

Management of Facilities in the Classroom

Florence Nkechi Okeke

Department of Educational Foundations and Administration,
Faculty of Education,
Imo State University, Owerri, Nigeria.

Abstract

As skeleton is to a person, so are facilities, or the school plant necessary for the realization of result-oriented teaching and learning. This chapter discusses management of facilities in the classroom, which bring about in the learner desirable change in behaviour through critical thinking. The paper highlighted classroom and types of classroom, facilities needed in the classroom, provision/management of facilities in the classroom, approaches/methodologies for facilities management, information communication technology and suggested remedies to promote effective maintenance of facilities in classroom management. The study is significant to all stakeholders in education. The pupils/students benefit as proper management of facilities will make learning environment conducive and also instill in the students the skill of maintenance. The teachers benefit because management of facilities is very essential in the effective coordination of activities in the classroom. If facilities are properly managed in the classroom, it minimizes cost to parents, as well as to the government. The study contributes immensely to knowledge and the existing literature because researchers are exposed to information and strategies for managing classroom facilities. Management of facilities to a greater extent boosts the standard in the education sector. ICT as learning and teaching resource gives reason to greater problem solving and critical thinking. Conclusion was drawn and possible revision questions were asked.

Keywords: Management, Facilities, Classroom, ICT, students.

INTRODUCTION

Education is universally acknowledged as a veritable instrument for socio-economic transformation. It is seen as a panacea for addressing underdevelopment and a practical means of improving the welfare of individuals (Ogbonna, 2005). This explains why nations the world over accord priority attention to education in their development plans. School planning (Classroom being the unit of School) starts and ends with the pupil. The building should be designed to satisfy the pupils/students physical and emotional needs. His physical needs are met by ensuring a safe structure, adequate sanitary facilities, a balanced visual environment, a satisfactory acoustical environment, and sufficient shelter space for his work and play. His emotional needs are met by creating pleasant surroundings, a friendly atmosphere, and an inspiring environment (Knezevich, 1975). This humanistic., pupil-oriented approach to school planning and construction, view design and equipment as means of enhancing the pupil's learning and comfort.

As skeleton is to a person, so are facilities or the school plant necessary for the realization of result-oriented teaching and learning (Okon & Sule, 2006) in the classroom.

Furthermore, Asiabaka (2008) maintained that the primary purpose of the teaching/learning process is to bring about in the learner desirable change in

behaviour through critical thinking. This process nevertheless cannot take place in a vacuum but rather in an environment structured to facilitate learning. Classroom is the nucleus of this learning environment.

The environment of an organization is described as all elements relevant to its operation which include direct and indirect action elements (Stoner, Freeman and Gilbert (1996). School facilities as well as classroom facilities, constitute the major components of both direct and indirect action elements in the environment of learning. The direct action elements are the instructional materials that facilitate teaching and learning while the indirect learning components are the academic support facilities that make the school environment conducive for teaching and learning. A direct relationship exists between the quality of school/classroom facilities provided and the quality of the products of the school. The availability of facilities in the classroom determines the tone of a school and acts as a propellant in the attainment of its objectives/goals. Nwagwu (1978:63), Complained that "over time, the problems of inadequate supply of equipment and facilities have combined with that of unsatisfactory management of the meager, available infrastructure to make Nigerian schools to become "deprived teaching/learning environments".

Management of these facilities is very essential in the effective coordination of activities in the classroom.

Management is defined as getting things done in an organization through people, money and infrastructural resources in the right mix. The resources being human and material that is, human beings both teaching and non-teaching personnel while materials are the facilities like teaching aids, chairs etc. Facilities being something designed, built, installed etc, to serve a specific function, affording a convenience or service e.g. educational facilities, a new research facilities etc. It can also be described as something that permit the easier performance of an action, course of conduct etc. to provide someone with every facility for accomplishing a task. It involves aids, circumstances, which make it easy to do things; facilities for study e.g. libraries, laboratories, sports facilities, like running tracks, swimming pools etc.

Classroom and Types of Classroom

The classroom is a common term associated with formal education. It could be seen and regarded as a power-house in which the success or failure of the learning process is generated and also sustained (Ezeocha, 1990).

According to Oku (2006) the classroom is an important place in the school, where the students are brought together, and given the opportunity of achieving the purpose of education and also learn to tolerate themselves. It is a place where teachers organize their work, carry out educational plans as well as a place where research findings are tested or tried out. In another view, Ozuzu (1997) defined classroom as a place where pupils or students gather for teaching and learning purposes, it holds them together and gives them ample opportunity for group socialization through interacting with one another. From Global point of view, classroom is a place where teaching, learning, acquisition of skills, as well as socialization is imbibed. In other words, the expectation and objectives of formal education are normally accomplished in the classroom.

The greatest amount of educational activities in the school, and even in the society take place in the classroom. It is where government policies on education are implemented to foster desirable behaviour and attitudes and develop problem-solving skills.

There are different types of classroom which may include -

- (1) Specially designed room
- (2) An art gallery
- (3) A studio
- (4) Museum
- (5) Workshop or exhibition centre
- (6) Laboratory

Facilities Needed in the Classroom

To promote a proper atmosphere for effective teaching and learning, the physical environment of the classroom must be harnessed. The physical environment is made up of desks, chairs, tables, space, instructional materials, lighting and ventilation as well as the latest Information Communication Technology (ICT) equipments & library. Others include chalkboard, projection screen, time table, power supply gadget, students and teachers who have come together for the purpose of teaching and learning. Classroom as a facility is one of key measures of quality as it determines the student-teacher ratio of any educational system. The availability and state of the classroom plays a key role in facilitating or engendering the teaching-learning process (Ahunanya & Ubabudu. 2006).

Starting from the facility need of the student such as writing and reading materials, to that of the teacher's need to carry out class" activities, a lot of money will need to be spent for the facilities required for quality learning. School/Classroom facilities are among the resources required in the realization of educational aims and objectives. Therefore, the process of achieving educational goals and objectives depends on school plants planning as well as maintenance (Adegbeson. 2007).

Knezevich (1995) maintained that physical facilities are essential resources that are required for the effective operation and maintenance of standard in the classroom/schools. These facilities include the site of the building, furniture, equipment, personnel resources, laboratories, workshops and other instructional aids. When these categories of school facilities are adequately provided, the classroom activities become effective and efficient. Adequate facilities in the classroom/school enhance the comfort, safety of pupils/students and teachers, thereby increasing their performances.

Provision and Management of Facilities in the Classroom

Facilities management is a process of ensuring that buildings and other technical systems support the operations of an organization (Fenker, 2004). The International Facilities Management Association (2002) described facilities management as the practice of coordination of the physical workplace with the people and the work of the organization; it integrates the principles of business administration, architecture and the behavioural and engineering sciences (Asiabaka, 2008). Classroom/School facilities management is the application of scientific methods in the planning, organizing, decision-making, coordination and controlling of the physical environment of learning for the actualization of the educational goals and objectives. Human and material resources are deployed for this purpose.

School/Classroom facilities are the material resources provided for staff and students to optimize their productivity in the teaching and learning process. The realization that the transfer of knowledge does not only take place in the four walls of the classroom from the teacher to the students but rather that learning takes place through discovery, exploration, interaction with the internal and external environment has necessitated the creative and innovative development of teaching and learning facilities that reflect these changes.

In the classroom enough desks, chairs, lockers, instructional aids as well as ICT materials etc. must be provided to match with the population ratio of not more than 1:30 students i.e. one teacher to thirty students. This will make for efficiency on the part of the teacher and good performance on the part of the students. The quality of products (students/pupils) bears a direct relationship with the quality of facilities deployed in the process of production. This implies that adequate human and material facilities must be provided in the classroom to prepare the pupils/students for life in the larger society.

The orchestration of classroom life which include planning curriculum, organizing procedures and resources, setting the tone of the class environment to maximize learning, monitoring student progress and anticipating potential problem is necessary (Ijeoma, 2007).

Akubue (1991:8) stressed that the successful teacher is one who has "mastered specific techniques for planning an optimal number of meaningful activities and for creating an enriched inviting environment". Clearly the teacher has an important role to play in fashioning a conducive learning environment for student academic achievement.

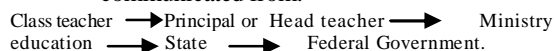
It is very necessary that we appreciate and develop the need for maintenance culture in the classroom/school environment. This can be achieved through effective implementation of management processes - planning, organizing, coordinating, controlling, inspecting and supervising both staff and material resources is essential. This implies that facilities management is a collective responsibility of federal, state, local government authorities, staff and students of the individual classrooms/schools and the community where the schools are located.

Renovation and modernization of old and dilapidated facilities must be carried out regularly to ensure that teachers and students are not depressed. Facilities decay and unavailability of facilities in the classroom is a disease that must be avoided. Available facilities in most classrooms are obsolete in terms of quality and quantity. These have relevance to varying number of student population which is invariably on the

increase. Therefore collaborative efforts are needed to bring into facilities management new ideas and perspectives. Classroom managers in collaboration with school managers should emphasize that positive steps should be taken to save the situation when physical facilities available for academic and non-academic activities are grossly inadequate.

Approaches/Methodologies for Facilities Management

- Planning for the provision of these facilities. The situation on ground must be communicated from:



All these organs must work together and provisions made without delay.

- Development of broad education goals and specific objectives flexible to allow for specific individual and group needs.
- Facility audit: This is a comprehensive inventory of a class/school's facilities that provides a standard method for establishing baseline information about the components, policies and procedures of a new or existing facility. It provides information on the status of classroom facilities.

Stages in facilities management are three steps: (Brooks and Akin, 2003)

1. **Analysis stage** - gathering relevant facts about human and material facilities functioning and utilization.
2. **Solution stage** – assemblies, criteria for judging options, evaluate these against the objectives of the organization and developing the facility management strategy.
3. **Implementation stage** - establishment of an implementation plan that incorporates the key elements of procurement, training and communication.

Approaches to facilities management in the classroom is incomplete without facilities maintenance which involves renovation and modernization of old structures and materials. Human resources which include teaching and non-teaching staff also need maintenance to keep them functioning effectively. Facility maintenance plan should take the following approaches.

1. Preventive maintenance
2. Routine maintenance
3. Emergency repairs and
4. Predictive maintenance.

Preventive maintenance is carried out to avoid breakdown and ensure optimal performance of the facility.

Routine maintenance is carried out periodically - monthly, quarterly or even annually depending on the agreed schedule by the class/school manager, Follow manufacturers guide to avoid breakdown.

Emergency Repairs takes place when a facility breaks down and urgent measures or steps had to be taken to remedy the situation. This normally occurs where people lack maintenance culture. It does require collective decision making because of limited time.

It is expensive because the extent of damage may demand total replacement or high cost of repair.

Predictive maintenance - Here computer software is used to predict equipment failure.

This is based on age, user demand and performance measures,

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) - The Most Modern Facility in the Classroom

Asogwa (2008) maintained that Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is a fusion of information technology and communication technology, which is the most potent force in shaping the 21st century (Ayo, 2001). It has shrunked the world to a global village thus repositioning the social, economic, political and academic outlook of man (Chinwe, 2005). Accessibility to timely information is the determining factor towards all round success in different facets of life.

The driving force economically, scientifically and technologically all over the world today is advances in ICT. A nation's growth and development is anchored on the acquisition of ICT skills and utilization of ICT opportunities. We are in an information society, where those who can create, manipulate/ process and manage these wide varieties of information will continue to dominate the economy and dictate the overall pace of development.

ICT, the process of creating, storing, processing and disseminating, information among people across boundaries involve equipments and devices. Every school/classroom should have ICT laboratory to facilitate learning.

Benefits of ICT as Learning and Teaching Resource

- Makes student to become independent learners and good beginners.
- Help to increase students' writing skills
- Help to present information in many forms
- Make learners' to be more confident in learning process
- Communicates effectively on any process
- Give reason to greater problem solving and critical thinking.
- Develops in the students the spirit to interact with their fellow students.

- Help student to work collaboratively (Kosakowaski, 2005).

Teachers as human facility are key players in instructional process and are the main determinants of quality in the classrooms. They cannot teach what they do not know, so the best way to produce good teachers is through avenue of professional training as well as in ICT.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The Study is limited by the fact that it relied solely on self report. A holistic approach should have incorporated interview schedules of head teachers and principals coupled with physical inspection of school infrastructures and equipments as well as personnel that is human resource. Although cumbersome, the measure would no doubt provide further insight into the problem investigated.

Suggested Remedies to Promote Effective Maintenance of Facilities in Classroom Management

- There should be policy guidelines for infrastructural development,
- Provisions for facility development/maintenance must be included in the original master plan.
- In overall budgeting, facilities maintenance should have its own sub-head.
- There must be routine check periodically either monthly or quarterly.
- A management should be constituted to be in charge of this routine check, and members should be drawn from professionals in architecture, business administration, behavioural and engineering sciences, interior designers, facilities planner, capital budget analysts, administrators, academic staff, fiscal and institutional research personnel.
- A very good habit should be inculcated in the pupils/students and teachers on how to -handle these facilities, considering their precious values. There should be collaborative efforts.
- Enough funds should be made available for repairs promptly from government. However, alternative means of sourcing for funds should be intensified by ^A managers within and outside the community.
- Obsolete facilities should be changed or replaced by constructing new ones.
- Properly maintained school/classroom plant or facilities can entrench a maintenance culture on pupils'/students' psyche and this would make them appreciate the merits of emphasizing the maintenance culture in the society.

CONCLUSION

Facilities management especially in the classroom is indispensable in enhancing the quality of the product of education. Effective management of the classroom sets the overall positive tone of a school, and this can only be achieved through the provision of adequate human and material facilities needed. ICT materials are important in the modern classroom setting and deserves attention.

REVISION QUESTION

1. Give an overview of facilities management in the classroom?
2. Explain classroom and outline the different types of classroom in the education industry?
3. (a) Outline briefly facilities needed in the classroom?
(b) Management of facilities in the classroom is essential - Discuss?
4. Discuss the major approaches/methodologies to facilities management?
5. (a) State the most modern facility in the classroom and briefly explain it?
(b) What are its benefits as a teaching and learning resource?

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