

# **SUPERVISION AS AN INSTRUMENT OF TEACHING – LEARNING EFFECTIVENESS: CHALLENGE FOR THE NIGERIAN PRACTICE**

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## **ABSTRACT**

There are gaps in teacher preparation in Nigeria, such as limited contents of teaching subjects as well as deficiencies in pedagogy and length of practice, which affect the quality of instruction in Nigerian schools. There is, therefore, need for the supervisor, who should be knowledgeable, committed and tactful enough to sense teachers' failings, suggest appropriate solutions and evaluate the progress of corrective programmes, in order to achieve improved school instruction. This paper presents models to analyze the capabilities of individual teachers, schools and educational systems for supervising teachers for improved instruction in school.

**KEY WORDS:** supervisor, model, instruction, school programme, techniques, and supervision

## **INTRODUCTION**

According to Segun (2004), the importance of school supervision in today's educational system demands far greater attention. People are becoming more conscious now than in the past about the importance of education in general and thus have generated interest in the daily operation of the school system in particular. Enlightened parents are now more curious to know the functions of the supervisors in our educational system and thus they ask questions from educators in order to satisfy their curiosity. They have been asking intriguing questions such as: What is the cause of the falling standard in our education? What are the functions of the school? Who are the supervisors? What do they do? Why do we supervise? Whose instructions should the teachers follow? What hope is there in future for the school system?

A supervisor is defined by the Britannica edition of the Oxford Dictionary as: "one who supervises". "A person who exercises general direction or control over a business; a body of workmen etc. One who inspects and directs the work of others."

Good's dictionary of education also defines supervision as all efforts of designated school officials towards providing leadership to all the teachers and other educational works in the improvement of instruction. It also involves the stimulation of professional growth and development of teachers; a selection and revision of educational objectives; materials of instruction, methods of teaching; and the evaluation of instruction.

Another group of people may perceive supervision as a way of advising; guiding; refreshing, encouraging; stimulation; improving; and over-seeing certain groups with the hope of seeking their cooperation in order for the supervisors to be successful in their tasks of supervision (Dodd, 2008). Others may view supervision as a way of persuading people to desist from applying wrong procedures in carrying out certain functions on their jobs, and at the same time try to emphasize the importance of good human relations in an organization.

The Ministry of Education, the Schools Board Members and Parents Teachers Association may strongly believe in efficiency and effectiveness as necessary ingredients for good supervision. Teachers working under these

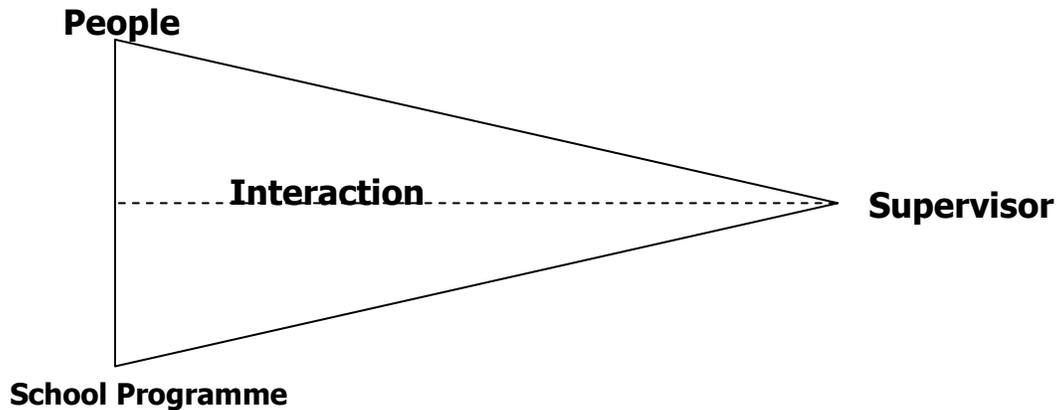
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bodies may perceive supervision as the enforcement of protocol. Whereas, to ordinary people supervision may be the only way of knowing the performances and efforts of their schools in providing what the people believe a school should provide. Supervision functions within two contexts; one concerns people and the

other concerns improvement of the school programme. The mediator between the people and programme is thus known as the supervisor, and he designs various methods in performing his functions in order to achieve the educational objectives of the institutions under his control.



**Source:** University Lecture note on Educational Supervision UNN by Prof. O. C. Nwana

**Figure 1:** The context of supervision

Figure 1 shows that the supervisor interacts with people who are stake holders and the school programme.

Throughout the several definitions given by various experts one thing seems to be commonly stressed which is an inescapable fact, that is interaction between and among people is of prime importance in the survival of any organization. As was once stated by Adesina (2001, PP. 266-268)

Whenever more than one person is involved in an activity, interaction is bound to take place in form of some of established relationships. In the same vein, since most rational activities occurring in human enterprise usually involve people, supervision is evident through interaction for the purpose of achieving the goal of the enterprise. Research has also revealed the fact that supervision exist primarily for the purpose of improving the instructional programme in the schools. Moreso, educators have come to recognize the inherent value of each person involved in the school system, so that

in the end, the full potential of all will be achieved.

#### **The Purpose of Supervision in Nigerian Schools**

Supervision is a function which can be performed in various degrees and in various forms in any school organization or private enterprise. With the new trends in the Nigerian educational system, it becomes obvious that effective supervision will be necessary in order to enhance the quality of instruction in schools. Already, there is pressure from various groups concerning what is to be taught and how it should be taught. Moreover, modern instructional materials are being introduced and used as teaching aids in the school instructional process. In order to cope with these demands, it seems that supervision has got an important role to play in deciding the nature and content of the curriculum, in selecting the school organizational patterns and leaving materials that will enhance educational growth and development of both the students and the teaching staff. There are various reasons for carrying out supervision in schools. One of the most crucial reasons is to ensure that each individual teacher within the school system has been performing the duties for

which he was scheduled. Another cogent reason is to improve the effectiveness of teachers so that they can contribute maximally to the attainment of the system's goals (Adesina, 2001). For a supervisor to achieve the above stated purpose it is necessary that the supervisor has a clear understanding of what he wants in the supervision and how he can go about achieving the purposes.

Other reasons for supervising schools are:

- To improve the incompetent teachers,
- To provide a guide for staff development,
- To know the effectiveness of classroom management by the teachers,
- To improve methods of teaching and learning,
- To create a physical, social and psychological climate or environment favourable to learning.
- To co-ordinate and integrate all educational efforts and materials which will ensure continuity.
- To enlist the co-operation of all staff members in serving their own needs and those of others to prevent teaching difficulties,
- To aid inspire, lead and develop that security which liberate the creative spirit of the teacher.
- To help teachers see more clearly the real ends of education and the special roles of the should in working towards these goals,
- To help the teachers to see the problems and needs of pupils and to help them solve these problems and provide as far as possible for most of their needs.
- To induct beginning teachers into this mainstream of the school system and into the teaching profession
- To assess the "tone" of the school and identify some of its most urgent needs (Nwaogu, 2006).

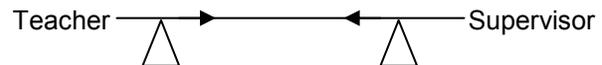
### The Format and Mechanics of Change

Since change is the outcome of learning it must ultimately relate to the activities of the classroom teacher if it is to be effective, the mechanic of change must be viewed in the context of his function in particular, change could be initiated through

1. Visits to other teacher(s)
2. Group action
  - Meetings
  - Conferences

- Demonstration
  - Formal course
  - Clinics
3. Impersonal Communication
- Memoranda
  - Newsletters
  - Teachers' Magazine/journals
  - Audio-visual media

If visiting other schools and teacher is called for, the effective supervisor will not only need to put the teacher at ease, he must demonstrate in a positive sense that the flow of experiences is two directional



In working as groups teachers need to be given the freedom to be creative, they need to be given responsibilities individually and a few need to assume leadership roles when and as necessary. Unless these three processes are made meaningful, improving instruction through group activities would be impossible.

Freedom to be creative is the bed-rock of any worthwhile change in school instruction. Communication with teachers through newsletters, magazines and memoranda is effective but non-dynamic. Communication media should therefore be used mainly as additional means to supplement visits and other interpersonal activities. Briggs, T. (2002). Improving instruction.

### Qualities of a Good Supervisor

A supervisor in his own capacity is regarded as an instructional leader. He is expected to perform functions and to fulfill the expectations, aspirations, needs and demands of the society in which he operates. For a supervisor to be successful; he needs to possess certain qualities that will put him over those under his supervision.

- He must be true to his own ideals at the same time flexible, loyal, respectful of the beliefs, right and dignity of those around him.
- In the same vein, he must be strong-willed, consistent and fair in his dealings with other people.

- He must be prepared for opposition but should handle opposition without malice.
- In the final analysis, a good supervisor must be sincere, firm, approachable, ready to help people solve their problems and maintain a relaxing atmosphere that will encourage, stimulate, and inspire people around him to work harmoniously.
- Finally, the supervisor must be up-to-date in his knowledge of psychology of learning and principles of education since such knowledge greatly influences the effectiveness of instruction (Hammock, T. & Robert, C. 2005).

### Model of Supervision

There are at present five proven models of supervision.

1. **The “skill training model”**  
This is a diagnostic and prescriptive approach to supervision in the application of this model and the supervisor begins by determining along with his teacher those elements of teaching behaviour that lead to effective teaching. Teachers skill could as well be developed in addition to that, by attending conferences, seminars, workshop, in- service/on-the-job training about help to perfect the teacher in the discharge of his duties.
2. **Counselling Model**  
In this model, the supervisor deals with the teaching outside the classroom. It draw not from the teachers classroom behaviour, but concerned about the teachers self-awareness. The model is bas ed on the assumption that;
  - a. Teaching is expression of the self
  - b. Psychological changes bring about changes in teaching behaviour
  - c. If one build a sense of personal security and confidence, it will have positive results in the classroom
  - d. The solution to teaching problems lies with the teacher and the supervision can help to improve a teacher's self-concept.

3. **Clinical Supervision**  
Through a careful systematic procedure, clinical supervision tries to take account of teacher behaviours and feelings in supportive, analytic and non-evaluative clinical supervision in eight-phases:
  - Establishing the teacher – supervisor clinical relation;
  - Planning the lesson with the teacher
  - Planning the strategy of observation
  - Observing instruction by collecting the performance data and effect data
  - Analyzing the teaching-learning processes
  - Planning the strategy of the conference
  - The conference
  - Renewed planning (Cogan, M. 2003).

4. **Group Model**  
This is an increasingly important strategy that requires skills in-group processes. This model is useful for two goals;
  - a) To promote a learning experience;
  - b) To accomplish a particular task

In the group setting, the participants will explore their own assumptions, become aware of the variety of approaches to an issue, explore alternative points of view and learn to respect others, while affirming their own individuality. In short, the supervisor invites to learn through communication with others.

5. **Intra-Mural Model**  
A recent innovation in the supervisory practices is the intra-mural model. Under this situation, a teacher supervises his colleague in a co-operative and supportive manner. This would be particularly helpful in Nigeria where the member of qualified teachers could therefore champion the course of improving the effectiveness of their colleagues. Above are the numerous approaches that we can use to arrive at the fruits of supervision in terms of the application of these models in Nigeria leaves much to be desired (Cogan, 2003).

### The Practice of Supervision in Nigeria

It has been noted earlier that the increasing school enrolment and explosion in

knowledge certainly call for new dimensions in the practice of supervision. Alternative models of supervision are required to withstand the

astronomical rise in Nigerian education since the last twenty-five years. For instance, study Table 1 appended below:

**Table 1:** Inspectors and number of schools expected to inspect for 2007/2008 session in some selected states of the federation

S/No.	States	Inspectors	Schools		
			Primary	Ratio	Post Primary
0	1	2	3	4	5
1.	Cross River	76	1,989	1:26	253
2.	Anambra	49	2,235	1:47	36
3.	Akwa Ibom	22	2,710	1:123	166
4.	Imo	53	2,855	1:54	60
5.	Abia	36	1,183	1:33	100
6.	Enugu	57	1,105	1:19	33
7.	Ebonyi	74	1,208	1:16	153
8.	Sokoto	31	3,167	1:102	53

**Source:** Computed from Report of sub-committee of the joint consultative committee, in the journal of the Federal Inspectorate of Education, 2008, p.10

From Table 1, it can be seen that the ratio of inspectors to primary schools vary from 16 to 123. Certainly these figures are too high for any effective supervision.

It has become axiomatic that no nation can rise above the level of its teachers. It is a fact too that poorly trained teachers will likely produce poor doctors, engineers, architects, lawyers as well as fellow teachers in the nation today and in future. From this stance, it may be noted that the future of the country's educational system is bleak considering the inadequate number of supervisors and the qualifications of teachers. Besides the shortage of supervising personnel, most supervisors in Nigeria are plagued with such problems as non-payment of allowances or touring advance. There is also the problem of lack of transportation especially in the rural areas. The personal factor has also hampered the practice of some of the discussed models in Nigeria. For instance, clinical supervision that requires a careful and systematic procedure cannot be attempted, nor the counselling model that requires extra technical competence. The teachers are yet to establish their competencies to carry out intra-mural model without being accused of intrusion or contravening some provisions of the law.

From the foregoing, it is evident that the practice of supervision, despite its necessity is still at its embryonic stage essentially due to lack of qualified and experience personnel to carryout the exercise.

In order to improve the practice generally, certain measures are necessary which

are clinical in nature. The principal and teachers should work together as a team and share ideas and problems of supervision. Teachers of the same subject area should feel at home to share problems, solution and teaching strategies as they occur. They also need to jointly experiment with and test new ideas with a view to establishing the intra-mural model of supervision.

## CONCLUSION

From the models discussed above it should be clear enough that every teacher, every school, every educational complex has capabilities for supervising teachers for improved school instruction. The importance of supervisory techniques for improving educational instruction in today's school cannot be taken for granted. The supervisor should device various techniques of supervision and apply the appropriate technique to any of the exercises in mind. In order to do this successfully, the supervisor must be purposeful in thought, motivating and productivity of other human beings, creative in nature, humanistic in approach and capable of seeing beyond the level of those whom he or she has to help.

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