

Supervision of Business Education Teachers: Issues and Problems

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Abstract: This paper is aimed at trying to explain who a business educator supervisor is and his functions. The research therefore, reveals the business education supervisor functions such as he corrects, directs, teaches, demonstrates, assisting in teaching techniques, conferring with teachers, assisting in processing of evaluating and examination and revising curriculum and courses of study, holding conferences or group meeting to discuss problems, attending local, state, regional and national professional conventions. It also reveals the problems of business education supervisors. Conclusion and recommendations were made.

Key words: Business education, conference, supervision, teachers and teaching techniques

INTRODUCTION

Supervision is the process whereby an authorized person whose nomenclature is thereafter called supervisor sees to the work of others to see whether it is in line with stated standard, and if not, he corrects, directs, teaches, demonstrates, assisting in teaching techniques, conferring with teachers, assisting in processing of evaluating and examination and revising curriculum and courses of study, holding conferences or group meeting to discuss problems, attending local, state, regional and national professional conventions etc.

Onoyase (1991) opined that supervision of instruction has undergone a process of evolution since the colonial time. In the 18th century, supervision was characterized by inspection for control and laymen carried this out. It was a common practice that once an educator becomes a supervisor or director of instruction he was referred to as inspector. The impression people has about supervision during this time was that the supervisor was responsible for making judgment about the teacher and not helping the teacher on how to teach in order to make the students learn well. The supervisor's recommendation to replace a teacher was carried out immediately.

Kathleen (2006) says defining supervision is not a simple task. The field has "a variety of sometimes incompatible definitions, a very low level of popular acceptance and many perplexing and challenging problems" While Anderson (1982) in Kathleen (2006) stated that "even the terminology of supervision causes discomfort and weakens allegiance". In some situations, supervision has been defined for legal and contractual purposes. For example, according to Hazi (1994) in

Kathleen (2006), New Jersey law defined a supervisor, as "any appropriately certified individual assigned with the responsibility for the direction and guidance of the work of teaching staff members." In that context, supervision is defined by the administrative code and is "legally synonymous with evaluation".

A broader definition comes from Daresh (2001) in Kathleen (2006) a general education author, who said "supervision is a process of overseeing the ability of people to meet the goals of the organization in which they work." He stresses that supervision should be seen as a process rather than as a professional role.

Goldsberry (1988) defines supervision as "an organizational responsibility and function focused upon the assessment and refinement of current practices". He also notes the hierarchical nature of supervision: "Because it is an organizational responsibility, it necessarily involves interaction between an organizational superordinate and a subordinate – meaning that legitimate authority for decision-making resides with the supervisor".

Gambrill and Stein (1983) say effective supervisors are those "who help their staff help their clients in a manner that maximizes positive consequences for all". In a similar way, effective business education teacher supervisors help business education teachers help students in order to maximize learning and positive attitudes. Almost everyone in business education teaching has folk wisdom about what it means to be a supervisor because so many of us have been supervised at some time. There are some specific definitions in our field, however. For instance, Wallace (1991) states that a supervisor is "anyone who has...the duty of monitoring

and improving the quality of teaching done by other colleagues in an educational situation”.

Gebhard (1990) says “language teacher supervision is an ongoing process of teacher education in which the supervisor observes what goes on in the teacher’s classroom with an eye toward the goal of improved instruction”.

However, teacher supervision is not just concerned with the creative and positive aspects of helping business education teachers achieve their full potential. If it were, the job title might be “teacher developer” instead. Supervision also includes less rewarding and rather unpleasant responsibilities, such as providing negative feedback, ensuring that teachers adhere to programme policy and even firing employees if the need arises.

According to Frederick (2009), the function of the supervisor is to help the worker to find himself, to discover his own best way of doing whatever has to be done. Supervision must therefore be sympathetic - working, thinking, feeling, with the person supervised. The supervisor should be enthusiastic - should radiate success in every motion and word - though not at all in the spirit of self-display, wholly to set an example and to encourage. The discouraged worker must have kindly instruction. Nothing must be done to destroy self-respect; cutting remarks must be reserved for the careless or supercilious worker. But the supervisor must have compelling power - something in him to make the corps of workers feel that their assignments are of tremendous importance.

Aiyepoku (1982) stated that since independence, there has been a conscious effort to change the unfortunate image of the inspector to a more favourable one. Nowadays, the inspectorate service tries to ensure that the inspector of education conducts himself as the teacher’s friend, adviser, guide professional colleague and consultant. Nowadays, the primary interest of the inspector is to help teachers to do their work better in order to improve the learning environment for students. The modern inspector does not visit schools merely to find fault and to criticize but to identify problems and help to solve the problems. He encourages teachers to write to him for advice and would either send back promptly a written reply or come in person. He encourages teachers not to window-dress for his visits but to let him see their problems in their natural setting. The modern inspector does not hold to sheer naked authority in his interaction with teachers. He wins the respect of teachers, not command it. He does not do anything that will shame the teachers before the students.

Rotimi (1969) in Onoyase (1991) says the word supervision can be interchangeably used as inspection and vice versa. And since in this country the word widely used when one refers to supervision is inspection I shall ask your indulgence to use it in that way.

Wiles and Lovell (1975) in Onoyase (1991) stated that supervision is an organizational behaviour system, which has the function of interaction with teaching behaviour system for the purpose of improving learning situation for children. Eye *et al.* (1971) in Onoyase (1991), opined that supervision is the phase of school administration which focuses primarily upon the achievement of the appropriate instructional expectations of educational system. Harris (1963) in Onoyase (1991) says, supervision is what school personnel does with adults and things for the purpose of maintaining or changing the operation of school in order to directly influence the attainment of the major instructional goals of the school. Onoyase perceived supervision as an action purposely directed towards the improvement of teaching-learning process.

According to Eferakeya and Onyene in Peretomode (1995) the school like any other organization has problems. The variety of problems which the school present can be identified through the process by which its functions are performed.

Instructional supervision is one of the process by which school administration attempts to achieve acceptable standards of performance and results. It is the tool of quality control in the school, system.

According to Nwankwo (1984) in Peretomode (1995), supervision can be divided into categories. These are instructional and personnel supervision, Instructional supervision has been defined as a set of activities, which are carried out with the purpose of making the teaching and learning purpose better for the learner. Personnel supervision on the other hand, deals with the set of activities, which are carried out by the supervisor with the basic aim of sensitizing mobilizing and monitoring staff in the school towards performing their duties ultimately in terms of achievement of the stated aims and objectives of the educational system.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Problems of school inspection and instructional supervision:

Poor Incentive: According to Peretomode (1995), the inspectors are dissatisfied (business education inspectors inclusive) with their jobs because of motivating factors are minimal. It is well known that teachers and their resource persons are poorly remunerated.

Communication in Supervision: For a business educator supervisor to carry out his/her duties effectively he/she must be able to communicate effectively. Hence, Peretomode (1995) stated that communication is an important factor in human relations. Without communication, meaningful relationships would not be possible, and without relationships among people,

communication will not be necessary. Communication is the process of transmitting and imparting information from a sender to a receiver. It is a process of transmitting meanings from sender to receiver. For an effective communication to occur, the receiver must get the information as the sender intended.

The Supervisor as a Helper and Facilitator: The earliest form of supervision was described as inspection. Their inspectors to determine whether they were doing the job visited teachers. The reports of such visits were used to determine the teachers' promotion or retention. There was no effort to improve the teachers' knowledge or the teaching. Supervision was introduced to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

Basis for Supervision:

- Supervision is geared towards the improvement of the teaching/learning situation for the benefit of both the teachers and the learners.
- Supervision helps in the identification of areas of strength of teachers, while weakness areas are developed, weaknesses are further identified and the teachers are helped in an understanding manner to overcome them.
- Supervision is democratically conducted so as to give recognition to the teachers and create a cordial working atmosphere based on good human relations.
- Supervision is tailored towards ensuring that the teacher follows the general guidelines as provided in the curriculum.

There are follow-up activities that should be directed at the improvement of identified areas of teacher's weakness.

Supervision helps the teachers in terms of self-discovery particularly in the area of improvisation and the use of modern teaching aids as a basis for improving teaching strategies; supervisors help to introduce teachers to a variety of audio and visual materials that help to facilitate good teaching.

Duties of a Supervisor: According to Aderounmu and Ehiamentor (1985), the specific duties of a supervisor include some of the following

Planning: To ensure that the aims of supervision are attained, planning principles have to be applied to the supervision exercise from the very beginning. Planning principles involve the articulation of objectives, selecting of the best strategies, mapping out of policies, programmes and procedures that would best help in achieving the stated objectives. As it should be planned with the in service development of teachers in mind, provision of adequate teaching materials and help the

students, teachers, administrators and indeed the entire school system to solve identified problems.

Staffing: Through the process of supervision, staff vacancies in terms of grades and disciplines, can be identified in accordance with the organizational structure of the school. Subsequently as a follow up activity, steps should be taken to fill such identified vacancies.

Co-ordination: The supervisor is expected to co-ordinate the efforts of all participants and ensure that by so doing, decision-making becomes a collective responsibility.

Observation: Management, staff and students are observed at work during a typical supervision session. In an attempt to help improve observed habits and standards, the supervisor through consultation, offer advice to the participants.

Assessment: Through the supervision process, a comprehensive list of people and materials at work are assessed in their natural states. This is important when it is remembered that there are still a number of untrained teachers within the school system. To help in the improvement of some identified shortcomings, activities such as microteaching, demonstration teaching, seminars and workshops can be organized.

Differences between Inspection and Supervision: There exist some differences between inspection and supervision. According to Nwankwo (1984) the aim of the traditional inspection is to find reasons for closing, opening or retaining a school. Inspection is teacher and principal centered. The fundamental aim is to serve the purpose of witch hunting. Inspection rigidly stresses strict compliance to set down rules and regulations, irrespective of peculiar local conditions, which may make some of the set down regulations not workable. Inspections were normally not thorough because they were usually directed at specific occasional issues such as investigating cases of fraud. Inspectors usually demand respect and intimidate the teachers and students, and even school heads. One person who was a jack of all trade usually conducted inspection by the nature of work that was done. Inspection reports were usually negative in tone and not written immediately after the inspection. This led to situations where there were no follow up activities.

While the aim of the supervision is to help the teachers and students to carry out the teaching/learning process more effectively and make it more interesting.

Supervision is usually concerned with the general structure of the school. It deals with anything from the school curriculum to the welfare of students and teachers. It looks at the management variables such as plans, policies and programmes and then in conjunction with the other participants, works out a mutually accepted formula

for supervision after considering all the prevailing conditions in the school and immediate environment.

Supervision usually is well planned and not reserved for investigating occasional problems. The supervisor earned respect by sharing his expertise and consideration on matters that were encountered. Supervision was usually teamwork that was characterized by division of labour, and expert advice would be sort and obtained by the teachers and students. Supervision reports are usually discussed with the teacher and follow up activities are normally commenced at the earliest possible time.

Inspection is looking closely at something or someone, usually to detect faults or problems, with a view to giving them an assessment of some kind. For example, the customs officers inspect the goods going through customs - the officers look all over/through the goods to see if anything is wrong with them. If nothing is wrong, they are passed as "in order" or a similar term, indicating that the inspection has been carried out and everything is OK. Basically this is what all inspectors do, whether they are looking at food safety, school standards or whatever.

Supervision, on the other hand, really means "looking from above." If you supervise someone/ something, you keep a general eye on their activities and usually help to direct them. As an employee, if you work under supervision, it means that your line manager tells you what to do, and is usually around to check that you are working well; but if your work is inspected, it means that he/she takes what you have done and examines it very closely, looking for faults.

Role of School Supervision and District Office:

According to Trinidad and Tobago (2009) each school is part of an educational district and falls under the direct control of the School Supervisor III of the district. The Division of School Supervision has a major responsibility for ensuring school effectiveness in the education sector. It consists of a head office and seven (7) sub-units "the educational districts. The Tobago House of Assembly is responsible for the educational district of Tobago. The Division of School Supervision is the key player in all policies and initiatives set out by The Ministry of Education aimed at reforming and the strengthening the education system.

The Director of School Supervision, who manages a cadre of school supervisors and other support staff, heads the division. His specific responsibility is to ensure the efficient and effective administration of schools at the early childhood, primary, and the secondary levels. In the present environment of educational reform, the Division of School Supervision is committed to meet the challenges by making a genuine effort to plan for change and be part of a collaborative team in the proposed entity called the Quality Delivery Unit that is responsible for the quality assurance process within the Ministry of Education.

The Division of School Supervision must, of necessity, work collaboratively with four agencies that contributes to the welfare of students. These include;

- The Teaching Service Commission
- Denominational Boards-in particular their Secretaries and Managers
- Principals
- Teachers
- Parents
- Other Ministries of Government e.g. Health, Works and Transport
- The representatives of Teachers' Association
- Members of the religious community
- Members of the business community

The division must be aware of the roles of these various bodies and the authority with which some of them have been entrusted over time. They must also be sensitive to situations where roles seem to overlap and must use of its expertise and experience to resolve or avert potential areas of conflict. The school supervisor must be an agent of guidance, conciliation and harmony – not one who generates conflicts, suspicion or anxiety. Supervisors and Principals must engage in building capacity in leadership both at the district and school level. This requires the development of an action plan that is monitored and evaluated by those who are knowledgeable and promote the same vision and mission for the education system. The Supervisor is responsible for:

- Ensuring the implementation of the policies of the Ministry of Education
- The supervision and inspection of the programme of education required by the Curriculum
- Ensuring that school premises, property and stock are protected against improper use
- The submission of reports on matters relating to the discipline of teachers
- The conduct and the supervision of courses of induction and training for untrained teachers in service as well as courses for other teachers
- The observance of the Education Act and the Regulations pertaining to the conduct of schools
- Arranging for the approval of such special leave to teachers that may be granted them in accordance with the Regulation
- Arranging for the approval of school holidays that may be granted them in accordance with the Regulation
- Considering, accessing and recommending the performance appraisal reports for all teaching staff – those of Vice-Principals and Senior teachers and completing those for Principals
- Supervising the due performance of managers/principles

- Furnishing such returns as may be prescribed or required at any time by the Minister
- Dealing with all other matters of organization, management and administration as may be referred to him/her by the Minister e.g. Student Transports, Administration of Book Grants
- Cooperating with appropriate authorities in the exercise of organizing schemes
- Arbitrating in issues concerning students
- Making recommendations to the Minister of Education for the suspension and expulsion of students
- Ensuring the attendance at school of children of compulsory school age.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the business educator supervisor should see his role as that of creating conditions that can motivate teachers to enhance his instructional effectiveness. This can be achieved by appealing to their social needs. An integrative approach that makes the teacher feel strongly attached and committed to the school can blossom an interpersonal relationship that is characterized by trust, mutuality of interest and handwork. These are the characteristics that are germane to the realization of the goal of instructional supervision.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The issues and problems that were identified in this research can serve as a foundational basis for future developmental efforts as well as evaluation criteria. By addressing the issues and problems, the leadership of business educators can proactively establish specific task force action groups to meet these challenges, strategically marshalling their use of human and physical resources. Based on these, the following recommendations are put forward:

- There should be a uniform curriculum for all Nigerian universities offering business education programme for ease supervision.
- Greater emphasis should be placed on the development of the knowledge base for the business educators' supervisors.
- The relationship between a business educator supervisor and business education teachers should not be that of servant and master but a learning situation where both partners contribute.

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