

***Promoting Secondary School Education for Global Competitiveness: Implications for Implementing Collaborative Teaching Strategies***

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**Abstract**

*Education received by students at secondary schools in Nigeria should enable them to competently compete with their counterparts worldwide. Quite often, experts in education, parents and government are worried on the low knowledge, skill and character displayed by the secondary school leavers these days. These adjudge their credibility in global competition. Every student is a product of teaching and learning activities undergone in school. Against this rationale, this paper concentrates on promoting secondary school education for global competitiveness and espouses its implications for implementing collaborative teaching strategies. Specifically, the paper examined brief history of secondary education in Nigeria, aims of secondary education in Nigeria, collaborative teaching strategy, relevance of collaborative teaching strategies, general guidelines for effective implementation of collaborative teaching strategies and specific collaborative teaching strategies. It was concluded that considering the fact that the teaching and learning quality of a nation determine its product, it is imperative for the secondary school teachers to thoroughly imbibe the collaborative teaching strategies and do less of the traditional teaching approach. It was recommended, among others, that the Government should organize workshop for secondary school teachers and their principal on application of collaborative teaching strategy.*

**Keywords:** Secondary, education, global, competitiveness, teaching, collaborative, strategies

## **Introduction**

The need to enhance the secondary school students' knowledge and skill to be globally fit to compete with their counterparts worldwide in this rapidly complex world has attracted the interests of experts in the field of education. In most countries of the world, secondary school serves as the recruitment ground for the tertiary institutions and manpower needs of the nation (Mbayuav, 2019). It is worrisome to note that secondary education in Nigeria is riddled with crises of various dimensions and magnitude, all of which combine to suggest that the system is at a crossroad (Ajayi, 2002; Omoregi, 2005). The large proportion of the products of today's secondary school system in Nigeria can neither productively live in the society nor are well equipped with the required knowledge, skills and character to further their education without illicit influence. Omoregie (2005) lamenting on the Nigerian secondary school products, stated that they are less creative, weak in divergent thinking, hardly respect good reasoning, views and feelings of others. In other words, they have no iota of dignity of labour except for the things that will give them quick money. Secondary school education can never be an instrument par excellence for achieving national development and realizing enhanced secondary school education for global competitiveness, if effective strategy like collaborative strategy is not utilized.

## **Brief history of secondary school education in Nigeria**

On June 6, 1859, The Church Missionary Society founded the first secondary (high) school in Lagos. The school was called CMS Grammar School. The school was modeled after the CMS Grammar School in Freetown, Sierra Leone. The school is even older than the British Colony of Lagos which was established 2 years later. CMS Grammar School, Lagos started with just six students who were all boarders, housed in a building on Broad street, Lagos. The subject taught included English, Logic, Greek, Arithmetic, Geometry, Geography, History, Bible Knowledge and Latin (Adefule, 2019). This was followed by Methodist High School Lagos founded on March 14, 1878. It is interesting to note that the first Government Secondary school, Kings College Lagos was established in 1927 (Nyamibo, 2006). Today there are many schools found by private, community, faith-based institutions and the government at various levels. The management of these schools has been in the hands of the government, private individuals and groups (Mbayuav, 2019).

## **Aims of secondary education in Nigeria**

The Federal Republic of Nigeria (2013) has clearly spelt out the aims and objectives of secondary education in the country to include preparation for:

(a) Useful living within the society; and

(b) Higher education

In specific terms secondary education shall

(a) Provide all primary school leavers with the opportunity for education of a higher level, irrespective of sex, social status, religious or ethnic background.

- (b) Offer diversified curriculum to cater for the differences in talents, opportunities and future roles,
- (c) Provide trained manpower in applied science, technology and commerce at sub professional grades,
- (d) Develop and promote Nigerian languages, art and culture in the context of world's cultural heritage,
- (e) Inspire students with a desire for self improvement and achievement of excellence,
- (f) Foster national unity with an emphasis on the common ties that unite us in our diversity,
- (g) Raise a generation of people who can think for themselves, respect the views and feeling of others, respect the dignity of labour, appreciate those values specified under our broad national goals and live as good citizens;
- (h) Provide technical knowledge and vocational skills necessary for agricultural, industrial, commercial and economic development.

The above stated aims and objectives of secondary education give a sense of direction as to what secondary education should be in Nigeria. There is no doubt that these objectives are likely achieved. For instance, secondary schools have remained the recruitment grounds for tertiary institutions in Nigeria while absorbing the end products of the primary education. What is alarming is the rate and quality of the products produced nowadays when compared and contrasted with the yesteryears. It appears that secondary schools do not meet up with the societal demand in terms of quality. According to Mbayuav (2019), the products of secondary schools today are of poor quality. They do not meet up with the demand of the society, not to talk of competing globally. One of the problems experienced in secondary education is decrease in teachers' effectiveness. Adegbile and Adeyemi (2008) point out that there is widespread shortage of effective teachers in secondary schools. This factor has been found to hinder the performance of learners and attainment of quality by secondary schools students. Anderson (2004) claimed that education systems need to establish more systematic approaches to monitoring teacher effectiveness.

It is paramount to state that the quality and relevance of education largely depends on a great deal of what teachers do with learners (Adegbile & Adeyemi, 2008). It is unfortunate that over the years, the secondary schools teacher's teaching effectiveness in Nigeria has dropped drastically due to their low exposure, not to talk of the use of the latest teaching strategy. This no doubt has been drawing back the quality of education received by the students at this level and rendering them less competitive with their peers in the larger world. A growing body of evidence (Mcberr, 2000), suggests that secondary schools can make a great difference in terms of students' achievement, and a substantial portion of that difference is attributable to effective teaching. Specifically, differential increase in teachers' effectiveness is a strong determinant of differences in

students' learning, far outweighing the effects of differences in class size and class heterogeneity (Darling-Hammond, 2000). Students who are assigned to one ineffective teacher after another, have significantly lower achievement and learning than those who are assigned to a sequence of highly effective teachers (Sanders & Rivers, 1996). This calls for urgent attention by utilizing appropriate strategy which can promote secondary school education such as collaborative teaching strategy.

### **Theoretical Review**

This article is based on the theory of social constructivism. The theory holds that if collaborative teaching is effectively implemented by the teachers in the classroom, teachers would be able to reinforce teaching activities. Powell and Kalina (2009) explained that constructivism, or cognitive constructivism, was construed by Piaget, who claimed that “humans cannot be given information, which they immediately understand and use; instead, humans must construct their own knowledge” (p. 242). Years later, Vygotsky built upon Piaget's theory in creating social constructivism (Powell & Kalina). Vygotsky theorized that “ideas are constructed through interaction with the teacher and other students” (Powell & Kalina, 2009, p. 241).

The two theories of cognitive constructivism and social constructivism were the theories adapted in this study in the sense that, the duo emphasized that learners develop knowledge intrinsically as a result of the viable social interactions they have with others. The beauty of learning is realizable when both the learners and teachers are active in the processes. Aside that, through collaborative teaching, the learners will receive learning from different teachers and that will surely enhance their thinking, understanding and retention of the learning contents for a long time.

### **Collaborative Strategy: Definition and global trend**

Collaboration has become a twenty-first-century trend. The need in the society to think and work together on issues of critical concern has increased (Austin, 2000). Efforts in solving problem are now shifting from the individual to group work based strategy (Leonard & Leonard, 2001). In education, collaboration is seen as an opportunity for school renewal (National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, 2000). Through collaborative strategy, an opportunity is created to involve many individual teachers in solving complex educational problems whereby teachers are united in improving teaching by bringing up different ideas based on the observed learning needs of the students, teaching contents, behavioural objective, required resources and instructional needs.

Gurgur and Uzuner (2010) described collaborative teaching as the sharing of planning, teaching and assessing responsibilities by two or more teachers in the same classroom environment. Laying more emphasis, Little and Dieker (2009) stated that collaborated teachers work to meet the instructional needs of all students irrespective of the students'

special learning needs. Little and Dieker continued by explaining that a true co-teaching situation is one which both teachers are equally involved in all the curricular and non-curricular aspects of running a classroom including planning and delivering instruction, assessment, and classroom management.

Many countries of the world today are reforming their education systems to provide their citizens with knowledge and skills that enable them to engage actively in the societies, and dynamic knowledge-based economies which could make them sound and cope in any part of the world they found themselves (Riley, 2004). Rather than shifting emphasis onto standardized knowledge of contents and mastery of routine skills, many of the advanced educational systems are focusing on flexibility, creativity and problem solving through modern methods of teaching, such as collaborative teaching that enhances multilateral clusters approach. The widespread approach of increasing external pressure on teachers and students in order to improve the quality and effectiveness of education has been proved to be unsustainable (Fullan, 2005; Hargreaves & Fink, 2005). As a reaction to this, ministries in China, Japan, Singapore and in the European Union are developing more flexible forms of curriculum, introducing authentic forms of assessment and accountability, and supporting teachers to work together to find alternative instructional approaches that promote learning of essential knowledge and skills instead of focusing on individualized single institutions, but to adopt collaborative strategy (Mbayuav, 2019).

### **Relevance of collaborative teaching strategies**

Research has suggested that collaborative teaching can be an effective medium to deliver special education services. Villa and Thousand (2005) stated that delivering the twenty-first century curriculum requires teachers to try new ways of teaching like cooperative group learning, differentiated instruction, active student-centered learning, detracting, and focusing on social skills (Bingham, 2011). Co-teaching helps teachers to expand their instructional approaches and increase opportunities for students' success. It allows for greater student's participation, increases student's engagement, and makes it easier for teachers to facilitate many of the instructional strategies listed above. Besides providing more instructional options and increasing engagement for all students, co-teaching promises to “reduce the stigma for students with difficulties as the strategy helps cater for their needs and enhance their effective learning acquisition (Cook & Friend, 1995).

### **General guidelines for effectively implementing collaborative teaching strategies**

To lead an effective collaborative teaching programme, teachers should be willing to take the following two steps: frequently communicate with teaching partner and differentiate instruction based upon students' needs, learning styles, and interests. Perhaps the single most often cited key to establishing an effective co-teaching programme is frequent communication and planning. Sileo and Garderen (2010)

insisted that co-teaching requires a considerable amount of planning; it is suggested that teachers should plan together, using the same plan book, at least twice a week. Hammeken (2000) suggested that co-teaching partners should schedule time to meet with each other and plan daily. When they meet, the two should bring each of their individual perspectives together to develop a plan that will benefit all students. Murawski and Dieker (2004) contended that frequent collaborative planning, although ideal, is not always possible due to large workloads, scheduling, and other professional responsibilities. Still, because lack of common planning often leads to poor collaborative teaching practices, co-teaching partners should endeavour to plan together as often as possible (Gurgur & Uzuner, 2010).

### **Specific collaborative teaching strategies**

The five most commonly used collaborative models are as follow: one teaching and one observing or assisting, station teaching, parallel teaching, alternative teaching, and team teaching (Gurgur & Uzuner, 2010; Treahy & Gurganus, 2010). Most teachers begin their career as collaborative teachers by using the one teach, one observe or assist model. As they become more comfortable with co-teaching, teachers begin integrating other models into their co-teaching repertoire, sometimes using two to three structures within a single lesson. Depending upon the age of the students and the subject matter being taught, each strategy has a place and a purpose in the classroom (Cook & Friend, 1995).

The first two strategies that new co-teachers most often develop are one teach and one observe. Thousand, Villa and Nevin (2006) called these strategies “supportive teaching (p. 243).” When following this model, one teacher leads the class while the other teacher observes specific students or provides independent support. Supportive teaching is useful for collecting data, monitoring students' behaviour, writing and evaluating, checking for individual student's understanding, providing individual instruction etc (Sileo & Garderen, 2010).

Station teaching is co-teaching model in which teachers divide the students into two or more groups. Each teacher teaches his or her part of the material to every group of students. When using this method, teachers often create an independent station along with the two teacher stations (Cook & Friend, 1995). Cook and Friend also noted that either the teachers or the students can rotate. Thousand et al. (2006) warned that teachers using this model should be careful not to create a “special class within a class by routinely grouping the same students in the same group with the same co-teacher (p. 244).” This, they warned, could stigmatize certain students, particularly if the special needs students are always placed in the same group. Instead, the students should be grouped heterogeneously and rotated among the co-teachers.

Alternative teaching is another model. According to Sileo and Garderen (2010), alternative teaching involves “one teacher [teaching] a small group of three to eight

students while the other teacher teaches the whole class (p. 16).” Alternative teaching benefits students by providing small groups with intense and individualized instruction in a specific area (Sileo & Garderen, 2010). After observing this particular benefit, Treahy and Gurganus (2010) claimed that mathematics content is particularly conducive to alternative teaching.

Team teaching is a structure which involves both teachers teaching the entire class simultaneously. The teachers may alternate teaching or one may teach while the other teacher models questioning or note taking techniques. The team teaching model provides teachers with the opportunity to teach the areas of the contents with which they feel more competent (Thousand et al., 2006). Allowing teachers to teach to their strengths in this manner benefits both the students and the teachers. Teachers tend to use the team teaching model only after they are very comfortable with each other and the idea of co-teaching in general.

### **Conclusion**

Secondary school leavers in Nigeria do not only seek admission within Nigerian universities and to other universities overseas but also seek and get job overseas using their secondary school certificate. Well, where the certificate is less required, at least, the knowledge, skills and attitude so acquired by the individual while in secondary school would be exhibited and used by the secondary school certificate holder. A viable, effective and efficient knowledge and skill displayed by the person would be a determinant of the quality of the secondary school education received by the person. The unproductively substandard realized in secondary school leavers these days, is sympathetic and weighing them makes one to doubt their viability for the global competitiveness. For the fact that the teaching and learning quality of a nation determine its product, it is imperative for the secondary school teachers to thoroughly imbibe the collaborative teaching strategies and do less of the traditional teaching approach.

### **Recommendations**

From what has been discussed so far, it is necessary to make recommendations for the effective implementation of collaborative teaching strategies in order to enhance secondary education for global competitiveness. Therefore, the following recommendations are made:

1. Government should as a matter of urgency, organize workshops for secondary school teachers and their principals on application of collaborative teaching strategies in order to enhance secondary education for global competitiveness. At this workshop, experts in the field of education should be invited to expose the teachers and their principals to the contents of collaborative teaching strategies.
2. The secondary school administrators should also embark on periodic supervision and monitoring of the teachers to ensure the success of collaborative teaching programme. One of the most significant administrative measures is a stress on the importance of communication between co-teaching partners.

3. The Government through the ministry of education should be making impromptu visit to various secondary schools to ensure the effective use of collaborative teaching strategy.

4. Thorough implementation of collaborative teaching strategy would be threatened if adequately equipped classrooms are not provided. Hence, government should build more classrooms, renovate and equip the existing classrooms to world-class standard.

5. Specialized teachers in special education, guidance and counselling etc should be employed in secondary schools because their expertise is important and required consistently to enhance an effective collaborative teaching strategy.

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