



## **DUE DILIGENCE: ESSENTIAL STRATEGY IN CLASSROOM DELIVERY IN BUSINESS EDUCATION**

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### **Abstract**

*The paper examined the place of due diligence in realizing the educational goal of business education. It saw due diligence as the process of carrying out a home work before performing an activity which aids in taking the right step. The paper argued that due diligence is required in the teaching and learning of business education because the goal is not just to teach but to make skilled businessmen or women and educators out of students, moreover the innovative nature of the programme calls for thorough analysis of resources and recipients if goal must be achieved. It maintained that a teacher's effectiveness could be seen in his ability to properly assess teaching methods, skills, activities and materials that will promote learning in specific situations. It went further to discuss the issue of academic performance and the factors that affect it pointing out that teacher's knowledge, skill, and strategy are critical to academic achievement of students. The concept of strategic teaching which involves making a good match between students' learning preferences and instructor's teaching style was discussed. The peculiarities of business education which makes it imperative that due diligence must be taken for effective classroom delivery was also discussed. It was concluded that due diligence will enable a teacher establish positive relationship with his students. This builds in them a sense of belongingness characterized by trust, connection and understanding which affects learning positively. Finally the paper recommended among others that business educators should constantly engage in continuous professional development considering the innovative nature of the programme and the changes being experienced in the educational industry in the last few decades.*

### **Introduction**

Education is of essence as it brings sustainable development to any nation. This is because it transmits knowledge, develops skills and attitudes, beliefs and practices in individuals for self development which transcends to national development. Therefore, assessment of students' attitude to learning, prior knowledge, learning preferences and instructional materials



that will promote learning in relation to teaching methods, skills, technique of classroom control, ways of involving students in exercise and activities, ways of supervising and managing exercises and activities, instructional procedures (lesson presentation) and methods of evaluating outcomes of educational endeavours is of essence if the objective of any educational policy must be achieved. Due diligence as a measure or exercise of care a prudent and rational individual puts in the performance of his duties could be a strategy for teachers to ensure that the nation's educational standard is improved and maintained.

Nigeria as a nation is battling with falling educational standard though the educational system is geared towards maintaining a high standard as contained in the National Policy in Education. Ezembu (2011) believes that the standard and quality of Nigeria educational system can be measured by the efficiency and functionality of the products turned out by our schools. This has implication for teachers. Hence, Ukeje in (2011) stated that the quality of education provided in any society and the nature of the change effected by that education are both dependent on the quality of teachers and the effectiveness of their teaching in the schools.

The quality and effectiveness of teachers can be determined by proper assessment of teaching methods, skills, activities and materials that will promote learning in specific situations. When these factors are well articulated the teacher comes up with a customized strategy that will improve instructional delivery which is the primary assignment of every teacher. With a well structured instructional delivery strategy, accomplishment of defined goals which is the target of every educational programme is achieved. Moreover, in business education where the goal is not just to teach but to make "skilled businessmen or women and educators" out of students, a teacher must not assume that the goal will be achieved when strategies are randomly or arbitrarily applied. Thorough assessment of components of teaching in relation to students' preparedness, preferences, readiness, and attitude; materials on ground (physical or electronic) and the innovative nature of the programme must be made. Hence, Nwazor and Udegbonam (2016) explained that strategies are activities that are implemented or required to be implemented towards the achievement of stated measurable objectives. Strategies describe the plans, actions, specific ways that can be adopted in order to achieve an objective. A business teacher is therefore expected to perform due diligence in every instructional process if the mandate of business education must be achieved.

### **Concept of Due Diligence**

In the submission of Arslan, (2009) "Due diligence is the investigative process of collecting and analyzing adequate, relevant data before making a decision, with the aim of understanding advantages, disadvantages and risks associated with such decision." It is a measure or exercise of care by a prudent rational individual or entity under a given circumstance. Ipaye (2021) describes due diligence as a reasonable step taken by a person to avoid committing a civil wrong or injury. It encompasses carrying out a home work before an activity is performed; obtaining all necessary information that will enable one perform an activity; critically evaluating issues before embarking on an action and examining situations in order to obtain facts, information, direction that will aid taking the right step. It exposes one to the fact that no two situations or transactions are the same and therefore should be handled in consideration of their peculiarities. It calls for diligent search, examination, questioning to obtain facts/truth and secrets before embarking on a transaction. Due diligence, is the extra care taken; the effort put to get all needed information in order to achieve a desired goal.

As a legal term, it is a way of ensuring that the terms and conditions outlined in any contractual deal are legally favourable to the concerned party. Whether it is a real estate deal, hiring contracts, employment contracts, or tenders and bids by private parties, due diligence is done to protect oneself from the legal troubles that can ensue if the contract is unfavourable to a



particular party (Novikov, Dubinina & Kuzoma, 2018). Thus, due diligence includes a set of measures to conduct a comprehensive examination of an investment agreement within the framework of making a decision on effective capital investment, which involves significant economic risks. In the submission of Savovic and Pokrajc (2017), the need for due diligence is due primarily to the fact that in today's market relations, the requirements of investors, banking institutions, and buyers are increased to the transparency of information about the object of investment, lending or purchase.

Due diligence as a research tool allows you to get a realistic assessment of your business, to determine the financial position and business development trends, as a result of obtaining information that will have a qualitative impact on effective management decisions (Silichieva, 2011). The procedure of due diligence will help to create a complete picture of the actual financial condition of an enterprise and of all the risks that may have a negative impact. Kasych (2015) emphasized that under due diligence, we propose to understand the procedure for carrying out a comprehensive examination of an investment agreement in the framework of making a decision on effective investment of capital by minimizing risks in order to preserve the capital and its potential future increase. The main purpose of due diligence procedure is to provide an investor with a complete picture of the real financial situation of an investment object and minimize the existing risks of transactions when making a decision on investing capital.

In teaching and learning, due diligence could be described as the basic steps which will involve inquiry, analysis and evaluation of the peculiarities of learners and materials which will enable a teacher to devise the right or combination of teaching strategies for mastery learning and goal achievement. It describes teacher preparation which according to Adekunle (2020) determines the extent of skill acquisition by students. Due diligence in educational process ensures that a teacher, besides gaining mastery of his subject matter, ascertains students level of preparedness, or readiness and attitude. It also ensures that the state of materials for teaching and learning is ascertained. Such knowledge will enable the teacher apply the right teaching skills, method, processes, technologies, and tools, that will correctly address the peculiar learning needs of a student or set of students. Due diligence in education does not assume that teaching strategies should be randomly chosen even though there might have been marked success in their usage. Due diligence search enables a teacher to find out the students disposition and the condition of the environment which will enable such teacher devise a customized teaching strategy that will emphasize critical thinking, flexibility, effective communication, innovation and creativity (Adekunlu, 2020). It enables a teacher understand students' level of knowledge so as to design lessons to suit students' abilities; structure lesson activities to suit students' level of experience; pace instruction to allow students time needed for internalization of learning; know the type of learning aids needed by a particular student or set of students; use visuals like graphic organizers, maps, word webs, drawings, pictures etc and also know how to break concepts for easy understanding (Bagudu & Dibbari, 2020). Due diligence in teaching provides the teacher with a complete picture of the students' actual academic level and minimizes the existing risks of ineffective implementation of curriculum content which results in students' poor academic performance.

### **Students Academic Performance**

Although there has been considerable debate about the determinants of academic performance among educators, policymakers, academics, and other stakeholders, it is generally agreed that the impact of these determinants vary (in terms of extent and direction) in a particular context, for example, culture, institution, course of study, teacher's knowledge or skill and so on. However, not all factors are relevant for a particular context. Therefore each situation must be



analysed to identify the context-specific determinants for sound decision making that will enable a teacher achieve educational goal.

According to Nchungo (2013) a number of studies have been carried out to identify and analyze the numerous factors that affect the academic performance of students in various centres of learning. The findings identify students' efforts, previous schooling (Siegfried & Fels, 1979; Anderson and Benjamin, 1994); parents' education, family income (Devadoss & Foltz, 1996); self motivation, age of student, learning preferences (Aripin, Mahmood, Rohaizad, Yeop & Anuar, 2008); class attendance and entry qualification (Romer, 1993); prior knowledge, course prerequisites and course combinations (Pashler and Bjork, 2008); poor facilities for learning (Roeser, 1996) as factors that have significant effect on the students' academic performance in various settings. The usefulness of these studies lies on the need to undertake measures that will improve the academic performance of students.

Studies have also shown that poor teaching facilities have profound effect on academic performance. Therefore a teacher engages due diligence on facilities to assess the availability, accessibility, applicability and determine ways to effectively utilize such facilities. In the opinion of Akapan and Eminue (2020) well planned use of facilities facilitates effective teaching and learning process and enhances better learning outcomes of the students.

An effective teacher's action can cover for any other deficiency in learning since the teacher manipulates every other variable to facilitate learning. The teacher as a major component of the curriculum process motivates, facilitates and guides learning. He can handle the limit to which every other factor can mar the achievement of educational objective. In the submission of Ibrahim and John (2020) the teacher has the autonomy to plan, arrange and manage all that are involved in instructional delivery in order to provide opportunity for learning. They further stated that the effect of the teacher's action on the achievement of their students is twice of the effect of other factors.

### **Strategic Teaching**

**Strategic teaching** is a way of making decisions about a course, an individual class, or even an entire curriculum, beginning with an analysis of key variables in the teaching situation. These variables include the characteristics of the learners, the learning objectives, and the instructional preferences of the teacher. Once these variables have been analyzed, informed decisions can be made about course content, structure, methods of assessment, and other key components (Oyekan in Amiaya and Ovbiagele, 2015). In the light of the above assertion, one can only conclude that strategic teaching is the aftermath of due diligence process. Classroom delivery in business education must involve strategic teaching if the mandate of the programme must be achieved.

Harb and El Shaarawi (2006) stated that, a good match between students' learning preferences and instructor's teaching style has been demonstrated to have positive effect on student's performance. Reid (1995) defines learning preference as a person's "natural, habitual and preferred way" of assimilating new information. This implies that individuals differ in regard to what mode of instruction or study is most effective for them. Scholars, who promote the learning preferences approach to learning, agree that effective instruction can only be undertaken if the learner's learning preferences are diagnosed and the instruction is tailored accordingly (Pashler, McDaniel, Rohrer & Bjork, 2008). "I hear and I forget. I see and I remember. I do and I understand," (Confucius 551-479 BC) is a quote that provides evidence that, even in early times, there was recognition of the existence of different learning preferences among people. Indeed, Omrod (2008) reports that some students seem to learn better when information is presented through words (verbal learners), whereas others seem to learn better when it is presented in the form of pictures (visual learners).



In the light of the above, it is conspicuous that in a class where only one instructional method is employed, there is a strong possibility that a number of students will find the learning environment less optimal and this could affect their academic performance. Felder (1993) established that alignment between students' learning preferences and an instructor's teaching style leads to better recall and understanding. Such effective alignment could only be achieved when a teacher carries out due diligence procedures that will enable him determine the preferred or combination of methods or processes.

In line with that, studies have established a number of methods used to assess the learning preference or styles of students. One of these approaches being used widely is the Visual/Aural/Read and Write/Kinaesthetic (VARKR) questionnaire, pioneered by Neil Fleming in 1987, which categorizes learners into four major learning preference classes. Neil Fleming (2001-2011) described these four major learning preferences as follows: Firstly is a class of visual learners who prefer information to be presented on the whiteboard, flip charts, walls, graphics, pictures, and colour. The creative among them may use different colours and diagrammes in their notebooks. Failure to do this, their academic performance would be poorly affected. Secondly is a class of Aural (or oral) or auditory learners which are students who prefer to sit back and listen. They do not make a lot of notes. More often than not, they find it useful to record lectures for later playbacks and reference. This helps them improve their academic performance. Thirdly is a class of read/write learners who prefer to read the information on their own and take a lot of notes. These learners benefit more when given access to additional relevant information through handouts and guided readings from their teachers or lecturers. Failure to avail to them such facilities may impede their academic performance. The fourth class according to Fleming is the class of Kinaesthetic (or tactile) learners; these kind of learners cannot sit still for long and like to fiddle with things. They prefer to be actively involved in their learning and thus would benefit from active learning strategies in class.

Moreover, students' prior knowledge, course prerequisites and course combinations have profound influence on their academic performance. This is justified by the fact that, learning is a cumulative process, thus a student admitted with matching courses to the career of their choice will be well prepared for the course material compared to a student with a mismatch of course combinations. It is important for teachers to have an idea of how well the courses correspond to each student in order to complement learning. Such an analysis would be helpful in the choice of teaching method and skills to apply. Also important to the teachers are the analysis of the students' attitude to learning and the activities that motivate their learning process.

### **Business Education Programme**

Business education like any other educational programme holds the key to individual and national development. It is a programme targeted at developing in students, life skills for economic success; provide information and communication technology skills; broaden educational opportunities; help students develop skills and attitudes for career success, help learner acquire global business knowledge; encourage creativity and innovation in entrepreneurial thinking (ABEN, 2020). This suggests that the programme is expected to make its recipients resourceful and self-confident. As a vocational course it is expected that its products are equipped to qualify for gainful employment in business and office occupations. In the submission of Amesi and Allison (2020) business education in Nigeria is designed to serve as a platform for producing skilled business teachers, office administrators and business men and women that can effectively compete in the world of work and in enterprises as employees, entrepreneurs and as employers. This explanation corroborates Calhoun and Finch's opinion expressed in ABEN (2020) which described Business Education as education that equips the students with skills necessary to perform particular functions in an office and will provide them



with the understanding and knowledge needed for conducting personal affairs and for using the services of the business world.

Business education students receive education for (vocational education) and about (consumer education) business by being guided through planned experiences that offer them the opportunity to gain the knowledge, competencies, and attitude not only for them to be successful in business activities but also for success in life generally. The curriculum reflects currency in terms of technology and therefore incorporates information and communication technology courses like database management, information management systems, desktop publishing, ICT office applications, multimedia, webpage design and others. No wonder Umoru (2015) described Business Education as an academic programme which has the aim of equipping the learners with an understanding of value, knowledge, business and technical skills which are required in the world of work and teaching students business related subjects. It is not therefore an overstatement that the programme is designed in a way that it should be able to inculcate core skills, knowledge and values needed for gainful employment and productivity and therefore stands to correct the impression that Nigerian students graduate without core skills, knowledge and values.

Business education has three basic components which are: Accounting, Office and Distributive education and each of these components has been affected by continuous technology innovations. These innovations have brought a paradigm change in everything including classroom delivery of instructions. It therefore calls for innovative teaching where teachers are expected to first examine, analyze the students' preferences, prior knowledge and so on viza viz their teaching methods, skills, strategies, tools, technologies, processes in order to customize the teaching process.

### **Due Diligence and Instructional Delivery in Business Education**

Instructional delivery is the interaction among the student, the teacher, the content, and the knowledge or skills or dispositions for learning and collaboration with others in a diverse society and rapidly changing world. Wokochakelechi and Appah (2020) submit that instructional delivery is the process employed in the transfer of knowledge from the instructor to the learner which involves the use of several strategies and facilities. It involves the interactive skills and activities used by the teacher to promote and enhance learning. Ogwu and Ogwu in Wokochakelechi and Appah (2020) added that instructional strategy facilitates learning in order to bring about change in behaviour which is the aim of education.

Besides the conventional teaching methods which are identified by Nzewi, Okpara and Akudolu (2005) as follows: lecture method, discussion method, project method, discovery method, problem solving method and discovery method; Bagudu and Dibbari (2020) also itemized teaching techniques as counselling approach, focusing on understanding and mutual solving of problem to behaviour modification or ignoring inappropriate and reinforcing appropriate behaviour. Odah also recognised computer aided instruction business plan development instruction, industrial collaboration; teacher guided case analysis instructional strategy and others as customized strategies in business education. Vin-Mbah in Ama, Oko and Eze-Desy (2017) identified the following strategies as appropriate for teaching and learning in Business Education.

**Computer Aided Instructional Strategy:** The computer aided instructional strategy will enable the students to learn and acquire the knowledge, skills, ability and attitude necessary to function successfully in the global business and economic environments. In the opinion of Adelakin (2009) this is done by integrating the appropriate technology to support practices that link learning objectives and high levels of achievement. Consequently, for this strategy to be effective the institution must provide the technological environment, based on the curricular and students must be mindfully engaged in the teaching/learning process.



**Concept Mapping Instructional Strategy:** Concept mapping is a learning strategy that many students find useful in understanding complex ideas and clarifying ambiguous relationships. According to Ajaja (2009), concept mapping instructional strategy is creating a graphic representation of a topic to help the students visualize the key concepts and organize their knowledge more clearly than other strategies of study. A concept map is a two-dimensional representation of the relationship between key ideas. It shows how we think and suggest affinities and associations that might not otherwise be obvious. At first glance, a concept map looks like a flow chart in which key terms are placed in boxes connected by directional arrows. These boxes and directional arrows are meta-cognitive tools that empower the learner to take charge of learning in a highly organized and meaningful manner. ICT skills with regard to webpage design and e-commerce administration can be enhanced through this strategy.

**Industrial Collaboration Instructional Strategy:** According to Oduma (2008), industrial collaboration instructional strategy is the means of partnership with other bodies on something for mutual benefit. Universities, Polytechnics and Colleges of Education and industrial collaboration are an effective way of technology transfer and it is of mutual benefit to the school and industry. This strategy can only facilitate instructional delivery where the learning environment is a replica of office environment (Nwosu (2006). He further noted that technologies in learning environment should be the same in the office environment.

**Laboratory-Centred Instructional Strategy:** Laboratory-centred strategy according to Oduma (2008) connotes that all instructions requiring the acquisitions of skills and use of instructional facilities should, of necessity, be taught in a well-equipped laboratory. A well-equipped laboratory will facilitate teaching and learning of Business Education.

**Simulation Instructional Strategy:** Simulation instructional strategy in the teaching and learning of Business Education is a role play strategy. Individual acts a part to express his/her own perception of the roles or functions workers perform while discharging their duties. According to Farrant in Vin-Mbah (2012), role-play can be regarded as the experimenting stage of learning where the students tries out his newly acquired knowledge and skills with the activities of people and things. Hence, role-play encourages the student to stimulate creative imagination, provide opportunity for experimentation beyond the real level of development, exercise learning competencies, engage in independent learning and gain experience and express himself freely with confidence. Simulation strategy is fundamental in Business Education because it enables the students to play the role of an office manager, accountant, marketer, teacher and director as if he is in real working environment during teaching-learning process.

Besides analysing students to enable a business teacher apply the right technique, method, strategy in teaching; there are other due diligence strategies that could be applied to make instructional delivery of business education effective. This is in line with the assertion of Bagudu and Dabbari, (2020) that business teachers in order to achieve the objectives of the programme must:

- ✓ Bank time with students
- ✓ Encourage student-led activities
- ✓ Develop caring and supportive relationship with students
- ✓ Encourage students engagement in academic tasks
- ✓ Promote development of students social skills and self-regulation
- ✓ Use appropriate interventions to assist students with behaviour problems

These are necessary because Business Education programme curriculum requires practical demonstration of skills. The programme is skill driven and needs the concentrated use of the hand, brain, and the eye at the same time. Learning in Business Education is critical, because it is a skill driven programme that requires the attention of students to understand the gradual process, scientific knowledge and its concepts. It is technologically driven and is



expected to put the students in limelight and make them employable in almost every facet of the world of work. It is therefore designed to equip students in various aspects of different fields of endeavour. Learning in Business Education involves problem solving and according to Elom (2016) problem solving learning is a higher order learning process that requires the use of cognitive abilities such as thinking, reasoning and observation (Ama & Azih, 2020)

More so, the target of any educational programme is to use teaching strategies to accomplish defined goal. The way a teacher plans and organizes activities in order to engage students properly is the strategy however such strategy is expected to answer to students needs. Since the usefulness or effectiveness of teaching strategy vary as course contents and students need vary, the strategy used to achieve a particular task or for a particular student or set of students may not necessarily be used to accomplish another task or for another student or set of students. (Abdullahi, 2012)

The position of this paper is that as wonderful as these methods, strategies, skills and techniques are, their application in Business Education must vary in relation to the nature of the student or set of students. A Business Education teacher must therefore be adoptive, assess the needs of learners and be a life learner and researcher who is bent on finding ways of making students study acquisitively, that is studying to retain and not just to receive; studying to possess not just to perceive. Learners must be made to understand concepts, possess them and apply them and not just studying for certification.

### **Conclusion**

The goals of business education cannot be achieved without due diligence on the side of the teachers because the programme is highly dynamic, work focused, skill based, result oriented and technologically driven. Due diligence will enable a teacher establish positive relationship with his students; making students have sense of belongingness characterized by trust, connection and understanding. Positive relationship helps students to stay focused on learning. Due diligence also lends itself as a solution to the age long issue of how best to help learners especially learners in skill-oriented programmes like business education to acquire knowledge, skills and values.

### **Recommendations**

1. Business Education teachers should engage in constant trainings and retraining to enable them make appropriate considerations, analysis and evaluations before choice of methods, skills and strategies with instructional facilities to impart desirable knowledge to student or set of students based on their peculiarity. Continuous professional development (CDP) should be engaged on by the business teacher considering that education industry is dynamic and is experiencing a lot of changes in the last few decades. Such professional training could come in the form of traditional school training or e-learning.
2. Association of Business Educators in Nigeria (ABEN) should weld into this matter of making the teaching of business subjects effective through constant seminars and workshops.
3. The production of the Mandate for Business Education is already a way forward; however it is also recommended that ABEN should sensitize business educators on the need for thorough analysis of students' characteristics and materials available in each setting which will enable such teacher device an effective strategy. This is in line with the assertion in the Mandate of Business Education in Nigeria that 'Business Education courses are designed to solve the problem of Nigerian students graduating without core skills, knowledge and value needed for gainful employment.



4. Business education teacher should be adoptive, learn to assess needs of learners, advocate for the profession and be a lifelong learner.
5. ABEN should seize the opportunity of social media and group chats to discuss and elaborate on these issues that boarder on effective instructional delivery.

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