

EFFECTIVE UNIVERSITY TEACHING IN NIGERIA: A CORE COMPONENT OF INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE MECHANISM

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ABSTRACT

This paper discussed the effectiveness of university teaching in Nigeria: a core component of the internal quality assurance mechanism. University education is/are to contribute to national development through high-level workforce training and to create the intellectual capability of individuals to realize and acknowledge their local and external environs, among others. University cannot effectively or nobly serve the nation until it fulfills these responsibilities to itself. As part of contributing to national development, University promotes the acquisition of knowledge, nourishes the latent potentials of the individuals and qualities for a gainful profession. Effective teaching requires lecturers to possess certain characteristics, such as empathy for students, knowledge of the subject, preparedness, openness to change, feedback and creativity among others. There are principles of effective teaching in University which include relationship building, engaging active learning, assessment and feedback from students and lecturers. Unless university teaching is effective and efficient, it will be difficult for the university to meet its primary responsibility of feeding the mind with desirable knowledge and liquidation of ignorance. It is therefore recommended that mechanisms should be put in place for continuous assessment of effective University teaching. Seminars should be organized on a regular basis for lecturers on the need for effective teaching in the university.

Keywords: Effective University Teaching, Internal Quality, Assurance, Mechanism

INTRODUCTION

One of the purposes of University education is to feed the mind in an academic community and neutralize ignorance. According to National Policy on Education (FGN, 2018), the objectives of University education are to contribute to national development through high-level workforce training and to create the intellectual capability of individuals to realize and acknowledge their local and external environs, among others.

It also involves the acquisition of both physical and intellectual skills, which enable individuals to be self-reliant and useful members of society. As such, the major role of tertiary education through its institutions is that of manpower development or human capital, which involves the task of inculcating the skills, aptitude, attitude, knowledge, morals, values and creative ability. They are also expected to promote research and contribute to the development of the host communities. In achieving these roles, there is need for effective teaching and learning, research development culture, effective staff development programs and dissemination of knowledge in Nigeria's tertiary institutions. As the citadel of learning, the University becomes the hub of national development, being the source of production of

professionals that are behind the invisible machines that move the different sectors of the economy.

Centre of the cardinal obligation of the University is teaching, the act and process of imparting knowledge, developing skills and inculcating values and ideologies meant to empower individuals for functional living. There is no dispute about this central obligation, as it lies in the feeding of the mind with knowledge and information. What may be in dispute is the effectiveness of teaching in our universities. This becomes more striking in Nigeria, considering the host of incongruities and anomalies that have engrossed our universities in recent times. Apprehension about the decline in the quality of graduates of Nigerian universities can no longer be glossed over. The universities themselves are getting worried about what goes on in the lecture rooms. It is on this premise that this paper focuses on assessment of effective university teaching in Nigeria: a core component of internal quality assurance mechanism.

What is Effective University Teaching and how is it Recognized?

In a classroom, learners want to connect with the teacher, this connection allows the learners to be comfortable and ask their teacher questions, when this connection is created, it will lead to effective teaching. Effective teaching involves delivering the teaching to students in a capable manner. Effective teaching is when the teacher utilizes instructional strategies that are most appropriate for what is teaching, suitable for the students, and deliver it in a skilful way that allows for concrete learning. Effective teaching requires teachers to possess certain characteristics, such as empathy for students, knowledge of the subject, preparedness, openness to change, feedback and creativity among others.

Despite of the apparent controversy in the recognition and evaluation of effective teaching, attempts must be made to conceptualize this idea. An extension of the core responsibility of the University suggests that University teaching is that which optimizes the feeding of the minds of students with relevant knowledge of facts, truth and theories and liquidation of their ignorance. It is the kind of teaching that promotes optimal learning. Effective teaching is that which promotes the attainment of certain educational goals (the goals of tertiary education as contained in the National Policy on Education) (Iyamu & Omoruwa, 2007).

From theoretical consideration, effective teaching may be viewed as that which is rooted in the tripod perspective. This perspective sets off in the mind of the lecturer three fundamental questions that guide him to conceive and plan effective lectures. The three basic questions are: What am I going to teach?, Why am I teaching what?. How am I going to teach? When lecturer gives significant and conscientious attention to these questions, the resultant lecture is most likely to be effective. Every lecture is based on a topic with content, proper organization of such content of instruction is important for effective lecture. In order to achieve this, a lecturer needs to have a well-structured course outline with the topics organized in thematic or chronological order. Unfortunately, there are a number of lecturers who teach without well-developed course outlines. Some of those who have the course outline have been found to deny access to it. This is unprofessional and has many implications. Having had the course outline, the lecturer must give thought to what he intends to teach and prepare for it accordingly. As part of this preparation, a lecturer should make sketch of the content to be taught in a systematic manner. This can be done by breaking the topics into sub-topics. The lecturer looks at the sketch and develops the key-points in the discussion with the students. To work with a sketch of key points promotes concise and systematic lecture delivery. At the end of effective learning, both lecturers and students will

be satisfied (Adeosun, 2023). The main objective of a lecturer is to help and assist the learning of their students. According to Krause (2005) understanding how learning occurs, what conditions support learning and how to maximize students learning potency are key elements of being an effective University teacher.

Principles of Effective Teaching

There are principles of effective teaching in University, they are as follows:

1. Relationship Building
2. Engaging Active Learning
3. Assessment
4. Feedback from students and Lecturer

Relationship Building: To build a relationship with students, the lecturer needs to be an empathetic listener. When a student needs someone to talk to and the lecturer gives him or her a listening ear, this could develop bonding, it has been proven that students who feel they have caring and loving lecturers are more likely to always be present in school and perform well in school.

Engaging Active Learning: Active learning involves the use of different student-centered teaching strategies. Whereby, students are actively engaged in building and understanding complex concepts through different activities. Interactive activities and discussions in classes create a productive environment for students that promotes critical thinking. Active learning methods designate the role of facilitator to the teacher. The facilitator's task is to let the learners learn on their own through the use of different active training activities. Active learning is an approach to instruction that involves actively engaging students with the course material through discussions, problem approaches place a greater degree of responsibility on the learner than passive approaches such as lectures, but instructor guidance is still crucial in the active learning classroom. Active learning activities may range in length from a couple of minutes to whole class sessions or may take place over multiple class sessions. Active learning is when teachers engage their students in their learning by allowing them to think, discuss, investigate and create. Studies have shown that incorporating active learning strategies in school courses significantly enhances student learning experiences (Freeman et al, 2014).

Assessment: This is important to both the student and the lecturer, as it shows the extent to which teaching and learning have taken place and what need to be re-taught in different manners or identify if the student may need extra resources, such as tutoring. There are 2 main types of assessment: Summative and Formative. Summative assessment occurs at the end of learning, such as at the end of a semester or session. Formative assessment is ongoing and is meant to gauge where the student is at during the learning process. For instance, the lecturer could ask questions during a class. Teachers using formative assessment approaches and techniques are better prepared to meet diverse students' needs through differentiation and adaptation of teaching to raise levels of student achievement and to achieve greater equity of student outcomes, but this narrative cannot be realistic without the positive attitude of teachers toward Formative Assessment (Adeosun & Bakare, 2021).

Feedback: When a lecturer wants to improve her teaching and ensure she is meeting all of her students' need, she needs to spend some time collecting feedback from her students. For example, the lecturer could ask the student to write 3 things they learnt in the class that day and 2 other things they would like to know more about. The lecturer will then assess what adjustment she may need to make. Lecturer feedback to the student can also help create a relationship between them. The lecturer can develop a relationship through feedback by

showing appreciation and offering positive comments for the work submitted by students, such as saying thank you for your hard work. The lecturer could also help the students by correcting their work. According to Adeosun and Bakare (2021) giving feedback to the students enhances learning and improves their academic achievements.

Some Measures/Indices of Effective University Teaching

Teaching effectiveness focus on good teaching, possessing enough knowledge of the subject matter, having positive attitude, being patient with the students, assessing students on a regular basis, being able to evaluate students, identifying the proper learning needs and demands and being able to manage the classroom. The aforementioned measures shall be discussed as follows:

* **Good teaching:** Lecturer should be able to organize himself, and have a plan for what he intends to teach. He should be able to present difficult ideas in a simple manner that will make the students understand what he is teaching them.

* **Posses enough knowledge of the subject matter:** The lecturer should have enough knowledge to teach the subject he wants to teach. When the lecturer knows what is teaching, he will deliver the teaching very well in such a way that the students would understand the knowledge being passed to them.

* **Having positive attitude:** A Lecturer should have a positive attitude towards his students. He should not exhibit negative attitude towards them. A lecturer that has a positive attitude towards his students go on to be an effective lecturer because students would begin to see themselves as who can do difficult things since their lectures have positive attitude towards them.

* **Being patient with the students:** A good lecturer needs to be patient with his students. There is an individual difference, there are some students that they need extra time and patience to teach before they can understand what is being taught. A good lecturer will identify such students and provide a special time for them.

* **Assess students on a regular basis:** Students need to be assessed on a regular basis in order to know their progress. Assessment is the process of gathering information about the students in order to make decision about them. Therefore, there is need for a good lecturer to assess students regularly so that he can decide on their learning.

* **Being able to evaluate students:** Evaluation is a process of passing value judgment. It can be formative and summative. Evaluation is formative when is carried out during the course of the programme while summative is carried out at the end of the programme. A good lecturer should be able to evaluate his students for him to make value able judgments about them.

* **Identifying the proper learning needs and demands:** A good lecturer should be able to identify the proper learning needs and demands of his students.

* **Being able to manage the classroom:** Classroom management can be viewed as the process by which lecturers and schools create and maintain appropriate behaviour of students in classroom settings. The purpose of implementing classroom management strategies is to enhance prosocial behaviour and increase students' academic engagement (Eisenman et al, 2015; Everston & Weinstein, 2006). A good lecturer should be able to control and manage his classroom to maintain the appropriate behaviour of his students.

According to Berk (2005), there are 12 potential sources of evidence of teaching effectiveness which include student ratings, peer ratings, self-evaluation, videos, student interviews, alumni ratings, employer ratings, administrator ratings, teaching scholarships, teaching awards, learning outcome measures, and teaching portfolio.

Need for Regular Assessment of University Teaching

There is a need for regular assessment of university teaching based on the following reasons:

1. It will allow lecturers to know if they are teaching effectively or not.
2. It will allow lecturers to ensure the students learn what they need to know for them to meet up with the learning outcomes.
3. It provides feedback about learning.

Constraints to Teaching Effectiveness

There have been certain constraints to teaching effectiveness and these have been identified as follows: (Bryd & Rasberry, 2011).

1. **Extremely little collaboration** - Classroom isolation between teachers and administrators, lack of suppleness in the schedule, resulting in limited planning and collaboration, not successfully using the internal resources.
2. **Insufficient accountability measures** – High-stakes testing that does not align with state curriculum and idealistic single assessments and expectations.
3. **Inadequate leadership** - Disinclination to convert approach, lack of long-term, consistent and supportive leadership, especially in high needs schools, few leaders to address all needs in the school building, few opportunities for teachers to serve as leaders without leaving the classroom.
4. **Evaluation and tenure** – Deficiency of consequential effects for teachers who do not improve, tenure granted to some unproductive teachers who then cover themselves.
5. **Ill-planned reform implementation** - Band-aid explanations that are abandoned before their efficiency is evaluated, mandates and challenges without resources and training.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The urge to seek ways to enhance the effectiveness of university teaching in Nigeria is a continuous one. It is in this preface that this study discusses effective university teaching in Nigeria: a core component of internal quality assurance mechanism. Unless university teaching is effective and efficient, it will be difficult for the university to meet its primary responsibility of feeding the mind with desirable knowledge and liquidation of ignorance. Though there is no consensus on what constitute effective teaching, we easily recognize bad and ineffective one. It is therefore recommended that mechanisms should be put in place for continuous assessment of effective University teaching. Seminars should be organized on a regular basis for lecturers on the need for effective teaching in the university.

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