

## Teaching For Engagement: A Practice to Foster Lessons in the Central Senatorial District of Cross River State, Nigeria



Ewa, Gegbazi Moses<sup>1</sup>, Abutiang, Peter Ukpanukpong<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup>Department of Primary Education, School of Early Childhood Care and Primary Education Cross River State College of Education, Akamkpa

**ABSTRACT:** Teaching for engagement is an innovative strategy that places the learner at the fore of education. It is an approach which promotes active learning among children in primary schools. A multi-site case study was undertaken to explore the ways teachers conducted teaching for engagement to affect classroom lessons in three state primary schools located in Abi, Ikom and Boki Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Cross River State, Nigeria. Three (3) research questions were posed for the study. Six (6) teachers were selected from three primary schools across these LGAs for the study. Based on the social inclusion theory data was analyzed thematically. Findings were based on stated research questions and indicate that practitioner's choice of instructional strategy and promotion of learner voice affect engagement at lesson; huge workload on teachers and poor knowledge of pedagogy hinder engagement. It was recommended that emphasis should be on learner-centredness during classroom instruction, and that competent teachers have to be recruited to work in primary schools within the context.

**KEYWORDS:** teaching for engagement, teachers, teaching, participation, classroom lessons.

### INTRODUCTION

Teaching generates significant results insofar as it is engaging. Classroom instruction often presents a situation where a teacher meets the learner for educational purposes. The interaction which ensues from such a meeting usually creates a lopsided relationship. A situation which the teacher assumes the role of or is being regarded as 'all-knowing' is likely to keep the pupil at the sideline of the learning process, and the lesson unexciting. Modern teaching practices nonetheless are moving away from passivity to rather foster classroom environment where opportunity for learner participation abounds. It is an approach for provisioning education whereby teaching is being performed in ways that take cognizance of the value of pupils' contributions in enhancing knowledge generation and dissemination. By building partnerships with learners indicates that not only does the teacher have confidence and trust on pupils to co-create knowledge; he or she believes that the learner is also able to facilitate its impartation. Nowadays human curiosity motivates children to pursue measures that can assist them prevent practices that cause them to become compliant to the dictates of a teacher in the classroom. Such a change in behaviour probably alters the instructional procedure from being a lone affair to one that encourages mutual exchanges between the teacher and learner.

The task of teaching is quite an interesting one that can produce memorable experiences in the learners. Directed teaching cannot be said to have a connection to substantial positive experiences in classroom lessons. However, quite a number of teachers make it look arduous perhaps because they do not have the skills to share their responsibilities with pupils. Long held beliefs that question the competence and capacity of a child have continued to undermine the role of the pupil in improving school programmes. Educators do not seem to overcome diffidence regarding the quality of a child's inputs to alleviate any difficulties that may arise during the implementation of a lesson.

Much has been learnt over the past twenty years about engagement in the field of education. The rise in popularity of the concept connects its potentials to address educational challenges such as dictatorial teaching, poor learning outcomes, low interest, low achievement, school dropout, passivity in class activities among pupils and alienation (Chapman, Laird, Ifill & KewalRamani, 2011; Fredricks, 2015). In recent times engagement has achieved prominence in research and acceptance in education policy as an effective teaching approach for learner performance to thrive in school. Researchers such as Willms (2003), Fredrick, Blumenfeld & Paris (2004), Taylor and Parsons (2011), Power, Rhys, Taylor & Waldron (2018), Fielding (2004, 2008, 2012) and Ewa (2019) have

## **Teaching For Engagement: A Practice to Foster Lessons in the Central Senatorial District of Cross River State, Nigeria**

made strong propositions in their work in favour of the concept. Although semantic variations might occur in the views of these researchers about the issue, there is however a consensus among them. Such an agreement about the term is much akin to the perspective of Trowler (2010) who conceptualised the concept as providing the chance for children to be active and make efforts to contribute at lessons.

Also, engagement has legitimacy in education. As enshrined in the national policy on education (NPE), the Federal Government of Nigeria (2013) declares that teaching and learning in the primary school shall be participatory and child centred. This national policy statement for primary education draws from the article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child that states: “the child has the right to express his or her opinion freely and to have that opinion taken into account in any matter, including education, or procedure affecting the child” (United Nations Centre for Human Rights/UNICEF, 1990, pp. 3-12). Teaching for engagement places the pupil on the centre stage. Emphasis is on ensuring learner performance thrives. Teachers who support this practice are mindful about what they do, what do pupils do and how they do it to create spaces for co-operation to develop ideas and share knowledge for mutual benefit. Gavala and Flett (2005) and Johnson, Soldner, Leonard, Alvarez, Inkelas, Rowan-Kenyon & Longerbeam (2007) are of the view that engaging teachers are welcoming, support learning, facilitate collaboration, recognise and respect the diversity among children. Engaged pupils on the other hand often demonstrate readiness to learn, competency, autonomy and enjoy learning. Engagement mediates instruction and the reaction towards instruction by pupils, aimed at ensuring learning (Eccles, 2016).

It is implicit that motivation, interest, curiosity are vital to pupil engagement. It suggests that a lack of these factors or insufficiency of them results in low engagement or simply disengagement of the children in lessons in the classroom. Learner engagement takes place on a continuum from disengaged to engaged and vice versa (Bryson and Hand, 2007). Both disengagement and engagement of children in lessons occur in opposite directions. Failures on the part of such factors as family, teachers, school environment and education policy to make provisions for engagement are likely to weaken enthusiasm in children to learn. Lower performance, poor achievement, isolation, boredom, dissatisfaction with learning and dropout are often the final results of disengagement among school children (Willms, 2000).

Teaching for engagement is a participation procedure where teachers and pupils implement classroom lessons co-operatively to benefit the learner. Teaching for engagement recognises the child as having the agency to work with educators to co-create and share knowledge in classroom settings. It implies that didactic teaching practices promotes passive learning and is ineffective children’s education. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and national governments including Nigeria, in recognition of the importance of juvenile education, legitimised engagement as a strategy to encourage the active participation of children in their local primary schools.

Educational practices have advanced. Prevalent practices in education allow the teachers to orchestrate virtually all activities in the classroom while pupils are expected to be compliant. New teaching strategies have emerged to ensure the learner takes more responsibility for what he is learning in the classroom and how he is learning it. Engagement is the latest approach whereby pupils are given the opportunity to be active during lessons for their academic performances to thrive. It is referred to as teaching for engagement. It acknowledges the fact that classroom programmes do not involve teachers alone. Besides, it is in realization of the fact that teachers are not omniscient. Pupils co-partner with teachers to co-create knowledge, share knowledge and implement lessons in ways that make teaching and learning effective and enjoyable. This connects the social inclusion (World Bank, 2013; Woodcock, 2013) postulation which supports the creation of opportunities for collaboration to enable children work with teachers to enhance teaching and learning.

In spite of these, teacher perceptions culturally about childhood tend to affect the opportunities they provide children to engage in classroom lessons in schools located in the central senatorial district of Cross River State, Nigeria. The understanding of teaching engagement among teachers seems to influence teachers’ behaviours in relation to their abilities to ensure children are engaged during classroom instruction within the context. These tend to affect learning among the children, their motivation towards creativity, to make contributions at lessons, to complete tasks, and even to attend school regularly.

### **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The study explored the ways teachers conducted teaching for engagement to affect classroom lessons in three state primary schools located in Abi, Ikom and Boki local government areas of Cross River State, Nigeria. In specific terms, the study examined:

1. How practitioners conduct teaching for engagement to affect classroom lessons in primary schools;
2. The constraints to teaching for engagement during classroom lessons in primary schools;
3. Available measures to address the barriers to teaching for engagement among teachers to affect classroom lessons in primary schools.

# Teaching For Engagement: A Practice to Foster Lessons in the Central Senatorial District of Cross River State, Nigeria

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research will address the following questions:

1. How do practitioners conduct teaching for engagement to affect classroom lessons in primary schools?
2. What are the constraints to teaching for engagement during classroom lessons in primary schools?
3. What measures are available to address the constraints to teaching for engagement among these teachers to affect classroom lessons?

## RESEARCH METHODS

Since the research is focused on exploration, the qualitative research (Creswell, 2003) was employed. It allowed the conduct of real-world research and use of textual data so as to understand the overall issue under research from the perspective of the teachers and researchers. There tends to be unsubstantial application of qualitative methodologies, as an aspect of empirical procedures, in the field of Education in Nigeria. The present research helped to fill in the gap. In consequence, the quantitative method favouring the application of mathematical models in data collection and analysis is hereby jettisoned as it is not helpful herein. In addition, the quantitative research method is becoming an outmoded methodology in educational research, thus the paradigm is shifting today to the qualitative model.

## RESEARCH DESIGN

The multi-site case study (Creswell, 2003) was adopted for the study. This aligned with the qualitative direction of this study. It enabled the explanation and description of research contexts in details. Moreover, it made the researcher to be immersed in the culture of the participants in order to collect rich data. As such, other research designs that focus on quantification e.g. survey, ex-post facto etc are jettisoned.

## AREA OF STUDY

The study took place in public primary schools in three LGAs in the central senatorial district of Cross River State, namely, Abi, Ikom and Boki. These councils are among the six (6) LGAs that make up the senatorial districts in the state. These geographical locations are predominantly rural except for Ikom town that is suburban. Many public primary schools are established across these places. Teachers, including males and females, work in these schools. A considerable number of these teachers have the Nigerian Certificate of Education (NCE) as the minimum educational qualification according to the education policy of Nigeria. They include both young and veteran teachers who have spent from 3 to 30 years in service.

## POPULATION

Over 300 teachers, including males and females, served in about sixty primary schools sited in these places (Cross River State Universal Basic Education Board, 2023).

## SAMPLING THE TEACHERS AND THE SAMPLE

Male and female teachers across the schools were purposely recruited (Creswell, 2003) to participate in the study. Participants were drawn in such a way that ensured effective management of data. The sample included teachers aged from 25 to 50 years who have spent 3 and 10 years in service so that the research can benefit from their various experiences in regard to the overall issue under inquiry. Six (6) teachers from three primary schools, one each in Abi, Ikom and Boki constituted the sample size. Participants included one male and female educator per school. The sampling procedure allowed for a targeted, easy, equal selection of participants and also facilitated selection of teachers who could provide rich data to support the study.

## PILOT STUDY

A pilot study was conducted to trial the methods. This pilot study is to gauge how appropriate the methods are for the primary study. Six teachers, including three males and three females, in one public primary school outside the research area participated. The researcher had to step out from the research site to conduct the pilot study so as to prevent bias. Outcomes of the pilot study indicated that the participant observation and semi-structured interview were suitable for use in the main research.

## COLLECTING THE DATA

Lessons learnt from the pilot study led to the jettisoning of the observational method. Poor researcher skill, limited time and other extraneous issues discouraged the use of observation to generate data. Only the semi structured interviews (Robson, 20005; Asim, Idaka & Eni, 2017) were consequently deployed for that purpose. It enabled the researcher to ask pre-decided questions using an

## Teaching For Engagement: A Practice to Foster Lessons in the Central Senatorial District of Cross River State, Nigeria

interview schedule. Participants were interviewed in turns in their schools. Meetings for interview were agreed upon between the inquirer and interviewees ahead of time. Interviews were conducted on the teachers during their free periods so as not to interrupt their classroom programmes.

### DATA ANALYSIS

The case schools constituted the units of analysis (Robson, 2005; Stake, 2006). Data that emanated from the semi-structured interviews were transcribed and organised into meaningful themes in accordance with the three research questions stated above. The audio recorder used to record the interviews was listened to repeatedly to familiarise with data and code them thereafter. Data was coded and re-coded to find similarities, variations and uniqueness in outcomes, structure and patterns. Data was then transcribed thoroughly and transcripts read repeatedly to search for meanings, patterns and evidence and develop key themes from the texts.

Thematic analysis (Robson, 2005; Creswell, 2009) were therefore used to analyse textual data collected from the participants. Themes were developed based on the piece(s) of information that occurred dominantly in the texts in relation to each of the three research questions. Patterns were identified, analysed and reported within data collected from the participants (Braun and Clarke, 2006). As such, the development of themes was data-driven. Data sets were organised in order in which they are connected to a theme for analysis. The themes was linked to the data themselves; not based on researcher analytic preconceptions (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Moving from these semantic content of the data (Braun and Clarke, 2006), progress was made towards interpretation by examining the ideas, views and theories that shaped the themes. Commentaries were included to the themes based on the understandings derived from data so as to address the research questions (Miles and Huberman, 1994).

### ESTABLISHING TRUSTWORTHINESS

Trustworthiness in qualitative research such as this one was ensured via a process of credibility, dependability, confirmability and transferability (Creswell, 2006). It is what is often being referred to as validation of instrument in which such principles as validity, reliability and generalisability apply to evaluate quantitative studies. For qualitative studies, however, the four canons listed above were applied during access to and analysis of data so as to establish trustworthiness. This allowed for the conduct of research audit trail to ensure the processes, procedures and events being followed to access and analyse data are conducted with minimum error and fraud. Also, this is to help build confidence in the data and findings.

### ETHICAL ISSUES

Approval was received from the funding agency (TETFund) before this study commenced. Authorities at the Cross River State State Universal Basic Education Board (CRS-SUBEB) helped to identify state primary schools in Abi, Ikom and Boki. The researchers negotiated access to the case school with the head teachers. Teachers gave informed consent to participate. Teachers are adults and can self-consent to participate in research. Interview questions were worded in ways that would not raise emotive issues. Observations were conducted during classroom lessons. The identities of participants are pseudonymised and their data held confidentially. Data is preserved by the lead researcher and kept safely in a locker, USBs and password protected personal laptops.

### RESEARCH FINDINGS

Analyses of data are covered under this sub-section. Work herein focused on three research questions stated above. The analyses of data are based on the themes which have been inductively developed from the interview transcript. Excerpts of the interviews are being presented as quotes to support the analyses. In consequence, data analyses are presented under the following subjects:

1. Practitioners' conduct of teaching for engagement during classroom lessons in primary schools.
2. Barriers to teaching for engagement during classroom lessons in primary schools.
3. Measures available to address the constraints to teaching for engagement among teachers during classroom lessons in primary schools.
4. Main findings

#### 1. PRACTITIONERS' CONDUCT OF TEACHING FOR ENGAGEMENT DURING CLASSROOM LESSONS IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

The following were the activities with teachers and the outcomes for the above research question:

##### *Practitioner's choice of instructional strategy during classroom lessons*

Findings arising from data suggest that some of the educators view teaching for engagement as having:

- a. A link to the concept of behavioural engagement
- b. Ambivalence about the notion.

## Teaching For Engagement: A Practice to Foster Lessons in the Central Senatorial District of Cross River State, Nigeria

Statements such as ‘methods that spark interest and attention among pupils’ , ‘children would like to give answers to teacher questions’ are a signification of behavioural engagement. It points to the way teachers conceive teaching for engagement in context, as a practice that ensures lively classroom activities in which both teachers and children are able to share thoughts and ideas to enhance education. Responses from other teachers that the subject-matter involves ‘making children to talk during lessons’ indicate a lack of clarity among the respondents regarding the issue. For some of the teachers, a participatory lesson is determined by children’s talk in the classroom. Evidence of these can be seen in the following statements from the teachers:

Teacher A:

I understand the idea to mean using methods than spark interest and attention among pupils. When that happens, children would like to give answers to teacher question in the classroom.

Teacher B:

When there is an engaging lesson it has to do with making children to talk during lessons.

Teacher C:

As for me, I can work with them and encourage them to ask me questions in the classroom.

Teacher D:

Sometimes it is difficult to know how to make a pupil to be engaged at lesson.

Teacher E:

. . . teachers can make them pay attention to what he or she is teaching.

Teacher F:

. . . yes it is like making the children to take part . . . in what is going on in the classroom.

### **Promoting learner voice at lesson**

Views from the educators give a sense about their level of understanding about the concept of learner voice in regard to pupil engagement during lesson. The perspectives they shared on this issue indicate that teachers perceive children’s engagement at lesson as when they are able to air their opinions, make inputs and ask questions to seek clarifications to certain grey areas during instruction. Being able to share their perspectives suggest that the children have developed interests in and pay attention to the teacher during lesson. It is a behaviour that connects the affective component of engagement as it has to with them showing interest in and enjoying the lesson. Findings from this part suggest engagement as:

1. *Pupil voice during lesson*
2. *A Connection to affective engagement in lesson*

This is indicative in the following teachers’ statements:

Teacher A:

As the teacher is teaching they can ask some questions for the teacher to . . . to clarify the issue for them.

Teacher C:

Asking questions show that they are participating in the classroom . . . especially those who have the courage to do so.

Teacher D:

You find out that they are engaged when they . . . don’t sleep as the lessons is being taught by the teacher.

Teacher E:

When we (the teachers) make them to laugh while the lesson is going on.

Teacher F:

Engaging them is when the teacher delivers instruction in such a way that the pupils can share their ideas in order to improve the lesson . . .

## **2. BARRIERS TO TEACHING FOR ENGAGEMENT DURING CLASSROOM LESSONS IN PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Below are the activities involving tutors and the outcomes for this research question?

## Teaching For Engagement: A Practice to Foster Lessons in the Central Senatorial District of Cross River State, Nigeria

### ***Huge workload on teachers***

It was found that educators in public primary schools in Nigeria are usually saddled with huge tasks. They are often made to work in overpopulated classrooms, given plenty of subjects to teach alone and within a short time.

Evidence of this can be seen from the statements of the following teachers:

Teacher A:

Teachers are made to teach plenty of subjects each in the primary schools. For that the person be hurrying to teach to cover the syllabus for each subject you are handling, and there will very limited time to make children to ask series of questions that will would delay you. Also, our classrooms are crowded with pupils. What time will the teacher have to teach that number of subjects, attend to the needs of each of the children under his care and engage them during lesson? That is the problem!

Teacher B:

When teaching a classroom that is large is population it is impossible for the teacher create time for children to make inputs during lesson. It saps the teacher's energy to teach a large class and then still make them active during teaching and learning. The teacher will be so stressed to work like that.

### ***Poor knowledge of pedagogy***

A significant number of teachers, particularly the young ones, have poor teaching skills, knowledge of concepts, abilities to apply technology-based instructional materials. Quite a number of schools do not have modern teaching equipment. The very few that do manage to have them do not have teachers who possess the technical know-how to operate them. Poor technical ability is one issue that affects even the veteran teachers because they too are not exposed these tools. All of these hinder active participation of learners at lesson. This can be deciphered from the statements of some of the teachers:

Teacher A:

Nowadays teaching involves the use [of] modern instructional materials like computers, projectors. Who among the teachers in rural areas can operate these equipment?

Teacher B:

. . . There are colleagues who do not know what to teach in some topics. Sometimes what they teach is scanty and that leaves a lot areas uncovered. When as a teacher you pass instruction in a way that the interest of the children is not aroused how then do you expect them to develop an interest to engage in the lesson? Nothing can discourage learner participation like when a child discovers that you as the teacher cannot teach well.

### **3. MEASURES AVAILABLE TO ADDRESS THE CONSTRAINTS TO TEACHING FOR ENGAGEMENT AMONG TEACHERS DURING CLASSROOM LESSONS IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS**

While speaking with teachers the following were the outcomes for this research questions:

#### ***Emphasizing learner-centredness during classroom instruction***

It was found that the application of child-centred practices is a key to enabling teachers teach to engage the children during lessons. The teacher does this by regarding the pupils as partners in education. See the following statements from some of the teachers:

Teacher C:

Place the child first when teaching . . . .

Teacher D:

You can get them to participate when you, may be, use things like games to inspire them to play while learning

#### ***Recruit competent teachers***

This is a finding that indicates that competent teachers vary from qualified teachers. Being competent implies having the knowledge, skills, experience and enthusiasm to work with pupils in school whereas being qualified is just about having a certificate or licence to work as a teacher. This can be read further from the statements of the teachers:

Teacher B:

Government needs to emphasize competence over qualification during teacher employment

Teacher E:

Primary schools, as the foundation of education, need teachers who have knowledge, skills and are compassionate while working with children.

Teacher F:



## Teaching For Engagement: A Practice to Foster Lessons in the Central Senatorial District of Cross River State, Nigeria

There should be retraining of teachers to make the incompetent ones competent because teaching involves developing future leaders for the nation. I say this because many of [my] colleagues have the paper qualification but in practice they are not fit to teach.

### 4. MAIN FINDINGS

The following findings arise from data analyses for stated research questions as follows:

*Research question 1:* practitioner's choice of instructional strategy during classroom lessons, and promotion of learner voice at lesson;

*Research question 2:* huge workload on teachers, and poor knowledge of pedagogy

*Research question 3:* emphasis on learner-centredness during classroom instruction, and the recruitment of competent teachers.

### DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The main findings of the research are being discussed based on research questions as follows:

#### Research question one

##### ***Practitioner's choice of instructional strategy during classroom lessons***

Evidence found in data collected from the teachers for research question 1 indicates the teaching method being plays a significant the level at which it can inspire learner engagement during instruction. In other words, some teaching approaches hold minimum abilities to trigger engagement while others can substantially promote active participation in children when applied by teachers in the classroom. In the words of teacher A on the issue, Teacher A: *I understand the idea to mean using methods than spark interest and attention among pupils. . . . It means deploying methods innovatively to raise participation. Such methods can spark interest, enable self-directed learning and promote positive outcomes in the learners (Al Mandalawi, 2024). Couple with that, it is a demonstration of teacher dexterity and belief that an engaging lesson is a sure way to enhance performance in teaching and learning.*

##### ***Promotion of learner voice at lesson***

Learner voice is one innovative strategy that bolsters teaching for engagement. This procedure highlights recognition and value for the views of learners in helping the teacher make the instruction participator. As shown in data, even the teachers concur that learner voice is an approach facilitates teaching for engagement in primary schools. In the words of teacher F: *engaging them is when the teacher delivers instruction in such a way that the pupils can share their ideas in order to improve the lesson . . . . This confirms the theories of notable learner voice proponents such as Fredrick, Blumenfeld & Paris (2004), Taylor and Parsons (2011), Power, Rhys, Taylor & Waldron (2018), Fielding (2004, 2008, 2012) and Ewa (2019). These researchers and writers stated that the concept involves listening to the views of pupils, appreciating them and allowing them to make a difference in education.*

#### Research question two

##### ***Huge workload on teachers***

Engagement of learners would suffer setbacks when the teacher is assigned plenty of work to do. By carrying a heavy task the teacher would already feel stressed and unable to deliver lessons to spur the pupils to become active. Teacher B stated that: *when teaching a classroom that is large is population it is impossible for the teacher create time for children to make inputs during lesson. It saps the teacher's energy to teach a large class and then still make them active during teaching and learning. The teacher will be so stressed to work like that.* This statement reveals that many teachers are unable to engage children during lessons in the context because they are made to work under the weight of large class configurations, subjects and other administrative role they may be called upon to perform from time to time. Teaching to engage pupils in a large class size wears down teacher effectiveness. Growing pupil population often comes with diversity and complexities in the process of teaching and assessing the learners. Most times the teachers find it quite difficult to cope. For that the use of active learning methods by the teacher can be pushed down the priority order for the directed instructional strategy to ensure that the teacher is able to cover the content of his or her subjects. Obviously in such circumstances it is likely that will only allow limited interaction between them and the children (Exeter, Ameratunga, Ratima, Morton, Dickson, Hsu & Jackson, 2010).

##### ***Poor knowledge of pedagogy***

There is evidence to show that many teachers in the context do not have enough knowledge of the subject matter of their subjects and are also not having good skills to teach. For example, teacher B stated: *. . . there are colleagues who do not know what to teach in some topics.* Teaching involves possessing the logic of teaching and able to practice teaching effectively. Since teaching requires interaction with learners, it is possible that a teacher who lacks these abilities cannot engage the learners in critical and analytical debates and deliberations. Learner engagement is disadvantaged when there is limited teacher conceptual knowledge.

## Teaching For Engagement: A Practice to Foster Lessons in the Central Senatorial District of Cross River State, Nigeria

From the point of view of teacher-learner interaction in a Mathematics lesson, Dauda and Abidin (2012), stated that learner poor performance in the subject has been attributed to teacher knowledge of subject matter lesson presentation which makes students become passive and have less interaction with each other in doing mathematical tasks (*also see* Ntibi, Neji & Agube, 2020).

### Research question three

#### *Emphasis on learner-centredness during classroom instruction*

Teaching approaches that prioritize learner participation and needs is one way to tackle passive learning. Such methods enable the teacher to create a lively environment allowing the learners to become active during lesson. Adding to this, one of the educators, teacher D opined thus: *you can get them to participate when you, may be, use things like games to inspire them to play while learning.* In this way, according to teacher D, *the teacher would place the child first when teaching.*

#### *The recruitment of competent teachers*

Evidence from data generated from the teachers suggests that a measure for addressing the use of passive instructional strategies is by recruiting teachers who are not only qualified, but also competent to teach. For instance, teacher E suggested the *primary schools, as the foundation of education, need teachers who have knowledge, skills and are compassionate while working with children.* It is on that note teacher B suggested that *government needs to emphasize competence over qualification during teacher employment.* Competent teachers are effective in teaching, enabling an increased opportunity for interaction for pupils during lessons.

## CONCLUSION

Engagement in classroom instruction implies that the teacher is able to select and execute active learning methods to foster an exciting interaction during lesson. As this happens, learners feel the need to make useful contributions to improve the knowledge being imparted and the manner in which the impartation is being conducted by the educator. Classroom always reflects the existence of a diverse pupil population and each of them with his challenges and needs. A participatory classroom environment helps to spark activities among them, including the sharing of ideas to enrich learning. However, in some situations teaching causes passive behavioural expressions from the children in the classroom due to multivariate factors, including the teachers, pupils and environment.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made based on the opinions of the practitioners to address the problems:

1. Teachers are to always focus applying learner centred approached during teaching and learning;
2. Government should always insist on the employment of teachers who qualified and are competent to teach.

## REFERENCES

- 1) Al Mandalawi, A. B. K. H. (2024). Innovative teaching methods enhancing engagement and learning outcomes. *Al-Iraqa Foundation for Culture and Development*, 3, pp. 1-33.
- 2) Asim, A. E., Idaka, I. E. & Eni, E. I. (2017). *Research in education: concepts and Techniques*. Bloann Educational Publishers.
- 3) Braun, V. & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3, pp. 77-101.
- 4) Chapman, C., Laird, J., Ifill, N. & KewalRamani, A. (2010). Trends in high schools dropout and completion rates in the United States: 1972-2009 (NCES 2012- 006). National Center for Education Statistics, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education, Washington, DC. Accessed via <http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch>.
- 5) Creswell, J. (2003). *Research design: qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches (2nd Ed.)*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- 6) Creswell, J. W. (2009), *Research design: qualitative, quantitative and mixed method Approaches (3rd Ed.)*, Los Angeles: SAGE
- 7) Danda, U. N. & Abidin, L. N. (2012). Effect of instruction in metacognitive skills on Mathematics concepts achievement and test anxiety of low achieving students in junior secondary schools. *Review of Education*, 20(1), pp. 12–19.
- 8) Eccles, J. S. (2016). Engagement: Where to next? *Learning and Instruction*, 43, pp. 71- 75.
- 9) English, L. & Halford, G. (1995). *Mathematics education models and processes*. USA: Lawrence Earlbaum.
- 10) Ewa, M. A. (2019). Learner voice, praxis for democratic schooling in Nigeria. *British Journal of Education*, 7(4), pp. 84-97.
- 11) Exeter, D. J., Ameratunga, S., Ratima, M., Morton, S., Dickson, M., Hsu, M. & Jackson, R. (2010). Student's engagement in very large classes: the teachers' perspective. *Studies in Higher Education*, 35(7), pp. 761-775.



## Teaching For Engagement: A Practice to Foster Lessons in the Central Senatorial District of Cross River State, Nigeria

- 12) Federal Republic of Nigeria (2013). *National policy on education (6<sup>th</sup> Ed.)*. Abuja: National Educational Research and Development Council, p. 7.
- 13) Fredricks, J. A., Blumenfeld, P. C. & Paris, A. H. (2004). School engagement: potential of the concept, state of the evidence. *Review of Educational Research*, 74 (1), pp. 59-109.
- 14) Fielding, M. (2004a). Transformative approaches to student voice: theoretical underpinnings, recalcitrant realities. *British Educational Research Journal*, 30(2), pp. 295-311.
- 15) Fielding, M. (2008) *Interrogating student voice: pre-occupations, purposes and possibilities, critical perspectives in education. Summer 2008*, p. 2.
- 16) Fielding, M. (2012). Beyond student voice: patterns of partnership and the demand of deep democracy. *Revista de Educacion*, 359, pp. 45-65.
- 17) Fredricks, J. A. (2015). Academic engagement. In Wright, J. (Ed.), *The international encyclopedia of social and behavioral sciences, 2nd edition*, 2, pp. 31–36. Oxford: Elsevier.
- 18) Gavala, J., & Flett, R. (2005). Influential factors moderating academic enjoyment/motivation and psychological well-being for Maori university students at Massey University. *New Zealand Journal of Psychology*, 34(1), pp. 52–57.
- 19) Heylighen, F. (1997). *Epistemological constructivism*. Accessed via <http://pespmc1.vub.ac.be/construc.html>.
- 20) Johnson, D., Soldner, M., Leonard, J., Alvarez, P., Inkelas, K., Rowan-Kenyon, H. & Longerbeam, S. (2007). Examining sense of belonging among first-year undergraduates from different racial/ethnic groups. *Journal of College Student Development*, 48(5), pp. 525–542.
- 21) Liu, C. A. & Matthews, R. (2005). Vygotsky's psychology: constructivism and its criticisms examined. *International Educational Journal*, 6(3), pp. 386-399.
- 22) Miles, M. B. & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis. An expanded source book (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.)*. Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage.
- 23) Ntibi, J. E. E., Neji, H. A. & Agube, C. (2020). Students' Perception of Teacher Knowledge of Subject Matter/Lesson Presentation and Academic Performance in Physics in Calabar Municipality, Cross River State, Nigeria. *European Journal of Social Sciences*, 59(2), pp 247-254.
- 24) Power, S., Rhys, M., Taylor, C. & Waldron, S. (2018). How child-centred education favours some learners more than others. *Review of Education*. London: John Wiley & Sons Ltd.Publication.
- 25) Robson, C. (2005). *Real world research: a resource for social scientist and practitioner-researchers (fourth edition)*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell. p. 63
- 26) Stake, R. E. (2006). *Multiple case study analysis*. London: The Guilford Press.
- 27) Taylor, L. & Parsons, J. (2011). Improving student engagement. *Current Issues in Education*, 14(1). Retrieved August 28, 2016 via <http://cie.asu.edu/>
- 28) Trowler, V. (2010). Student engagement literature review. Department of Educational Research, Lancaster University. Retrieved 14 July, 2016 via [https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/sites/default/files/StudentEngagementLiteratureReview\\_1.pdf](https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/sites/default/files/StudentEngagementLiteratureReview_1.pdf)
- 29) United Nations Centre for Human Rights/UNICEF (1990). *Convention on the rights of the Child: Briefing Kit (Geneva, UN Centre for Human Rights/UNICEF)*.
- 30) Vrasidas, C. (2000). Constructivism versus objectivism: implications for interaction, course design, and evaluation in distance education. *International Journal of Educational Telecommunication*, 6(4), p. 7.
- 31) Willms, J. D. (2003). *Student engagement at school: a sense of belonging and participation. Results from PISA 2000*. Paris: Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development.
- 32) Wiske, M. S. (1998). *Teaching for understanding: linking research with practice*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- 33) Woodcock, M. (2013). *Social inclusion: its significance for development theory, research and policy*. World Bank and Harvard University. Paris: UNESCO.
- 34) World Bank (2013). *Inclusion Matters: The Foundation for Shared Prosperity*. Washington, DC: World Bank. ISBN 978-1-4648-0010-8.



There is an Open Access article, distributed under the term of the Creative Commons Attribution – Non Commercial 4.0 International (CC BY-NC 4.0) (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>), which permits remixing, adapting and building upon the work for non-commercial use, provided the original work is properly cited.