well as the appropriate teaching aid, the tendency is that he or she would succeed or be effective in carrying out the functions expected of him in the classroom setting. Therefore, it is possible to think of effectiveness in relation to one's ability to display the behaviours which one's work demands. It will be interesting also to digress a bit at this point by reflecting on the fact that an untrained teacher may in fact display these behaviours. When some people say that 'Teachers are born, not made' indicates that the expected teacher behaviour is less a function of training than of innate personality traits of the teacher. Finally, practising teachers should:

1. form the habit of making the pupils aware of the learning objectives of each lesson. It is sometimes helpful to put an outline for a topic's objectives in one corner of the board,
2. indicate not only what activities the teacher will perform and the tasks pupils will be working on, but also how much time will be allotted to each aspect,
3. always remember that time is allocated to every activity in the school setting,
4. assess the success of the lesson plan after each lesson and adapt it for the next lesson if it was effective.

Thus, this shows that classroom time management is a systematic application of common sense strategies and it requires creativity and planning which promotes effective teaching process by highlighting salient issues such as teaching methods, teaching aids, and level of achievement with accompanying test items. Identifying these will reduce time waste and increase effective management of one's classroom time by focusing on your chosen activities.

A Sample Daily Plan

1. Daily review (+/-8 minutes, except on Mondays) – Whole class

- i. Review of concepts and skills associated with yesterday's homework
- ii. Collect and deal with home work assignment
- iii. Ask several mental computation exercise (for Mathematics)
- iv. Ask several mental sentence work /word work
- v. At the nursery level – recite letters of the alphabets/numbers

2. Development (+/- 15 minutes) Whole class

- i. Introducing new concepts
- ii. Interaction between teacher and learners
 - a. Focus on the stated objectives
 - b. Teacher performs his or her own activities
 - c. Assess Learner competence
 - i. Using active participation
 - ii. Using controlled practice

3. Seatwork (+/- 12 minutes) Independent work

- i. Provide uninterrupted successful practice (learner based)
- ii. Momentum – keep the ball rolling- get everyone involved, then sustain involvement
- iii. Alerting – let pupils know their work will be checked at the end of each period
- iv. Accountability – check the pupils work

4. Homework assignment – Independent work

- i. Assign on a regular basis at the end of each subject

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