

## **The Use of Instructional Materials for Effective Academic Delivery in Nigeria.**

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### **Abstract**

*This paper presents the ability of a learner to apply whatever he is taught to his everyday life as an indicator of effective academic delivery on the part of the teacher and comprehension on the part of the learner. It emphasizes the fact that appropriate use of instructional materials is central to effective academic delivery. It equally stresses that improvisation and display are central to the use of instructional materials in the teaching and learning process. It concludes by highlighting the need for all stakeholders in the education system to join hands in the promotion of academic delivery. Recommendations are also given as to how to improve academic delivery regarding instructional materials.*

Keywords: Academic, delivery, effective, instructional materials, use.

### **Introduction**

Every good teacher aims to effectively deliver his lessons to mould children under his tutelage into academically, morally, socially, and emotionally balanced individuals. Such children will be able to apply what they learn to their everyday life experiences. They will be useful to themselves as well as to their society. Any teacher who can bring up such children can confidently boast of having done a good job. To be able to do this, the teacher needs to go the extra mile. This then follows that the teacher has an indispensable role to play in breeding academically sound youths who of course are tomorrow's leaders. It is pertinent to note that any form of lesson delivery which is rigid, boring, or teacher-centred without any form of consideration for the learner, will not have the desired impact on the learner. This was the case in the past, but the current trend, however, is for teaching to be learner-friendly or learner-centred. In other words, teaching strategies should reflect learners' learning styles and interests. Any form of teaching which caters for the learner's interest is sure to be fascinating to the learner who appreciates it when the teaching or learning process is pleasurable and an attempt is made at boosting his self-esteem. Thus, Denwigwe and Akpama (2013) asserted that students' outlook on life is traceable to their self-esteem. Self-esteem is the notion we have about ourselves concerning being able to cope with life challenges to be happy and successful in life (Denwigwe, Tolorunleke, & Elumeze, 2017).

For academic delivery to be effective, cognizance should be taken of present-day education and technology with their efficient gadgets and techniques resulting in an improved way of life, and enhanced ways of harnessing materials and accessing information. A teacher who wants to succeed in the job of churning out successful students as the products of his academic endeavours should be mindful of the fact that he or she is no longer the supposed 'chamber of knowledge' of the traditional classroom setting and so must improve his mode of lesson delivery to be in line with the current trend. He cannot remain static in a world that is constantly changing educationally and technologically. He should familiarize himself with the innovations that abound in his profession to cope with upcoming challenges.

One way of ensuring that the learner is carried along in the process of academic delivery is by using instructional materials in teaching. When teaching is appropriately done with appropriate

instructional materials, it has a direct impact on student performance since his or her interest in learning is stimulated. Apparently, in support of this view, Adeyanju (2003) opined that a great percentage of trained teachers and those undergoing professional training courses consciously use instructional materials because of their positive effects on learning outcomes. He further pointed out that most researchers claim that teaching with instructional materials stimulates the students by making them become more attentive, more interested in the lesson, and able to participate better in class activities. Denwigwe and Ngwu (2022) revealed that the attitudes of people, especially the youth matter a lot. Hence using instructional materials to teach may stimulate the learners to develop a positive attitude to learn. Youths are very energetic and adventurous, hence should be encouraged to engage their minds gainfully in things that will divert their attention from negative ventures (Denwigwe, Eke, and Ngwu, 2022). The use of instructional materials in teaching and learning is one of the things that help them engage their minds in learning.

### **The Meaning and Types of Instructional Materials**

Instructional materials are those materials that enable the teacher to enhance the teaching and learning process. Ross and Fabiano (2019) defined instructional materials as any tangible or digital materials or resources that can support teaching and learning including textbooks, audio-visual aids, computer software, and other instructional aids. They enable the teacher to enhance the quality of the learning experience for the learners. Instructional materials are technologies that carry information that can be used for instruction. They embrace all the devices that help the teacher to transmit the facts, skills, attitudes, and knowledge to the learners. According to Wu and Lu (2020), instructional materials are any resources used in the teaching and learning process that support the delivery and acquisition of knowledge, skills, and competencies.

Instructional materials come in various forms. Adeyanju (2003) listed the following as examples of instructional materials: Visual materials, Audio-visual materials, and real objects. The FCT Education Resource Centre (2006) classified instructional materials as follows: (i) Printed materials such as textbooks, newspapers, magazines, journals, and so on. (2) Graphic materials like charts, flip charts, flashcards, posters, graphs, pictures, cartoons, and others. (3) Three-dimensional materials like models, puppets, real objects, and others. (4) Writing /display boards or sheets such as chalkboard, whiteboard, drawing board, magnetic board, flannel board, flannel display sheets, and so on. (5) Audio materials like radio, audio cassettes, CD-ROM, and others. (6) Visual materials such as pictures, charts, maps, slides, film strips, and so on. (7) Audio-visual materials such as television, videotape, sound motion pictures, computer, CD-ROM, slide tape series, film strips, and others. (8) Projection equipment such as multimedia projector, overhead projector, slide projector, opaque projector, etc. (9) Other materials such as magnetic field apparatus, rock board, electronic components board, storyboards, AC-DC converter, toys, abacus, and others (pp2-3). It is evident from this list that some instructional materials may fit into one or more groups.

### **The Relevance of Instructional Materials to Lesson Delivery**

The relevance of instructional materials to lesson delivery cannot be overemphasized. Jonassen (2000) revealed that when used effectively instructional materials can help students understand complex concepts, apply their knowledge in meaningful ways, and achieve important educational goals. It means that when instructional materials are used with a professional touch, students understand better while teachers effectively achieve their educational objectives. Learning is more permanent when the teacher can complement her classroom instructions with adequately selected instructional materials. Banks (2009) stated that instructional materials make learning more concrete and relevant by bringing the real world into the classroom via a variety of still-moving pictorial displays. Park and Kim (2015) revealed in research that other conditions being equal, more learning occurs when information is received

simultaneously in two modalities (vision and hearing, for example) rather than in a single modality. Moreso, learning is enhanced when the material is organized in such a way that the organization is evident to the students. These suggest the value of audio-visuals and of course other instructional materials in the educational process.

According to the FCT Education Resource Centre (2006), instructional materials are known to enhance lesson delivery in a variety of ways such as: (i) Reducing the extent to which the teacher talks (bearing in mind that excessive verbalism or too much talking can be very tiring for the teacher and boring to the students). (ii) Enabling the teacher to explain concepts easily and logically with visible materials. (iii) Stimulating creativity and imaginative ability in the teacher and his students. (iv) Creating a learning environment that is inviting and stimulating. (v) Stimulating group interaction.

Providing an enabling environment for the learners to exercise the different senses of touch, sight, hearing, and smell, due to their multi-sensory nature (p. 1). Shimada & Yamaguchi (2020) are of the view that instructional materials promote learning through the creation of curiosity in the minds of the learners. Armitage (2021) pointed out that instructional materials improve teaching methodology as well as reduce chalk-and-talk teaching methods.

Through multimedia computers that combine sound, graphics, animation, and videos, for instance, students can learn about one topic in different ways such as by visiting a website, viewing pictures, films or listening to a conversation. Okwudishu (2005) added that instructional materials enable the entire audience to have a front-row seat at demonstrations and experiments through magnification. In other words, instructional materials can give a rich and engaging learning experience for students by making them more active and involved in the learning process. Caulina, Baissac, & Alkaus (2016) revealed that audio-visual devices can transcend geographical barriers. They can expose students to experiences beyond the classroom, and they can disseminate instruction across large areas, making education accessible to more people.

It is worth noting that for instructional material to serve its intended purpose, it must be relevant to the lesson for which it is being used, simple so that it can be easily understood, and accurate in size, shape, proportion, and information content. It must also be bold, clear, legible, and appealing to the learner. The teacher should ensure that the instructional material he is about to use has the qualities listed above. Using instructional materials inappropriately or completely avoiding using them to teach could be a bane to effective teaching.

Despite the obvious relevance of instructional materials to effective lesson delivery, if one is not very conversant with how to use them or what to do when they are not available, he may find himself complaining erroneously that using instructional materials to teach is time-wasting and delays the covering of the school syllabus, instructional materials are not readily available, when available, they are very expensive. For a teacher who knows what to do, however, the issue of instructional materials delaying one from covering the syllabus would not arise because he can plan well. A lot depends on the teacher's ability to plan; only those who lack the expertise and training needed for the proper use of instructional materials will be at a crossroads. A good and effective teacher who takes time to teach using appropriately selected instructional materials soon discovers that everything he does to ensure the student's understanding of the lesson is not a waste of time. With time, he would be able to cover lost ground because if a student understands the first topic very well and can apply it appropriately, he should be able to understand subsequent topics faster, since one topic leads to another. When there is a dearth (non-availability) of ready-made instructional materials or when found exorbitant, the solution lies in the word 'Improvisation.'

#### **Improvisation of Instructional Materials**

Improvisation has to do with making something out of the available materials when what is needed is not available. It involves providing a substitute for what is needed but which is not available at that

time. It is a way out of unforeseen circumstances that may crop up while teaching. If for instance a mathematics teacher needs to drive home an important point about circles and all he has at that time is a flower vase with a circular base, he can conveniently use it as a substitute material for the teaching. Supposing that in an agricultural science lesson, the teacher who needs to explain how the 'watering can' works has no watering can available, a plastic sieve or a perforated empty tin of milk and water, can do the magic. Plastic hangars, empty milk tins, some pebbles, and pieces of ropes can be put together appropriately to introduce the concept of weights in primary science. Also, when it becomes impossible to take the children out to the field on a rainy day to learn the rudiments of the game of football in physical and health education, the teacher can improvise a football field in the classroom using an old piece of rug, a piece of old mosquito net, an old metallic hangar, and a piece of white chalk. Thus, improvisation can be done by substitution, i.e. using readily available material in place of a standard one. It can also be by construction involving the making of new material when the one you need is not available or is expensive. This may involve drawing, snapping, or moulding the real object. Improvisation can also be one's original idea, i.e., you can just imagine what can enhance your lesson delivery and you go ahead and improvise it. Most often, it is the teacher who initiates the idea of improvisation, but he can employ the services of the students, a welder, a carpenter, a bricklayer, an artist, a blacksmith, or an electrician.

For the teacher not to use instructional materials merely because they are not available, not enough, or are expensive is very unrealistic. A whole lot of instructional materials can be improvised without one having to spend a dime. It simply calls for ingenuity and creativity on the part of the teacher who also must be observant. Many of the materials lying about are potential instructional materials. For instance, old newspapers, old magazines, old fabrics, cartons, Styrofoam, used drinking straws, plastic bottles or spoons, sand, sticky flowers, date palm seeds, used GSM recharge cards, old or used floppy disks and community resources and so on can be turned into very useful instructional materials. In other words, materials that otherwise would litter the environment or constitute environmental hazards, can be put into use. It is good to think twice before discarding any object because it may be a useful material to improvise with.

### **Display and Use of Instructional Materials**

One thing is to improvise instructional material, another thing is to display and use it appropriately. A teacher, after spending his time and energy improvising instructional materials, should endeavour to display and use them well. According to Hornsby's Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2000), to display is to put something in a place where people can see it easily. It is to put something strategically to attract people's attention. Instructional materials have a way of talking to the learners when they are displayed appropriately.

In stressing the importance of the display of instructional materials, Utsalo (2005) indicated that the display shows the quality of work done. According to her, when work done on a piece of paper is superimposed on another coloured paper and placed nicely on the wall, it comes out beautiful. A drawing of a lizard on a white cardboard paper for instance can be super-imposed on a red cardboard paper, leaving a margin of a quarter of an inch between the cardboard sheets, and then placed on the wall or display sheet. This makes the drawing to be very "eye-catching" to the students. A good display of instructional materials is necessary in the sense that it adds to the beauty of the classroom, while adequate use of them stimulates creativity and enhances learning.

### **Instructional Materials and the Teacher's Lesson Plan**

Instructional materials should not be used as 'window-dressing' in the lesson plan. Some teachers indicate them in the lesson plan just because inspectors insist on it whereas they do not use them to teach. Some teachers on the other hand use the instructional materials to teach but do not reflect them

in the lesson plan. Ideally, not only should the instructional materials be reflected in the lesson plan, but they should also be used during lesson delivery. In addition to having instructional materials as a heading in the lesson plan, the procedure should indicate how the instructional materials will be used during lesson delivery. This will make the teaching to be functional. As Denwigwe, Elumeze, and Otu (2014) succinctly put it, functional teaching or functional education is the type of education that will address the needs of the child and help him to become self-reliant, and it is the best type of education.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

Bearing in mind that teaching involves using appropriate learning experiences to bring up children who are skilled, self-reliant, and equipped to cope with future challenges with ease, teachers should strive to be in tune with current events in the teaching arena. Going by the Chinese proverb, 'What I hear I forget, what I see I remember, what I do I understand,' every teacher must realize that the use of instructional materials offers the learner an opportunity to learn better because learning is faster and more permanent when it goes with appropriate learning experiences. The fact that the teacher gives the learner tasks that require his use of instructional materials or even make them himself also helps him to learn better.

For academic delivery to be effective or meet the intended purpose, every negative bias about the use of instructional materials should be dropped while adopting the habit of improvisation, use, and display of instructional materials. Teachers' efforts at effective lesson delivery should be complemented by the administrators, counsellors, government, parents, and society at large. The responsibility of bringing up good students should not be entirely left to the teacher.

The following recommendations are necessary for effective lesson delivery: (i) The school heads should encourage the use of instructional materials by providing funds when necessary and ensure that teachers improvise and use instructional materials to teach. (ii) They should ensure that teachers attend conferences, seminars and refresher courses, on the improvisation of instructional materials. (iii) Teachers should form study circles where they brainstorm on the appropriate instructional materials needed for the various topics and how best to use them for lesson delivery. (iv) Every teacher should endeavour to give enough time and attention to the lesson preparation. Preparing lessons at least two weeks ahead of time gives room for one to make ready the necessary instructional materials. (v) Teachers should keep a collection of objects or materials that could be used to improvise and encourage the learners to do so.

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