

Instructional Supervision as a Catalyst for Quality Improvement in Secondary Educational Settings

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Abstract

A lot of inputs have gone into the creation and establishment of supervisory unit through organization and planning in our educational system. These inputs have been channeled towards the purpose of realizing the stipulated goals and objectives in the National Policy on Education. Thus, a quality school must provide its students with sufficient, current and detailed content in every subject areas. To do this effectively, the teachers have to utilize the appropriate teaching methods and materials that will enhance improved instructional materials, hence the urgent need for instructional supervision in the school. Instructional supervision must, therefore, be efficiently created and properly mapped out to help interaction that will foster quality improvement in the process of teaching and learning. This paper examines instructional supervision, quality education and the do's and don'ts of effective and quality supervision of instruction. The paper also examine instructional supervision as catalyst for quality improvement in secondary schools. Finally, the paper concludes that there should be modalities in place to ensure inspectors of the Ministry of Education monitor school heads to ascertain their appropriate use of the various techniques of instructional supervision in secondary schools.

Keywords: *Instructional Supervision, Quality, Improvement, Effective and Secondary education*

1. Introduction

The goals of secondary education as stipulated in the National Policy on Education (FRN, 2004) is to provide the highest level of basic education geared towards preparing the child for future challenges in tertiary institutions and in the society. As such, instructional supervision programmes are imperative as the quality of education system is measured by how well the system performs the functions of achieving the goals of education in the country. Instructional supervision ensures improved teaching and learning. To achieve improved teaching and learning process, therefore, require supervision to help teachers develop a new set of instructional methodology. Moreover, in this era of constant change that require teachers to be abreast with modern trends in their subject areas, ensuring quality in the school is possible through instructional supervision. The importance of supervision of instruction as a leadership process to stimulate, guide and assist teachers and, in fact, to improve instructional interactions is captured by Ukeje, Akabogu & Ndu (1992:359) that:

The educational leader as a supervisor has the responsibility for improving the school curriculum through cooperative planning of educational opportunities provided for education.

He has to improve instruction through the use of classroom visitations, individual and group conferences and demonstrations. These techniques were related to the broad strategies or approaches to supervision – clinical supervisions and micro-teaching.

Therefore, supervision is associated with the overall development of the teacher to grow professionally to be able to carry out his teaching exercise effectively and efficiently, thus improving learning in secondary schools. It involves technical services primarily aimed at studying and improving cooperatively all factors which affect child growth and development. Through the means of supervision we improve instruction, stimulate professional growth and develop teachers to be able to utilize the appropriate materials of instruction and methods of teaching in schools. The essence of a good instructional supervision, therefore, is to help a teacher to attain a better teaching-learning situation. It is also aim at providing conditions that are necessary for quality learning through effective teaching.

However, in schools today, supervision is lacking than it did in the past two decades. This may be attributed to the rapid enrolment growth of students in schools and increase in professionalism within the educational system (Ogunsaju in Utake, 2012). In fact, the tendency for some modern school heads is to unwittingly shy away from the supervision of instruction. They rather occupy themselves with inspecting school building projects; soliciting for funds from the Parents Teachers Association (PTA) and the general public; attending to visitors and unnecessary administrative chores, among others (Okwor, 2002). Giving credence to this, Adebayo (2008) noted that public education today is faced with various challenges ranging from mismanagement of allocated resources, inadequate supervision to failing academic standards to the extent that the primary purpose of schooling has been set aside. This is probably why there have been consistent question and complain about the quality of instruction children received at the secondary school level in Nigeria.

Today, the poor performance of students in external examinations has become a major concern of stakeholders, educators, parents, employers, employees and indeed the society at large (Ogunu & Momoh, 2011). The results in external examinations remain the major indicator of quality in the secondary educational system. For instance, West African Examination Council (WAEC) records of the results released in 2010 was reported as being the worst in the years 2008, 2009 and 2010. The result in 2008 was 23%, it was 21.9% in 2009 and in 2010, 20.4%. A further breakdown of the WAEC result released in December, 2010 and the report of WAEC (2004) by science subjects, grade and sex are shown in Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1 revealed that, out of the total number of 310,077 candidates that sat for the 2010 WAEC examination only 62,295 candidates passed, representing 20.09%. While Table 2 revealed low achievement in students' outputs in the science subjects such as agricultural science, biology, chemistry, health sciences and physics. This persistent poor performance in WAEC is an indication that the quality of education provided at the Nigerian secondary schools is of low quality. It, therefore, suggest that effective and quality instructional supervision is not only imperative but require immediate attention to ensure quality improvement in education. This is because if the principals can carry out their supervisory roles and duties and the teachers encouraged to perform their duties effectively, the educational goals and objectives, may be achieved. Experience may have shown that teachers' job performance is enhanced by correction, encouragement and in-service training. The fault or errors in teaching can only be detected through instructional supervision hence the importance of supervision in secondary schools cannot be over-emphasized (Onoyase & Onoyase, 2007). The focus of this paper is on the discussion of how instructional supervision would serve as catalyst for the effective and efficient improvement of teaching and learning in secondary schools.

Table 1: 2010 WAEC results

No. of candidates that wrote the examination	Result released	Result withheld	Processed result	No. that passed with credit in English	No. that passed with credit in Mathematics	No. of students that passed with 5 credits including Mathematics and English	Students that failed to meet the requirement to enter higher institution
310,077	295,224	51,876	295,224	133,807	151,565	62,295	247,782
100%	92.21%	16.73%	92.21%	43.06%	48.88%	20.09%	79.91%

Source: Daily Trust, December, 24th, 2010 in Ogunu & Momoh, 2011

Table 2: WAEC SSCE (August/September) zonal statistics of results in Nigeria by subject, grade and sex

Subject	Sex	Entry	% of all candidates that obtained a given grade								
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Agric. Science	M	134951	0.1	0.2	3.1	2.8	4.4	13.4	16.6	17.5	41.9
	F	86418	0.0	0.2	2.2	2.2	3.2	10.4	14.7	17.5	49.6
	T	221369	0.0	0.2	2.8	2.6	3.9	12.3	15.8	17.5	44.7
Biology	M	156673	0.0	0.1	3.1	3.3	5.2	17.9	13.5	15.7	41.1
	F	128314	0.0	0.1	1.7	2.0	3.3	13.3	11.9	16.3	51.4
	T	284987	0.0	0.1	2.5	2.7	4.4	15.9	12.8	16.0	45.6
Chemistry	M	71709	0.4	0.4	2.1	1.2	2.0	6.0	8.3	13.6	66.0
	F	44542	0.1	0.2	1.2	0.7	1.3	4.3	6.3	11.1	74.8
	T	116251	0.3	0.3	1.7	1.0	1.7	5.3	7.6	12.6	69.5
Health Science	M	3029	1.0	1.7	7.9	4.4	3.7	11.0	13.8	14.5	42.0
	F	2767	1.0	1.7	7.9	4.3	4.8	13.9	13.6	16.1	36.7
	T	5796	1.1	1.7	7.9	4.3	4.2	12.4	13.7	15.2	39.5
Physics	M	64567	1.4	1.0	4.1	2.2	2.6	8.1	14.0	16.2	50.4
	F	31969	0.6	0.6	2.6	1.5	2.0	6.4	12.1	16.1	58.1
	T	96539	1.5	0.9	3.7	1.9	2.44	7.5	13.4	16.2	52.8

Source: WAEC Report, 2004

2. Instructional Supervision

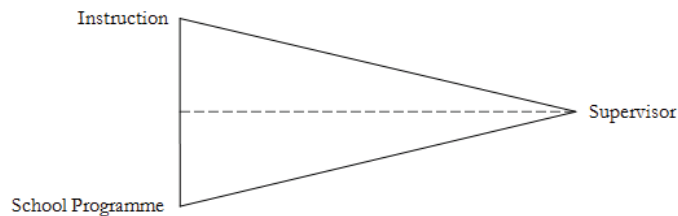
Instructional supervision is the act of appraising particular learning exercise to determine the needs of the learner and the effectiveness of the teaching process. It is a process of aiding and suggesting guideline for improvement of teaching and learning in order to enhance pupils learning and quality education. Thus, an instructional supervisor helps teachers to improve teaching process in the educational system. The process of instructional supervision involves supporting and assisting teachers to improve instruction through changing their behavior (Peretomode, 1995). Nwogu (1980), for instance, presented it as a process or an activity by which an individual or a group or team of individuals by means of advising and stimulating interest in teachers and pupils, help to improve teaching and learning situation in educational institutions. In effect, instructional supervision brings about improvement in instructional by helping teachers to improve on their teaching. In this sense, Ezeocha as cited in Nosiri (1997:215) asserted that:

Supervision deals mainly with improvement of learning and teaching and helps teachers to recognize and accept general aims, and work towards the achievement of the purposes to help them to see beyond their present performance and seek improvement to identify and

coordinate efforts and resources for more efficient and greater impact on important educational problems; to increase the amount and quality of learning by students; to promote continuous appraisal of performance of all who emerge in the educational process.

Therefore, supervision is a positive task directed towards the improvement of instruction, the continuous development and guiding of teachers and every others that are concerned. Hence, the primary aim of supervision is to recognize the real true value of each person, so that in the end, the full potentials of all those in the educative process will be recognized, appreciated and utilized (Nosiri, 1997). The fundamental focus of instructional supervision is the input maximization of teaching and supporting staff for quality control of teaching and students learning activities. As such, supervision has two contexts such as the people and the improvement of the school programme (Utaka, 2012). According to her, the mediator between the people and the programme is the supervisor as depicted by the model below:

Fig 1: The Context of Supervision



Source: Ogunsaju, S. in Utaka, M.A. (2012). The Nature and Purpose of Supervision for Quality Assurance in Schools

Significantly, instructional supervision serves various aims in the school system viz:

- Help to Develop and Utilize Methods and Materials: In order to effectively and efficiently carry out the teaching and learning process, we need to develop teaching aids and adopt appropriate methods to impart knowledge to ensure improvement in the pupils. This the instructional supervisor does by assisting the teacher to develop and direct how to utilize such methods and materials to ensure continuous progress in the pupil, as well as, help the teacher to do his work better.
- Staff Development: It is an obvious fact that teachers need to be retrained to be able to meet and mediate the constant changing society. We need to learn new trends in details. Thus, the instructional supervisor supplies the teachers with specific information they need in order to improve the professional effectiveness of the teachers and the growth of students.
- Professional Guidance: This helps to improve the conditions which affect the teaching and learning, as well as, the development and growth of students and teachers.
- Provide Instructional Leadership: Odor (1995) added that instructional supervision helps solve problems of improving instructions, improving quality of education in schools, achieving educational goals, ensuring curriculum development, development of staff and evaluation of staff. Supervisor provides instructional leadership to teachers by assisting, guiding and stimulating them to be able to do their work better, improve their instructional skills, experiences and growth professionally.
- Attainment of Educational Objectives: Nwosu (1997) also added that supervision is geared towards galvanizing and sensitizing of teachers for the improvement of materials, techniques and methods of instruction. This amplifies the rationale for supervision of

instruction, the enforcement of which has not only become absolutely necessary but also imperative for the attainment of educational objectives.

3. Quality Education

Quality is the degree of excellence of peculiar and essential characteristics. It is the grade, degree of performance and worth. Quality is something considered good which everyone wants to have presupposing that there is a standard set by which it is measured or assessed. Quality in education is assessed in terms of its relevance to the needs of the immediate community or society at large: relevance, functionality, needs of daily life and life challenges (Ogunu & Momoh, 2011). Quality education suggests the ability or degree with which an educational system conforms to the established standard and appropriateness of the inputs available for the delivery of the system (Fedipe, 1999). According to Okeke (2001), the quality of schooling can be measured in terms of the number of contact hours, curricular, class size, students motivation, characteristics of teaching staff, leadership style, how well the system prepares the product for life are to live. He noted that quality is assessed by the level of attainment of the goals as enshrined in the National Policy on Education. This implies that quality is an institutional value and conscious efforts are to be made to ensure and sustain quality in all its ramifications at every facet of the educational system by proper and adequate utilization of the available human and material resources (Emenalo, 2008).

The Dakar Declaration Framework expanded the definition of quality education to include the desirable characteristics of learners (health, motivated students), processes (competent teachers using active pedagogies), content (relevant curricular) and systems (government and equitable resources allocation). DuBrin (1997) noted that quality education require adequate curriculum, appropriate teaching and learning environment and experiences. This agrees with the United National Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Quality Education Framework Four-Fold Principle of Learning (Delors, Singh & Amagi, 1996) as depicted in Table 3 below:

Table 3: UNESCO's quality education framework four-fold principle of learning

Type	Principle
Learning to Know	Acknowledging that quality learning provides opportunities for learners to build their own knowledge daily combining indigenous and external elements.
Learning to do	Opportunities for learners to apply what they learn.
Learning to live together	Developing in learners attitude free from discrimination, where all have equal opportunities to develop themselves, their families and their communities.
Learning to develop skills	Emphasis on skills require for developing individual's full potential.

Source: UNESCO in Delors, J., Singh, K. & Amagi, I. (1996) Learning: The Treasure Within

Quality Education therefore include:

- Learners who are healthy, well-nourished and ready to participate and learn and who are supported in learning by their families and communities.
- Environments that are healthy, safe, protective and gender sensitive and provide adequate resources and facilities.
- Content that is reflected in relevant curricular and materials for the acquisition of basic skill, especially in areas of literacy, numeracy and skills for life, and knowledge of nutrition, HIV/AIDS prevention and peace.
- Processes through which trained teachers use child-centred, teaching approaches in well-

managed classrooms and the schools and skillful assessment to facilitate learning and reduce disparities.

- Outcome that encompasses knowledge, skill and attitudes, and are linked to national growth for education and positive participation in society (United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in Aigbomian, 2012:2).

4. Do's and Don'ts for Effective and Quality Supervision of Instruction

There are certain things supervisors should do away with for them to carry out effective and quality supervision of instructions in secondary schools. In other words, they are those attitudes that hinder efficient supervision viz:

- Supervision should not be seen and used as a means of clamping down on staff;
- Supervision should not be viewed as a fault-finding weapon;
- Supervisors should not forcefully or autocratically take charge of the classroom instructional interaction from the teacher to prove a point;
- Supervisors should avoid inspection;
- Avoid evaluation of the school as a designated place of learning;
- Avoid acting as threats to teachers careers;
- Avoid authoritarian attitude in the conduct of supervision of instructions; and
- Supervisors should see their role as basically that of facilitators.

As you are now aware of the factors that hinder effective supervision of instructions, it is even more imperative to be abreast of the positive factors that enhance quality supervision of instruction in schools. They are:

- Enhanced Satisfaction: The procedures of supervision should result in improved staff morale and job satisfaction. Thus, the supervisors should help teachers to develop more confidence in themselves.
- Advise and Guide: The supervisors should help teachers to feel more adequate to handle their own problems and experience the fuller realization of their capabilities.
- Assistance: The instructional supervisor should assist teachers to see far beyond their immediate performance and strive for quality improvement in instructional interactions.
- Cooperation: The genuine supervisor encourages the full participation of all those involved in the teaching and learning process rather than skill manipulation of staff. Thus, the effective supervisor seeks the adoption of pre-conference, observation and post-conference to enable the teacher be part and parcel of the decision reached.
- Supervision should help to increase the rate and quality of learning by students.

5. Instructional Supervision for Quality Improvement in Secondary Education

Those in charge of education such as the government and its education agencies are concerned about the values to be attained through schooling at all level of the educational system. All agencies responsible for education are equally concerned about the quality of the education system. According to Okwor (2002) achieving quality education is a function of effective and efficient administration by which smooth operation of school is ensured. Ensuring smooth operation of schools is possible through effective supervision. It is in realization of this, that responsibility to ensure the quality and increasing improvement of instructions in the education system was assigned to specific agency (Ministry of Education) and individual experts (School heads) to assess and supervise instruction in school in order to maintain and improve on quality. This kind of supervision serves as a catalyst to quality improvement in four ways: (i) to provide leadership; (ii) control and coordination; (iii) resource and service; and (iv) to evaluate the progress of instructional interactions. In the first instance, instructional leadership helps to identify the problems of instructions in the system. Then in a relax atmosphere, the supervisor brings the staff

and all concerned together to assess the instructional problem and assist by providing solution to them. In this process, the supervisor assessment will enable or aid to clarify the teachers' purposes and aims of their classroom instructions. In this way, there will be healthy organizational climate, instructional leadership stimulate staff to work towards attaining the objectives and goals of the system, that of quality improvement in teaching and learning. Therefore, supervision of instruction help to support teachers so that there is efficient learning, as well as, enable teachers to match and mediate changes in the system.

In addition, instructional supervision help to improve both skilled and unskilled teachers, this the supervisor does by observing the teachers to enable them adapt to new instructional techniques and results of research findings. By so doing, the supervisor would contribute his professional experience in instructional supervision to successfully solve problems of classroom instruction and development. Here, the responsibility of the instructional supervisor may include:

- Mentoring young teachers in the teaching profession;
- Guiding teachers up to a minimum standard of effective teaching;
- Improving individual teacher's competencies by providing them with necessary resources for effective teaching;
- Working with groups of teachers in a collaborative effort to improve student learning;
- Relating teacher's efforts to improvement in their teaching
- Monitoring to assess the level of performance with a view to finding out how far set objectives are being met; and
- Evaluation, used to see how the system can be assisted to improve on its present level of performance based on available data (Ogunu & Momoh, 2011).

Also, the supervisor is in the position to locate the human and material resources available in school. The supervisor has the authority to coordinate the available human and material resources in the school and make assessable to be fully utilized for the achievement of the school goals.

Moreover, the instructional supervisor assessment of teacher effectiveness help to determine whether there is improvement in the teaching learning process. Such an evaluation and assessment might find that there is need to plan and organize more efficiently for improvement in the future (Odor, 1995). According to him, even when classroom instruction is satisfactory, there is always room for improvement. So the guarantee for continuous instructional improvement is through supervision for evaluation of teacher effectiveness in instruction. Thus, supervisors according to Odor (1995) are to develop the teachers' method of influencing the students learning and to impact some knowledge of instructional organization to teachers. To do this effectively, instructional supervisors should:

- Work with teachers to develop instructional goals and objectives consistent with the National Policy on Education.
- Provide teachers with necessary resources for effective teaching.
- Obtaining and providing relevant educational information for teachers.
- Stimulate, encourage, support and facilitate all activities designed to improve instruction.
- Visit classrooms to observe how teachers are teaching.
- Hold individual and group conferences.
- Evaluate and develop curriculum materials, including a well-stocked library and instructional resource centre in the school.
- Inspect teachers' lesson notes, class registers, diaries and teaching and offering professional advice for their improvement (Ogunu & Momoh, 2011).

Furthermore, Oraemesi (1997) and Okwor (2002) identified some instructional supervision methods to ensure improvement of quality in secondary education to include:

- Classroom Visitation: Here, supervisor visits the classroom perhaps with a view to watch the teacher and the pupil in action.
- Demonstration in order to illustrate a process or procedure of doing a new particular thing or to demonstrate a particular newly developed or being wrongly applied. Through this

technique, the services of the supervisor as an experienced and knowledgeable officer or some other expert are employed in introducing and explaining innovation or problems that need attention and emphasis.

- Research finding affecting teaching/learning should be investigated or tried to determine their worth and relevance.
- Organization of Workshop: Here, periodic workshops, conferences and seminars for teachers should be organized in the schools for teachers to update their knowledge and keep current in their areas of specialization. These activities help to raise group spirit; integrate efforts, introduce new ideas, techniques or make improvements, tackle common problems and difficulties.

Therefore, supervision provides framework for monitoring and reporting on the effectiveness of the teachers' performance and focus upon improving it. As such, the process of educating the students need to be monitored and controlled so as to identify, remove or control the causes of the defects and departure from set standards (Emenalo, 2008).

6. Conclusion

This paper has looked at how instructional supervision could act as catalyst to ensure quality improvement in education in Nigeria, what instructional supervision and quality education entails, as well as, the do's and don'ts for effective and quality supervision of instruction in secondary schools, with emphasis on those attitudes that hinder efficient supervision and those that enhance effective supervision of instruction. The major considerations on how instructional supervision could stimulate and support teachers so that there is efficient teaching and learning, as well as, the attainment of secondary education were also discussed.

7. Recommendations

1. School heads due to their administrative task should delegate some supervisory functions/tasks to other teachers who are educationally qualified and experienced with sound classroom pedagogy to ensure effective teaching and learning.
2. There should be training and re-training programmes for school heads and teachers in the form of workshop to inform and guide them about current methods in their field to ensure effective supervision of instruction.
3. There is need for school heads to improve their instructional supervision techniques in order to offer necessary advice on the improvement of quality education.
4. There should be modalities in place to ensure inspectors of the Ministry of Education monitor school heads to ascertain their appropriate use of the various techniques of instructional supervision in secondary schools.
5. There should be regular upward and downward communication between the school heads and the ministry of education.

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