

INTRODUCTION *to* TEACHING METHODOLOGY

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Foreword

The production of this text book on Teaching Methodology titled: "Introduction to Teaching Methodology" was borne out of a strong desire to ensure that students that we train in the Faculty of Education have a strong grounding in the methodology of Teaching.

Over the years, there are indications that student teachers are no longer as conversant as they should be with teaching methodology. A major reason for this development includes the non-availability of a well prepared text book on the methodology of teaching. As part of the effort of the Faculty of Education to redress this situation a Workshop on Methodology of Teaching was organized on the 17th of December 2015 for all Lecturers in the Faculty of Education. This Workshop, in part, was meant to build the capacity of all staff and also refresh their knowledge on the methodology teaching.

At the end of the Workshop it became necessary to initiate the publication of this book titled "Introduction to Teaching Methodology. This book is meant to make available to student a one-stop shop for all student teachers in the Faculty of Education on key issues relating to Teaching Methodology.

Apart from the fact that the chapter contributors are seasoned, well qualified and highly dedicated members of staff of the Faculty of Education, some of the authors have decades of teaching experience in the Faculty of Education. The authors brought to bear on their respective chapters a rich pedagogical experience.

The book is divided into eight different sections covering a wide range of issues ranging from Basic Concepts in teaching, classroom communication and interaction, evaluation and feedback mechanisms in teaching, classroom management strategies to counselling services as an integral part of teaching and practical instructions on the playing ground.

This book is therefore a veritable resource for all students studying Education in all Nigerian Universities. I recommend this book to all students in Education across Nigerian Universities.

Prof. Alfred A. Adegoke
Dean, Faculty of Education
15 June, 2016

CHAPTER TWENTY

MANAGING LARGE CLASSES

R.L. Abdulkareem Ph.D & N.J.K. Abdullahi Ph.D

Objectives

At the end of the lesson, the students/readers should be able to;

1. Define what a large class is.
2. Differentiate between a large and small class.
3. Discuss the causes of large class in primary and secondary schools in Nigeria.
4. Discuss at least five ways through which large class can be managed.

Introduction

The Population of Nigeria according to National Population Commission (2006) is 140, 431790 with the population of children aged 0-9 totally 42,700347. Ages ranging from age 10 to 19 have population of 31, 035379; ages 20 to 29 have 25, 647505; ages 30 to 39 have 16,799293; ages 40 to 49 have 11, 047763; ages 50 to 59 have 6, 315466; ages 60-69 have 3,601334; ages 70 to 79 have 9, 10335; and ages 80 plus has 1,475288 as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Nigeria Population Distribution

S/N	AGE	POPULATION
1	0-9	42,700347
2	10-19	31, 035379
3	20-29	25,647505
4	30-39	16,799293
5	40-49	11, 047763
6	50-59	6, 315466
7	60-69	3,601334
8	70-79	9, 10335
9	80plus	1,475288
	Total	140, 431790

Source: National Population Commission (2010)

Thus, it is revealed in Table 1 that Over 60 percent of the population in Nigeria are attending one educational institution or the other from Nursery to higher institutions. The implication of this is that there is high enrolment rate. If this

high enrolment is not followed by a correspondent increased educational facilities especially classrooms, there is bound to be large classes. This notwithstanding, teachers still have to teach in these classes and children learn in them. It is therefore important that the effect of class size upon both pupils and their teachers should continue to be monitored and evaluated. The purpose of this study is to examine the causes and effect of large classes in Nigerian schools and suggest logical ways of managing large classes that have characterised Nigerian educational institutions.

Concept of Large Classes

It is difficult to set a definition of what large class is. In some countries, 30 students in a class is considered a large class while in some, 20 students in a class is considered a large class. Thus, a class of 30 may not be problematic in one country but challenging in another country. Some teachers even have to face or manage over 60 students and up to a thousand in some higher institutions in Nigeria (especially in general course like the GNS).

Small Classes versus Large Classes

The main thrust of class size research in the past decade has concentrated on analysing the effects of reducing class size (rather than the impact of increasing it) (Smith & Warburton, 2007). It is hard to draw definite conclusion on students' achievement based on class size alone, since other variables (like the quality of teachers, role of parents) may come into play. However, it is widely reported (Blachford & Mortimer, 1994) that teachers and parents view the following as determinants of high achievement and the product of small class size as against the product of large class (Tabberer, 1994):

- Small class size increases opportunities for more individual attention and individualised teaching;
- Small class size encourages a curriculum which takes on more variety, breadth, depth and richness; where basic instruction is completed more quickly providing more time for covering additional materials;
- Small class size unlike large classes allows high rates of engagement on set tasks, greater levels of pupil participation in lessons;
- Small class size helps teachers to spend less time on managing pupil behaviour, though the STAR [Student Teacher Achievement Ratio] research reported that smaller classes did not seem to have effect on the levels of classroom discipline;
- Smaller classes have positive effects on pupils' attitudes to school, on self-concept, motivation and better teacher morale;

- Smaller classes enhance better pupil/pupil relationships.

It seems plausible therefore, that class size has some impact upon the quality of education. However, there are a number of studies which cast some doubt upon this view, for example: There is some statistical analysis to support the contradictory hypothesis that large class size does not directly affect or decrease pupils' achievement (Tabberer, 1994). It would seem then, that precise correlations between cause and effect are difficult to make, but that the number of pupils in a class taught by one teacher is a factor in determining the quality of education.

Causes of Large Classes in Nigeria

The following are some of the major factors responsible for large classes in many Nigerian public institutions, especially at the primary and secondary school levels:

Increasing Enrolment: Increase in the number of pupils admitted into the school is one of the most significant reasons for large classes. In most cases, since the introduction of More Open Enrolment and the inability to enforce definitive catchment areas, schools have found themselves over subscribed, in terms of applications for admission and usually unsuccessful at the appeals stage. Since the introduction of Universal Basic Education, schools have witnessed tremendous upshot in pupils' enrolment without correspondent increase in the number of classroom, thereby bringing about large classes in many of the schools.

Budgetary Constraint: The financial status of schools resulting from low budgetary allocation to education is a major cause of large class. The present funding arrangements do not provide sufficiency of needs for schools to maintain adequate staffing levels and other educational resources which would result in smaller numbers of pupils in each class. Thus, few teachers and smaller number of classrooms as against high number of school-aged children would result to large classes in schools.

Managing Large Classes

Taking into account the advantages of smaller classes over large classes, it is necessary to find a lasting solution or proffer ways of ensuring that the class size in Nigerian schools is small. Since this needs the participation of Government in terms of fund and policy, it may not be achievable on time. It is logical therefore for teachers and school administrators to proffer ways of managing this impeding large class in Nigerian schools. Thus, the following are the ways of managing large classes:

- **Creating smaller teaching units:** Teach the class in groups of smaller number from 20 to 40 or more as the case may be, instead of trying to teach the whole class all at once. While you are teaching the first group, the other groups can be given practice or drill exercise on the previous day's lesson with little (enrichment or remediation as needed) supervision. Non-teaching staff can be used to monitor the smaller teaching groups while the teacher is teaching a particular group.
- **Encourage pupils' independence by establishing clear and well-structured routines:** this could be done by establishing simple rules of acceptable behaviour for everybody to observe when working in groups. Pupils can also be taught on how to lead a team or be an active member in a group.
- **Group work:** large class can be managed by assigning students to small groups and giving them tasks or projects to do together. The groupings can be changed once in a while with groups to allow the students to have a wide grasp of the subject matter.
- **Team teaching:** involves a number of teachers teaching each segregated groups simultaneously using homogeneous well planned scheme of work or lesson plan. This is in practice in the Sandwich programme of University of Ilorin, where large classes are divided into groups and lecturers simultaneously teach the same course content and set the same examination questions.
- **Peer tutoring:** involves assigning course content to every group in a large class. Each of the groups is made to present report or teach other groups on the subject matter assigned to them. The class members are given opportunity to ask questions. In this case, the teacher serves as moderator, and at times enlightens the students better on the subject matter.
- **Adequate sitting arrangements:** the teacher need to seat the people who need help closer to him or her. This will help the teacher to spot difficulties more easily while teaching. The shorter students are also sit in front to avoid being blocked by the taller ones.
- **Ensure adequate response pattern:** Teachers need to avoid pupils shouting when they need response to 'yes' or 'no' types of question. They can use signal like telling them to raise their hands if in support of 'yes' or if against.

Review Questions

1. When is a class considered to be a large class?
2. Differentiate between a large and small classes
3. What are the causes of large class in primary and secondary schools in Nigeria?
4. Discuss five ways through which large class can be managed.

Conclusion

Class size is an issue for national debate which need to be given urgent attention. In practice, large class has a range of consequences, both practical and philosophical, which are often in juxtaposition to one another. The complex issues which surround such consequences require further research and a national commitment to it.

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