

## SOCIAL CAPITAL AS A DETERMINATE IN EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND LEARNING

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### **Abstract**

*This study is titled “social capital as a determinant of effective teaching and learning process” was developed to identify the relevance of social capital in the application and use of the principles of teaching in the teaching learning process in the school systems. The existence of criminality among students and the school environment is a cause of concern to the Nigerian society. The researcher tries to identify the importance of building social capital into most of the principles of the teaching learning process to develop love and care among teachers and students in the school system. The study recommended that a good social capital development by means of seminars should be established by school leaders and managers, and social capital and moral values should be introduced as a subject in the SS III school curriculum and as a general studies course for all students in the faculty of education in Nigerian universities and all colleges of education.*

*Key Words: Social Capital, Teaching, Learning, Process and Education*

### **Introduction**

According to John Dewey as quoted by Osokoya (2010), educational development should be dialectical. He added that a learning child should be given the opportunity to participate in different types of experience, to build the child's creative ability. John Dewey believed that education should be a continuous development of immature experience toward mature experience. Essia (2005) said “man's mental characteristics determine how individuals construct their mental models”. Such models are formed from the aggregation of ideologies in one's environment and if wrong models are formed, it only takes a continuous learning process that makes an individual to condemn the self-seeking values of human ideologies and let the mental maturity to yield love, truth-telling, prudence, reciprocity, mutual trust, and how to postpone immediate self-gratification for the overall happiness of all in the future.

As if giving further explanation to Osokoya's use of the word 'dialect', Essia (2005) said “mental development is essentially a dialectical process that involves the acquisition and use of new information, interaction and activity to fill a self-felt knowledge gap”. To Dewey, education as a continuous reconstruction and growth of experience should also develop the

moral character of the child. Virtue should be taught not by imposing values upon the child but by cultivating in him, fair mindedness, objectivity, imagination and courage to change his mind in the light of new experience to knowledge (Osokoya, 2010).

Dewey's view is that a school is a miniature society and should reflect the good nature of the society. School is an instrument for carrying out social reform. Schools should be used to develop creative individuals who will work to eliminate evil from the society. He also believed that education should be used to encourage habits and dispositions that make up intelligence and that nurture such good habits, and in addition, be used to develop the moral character of a child. This issue of moral character development is what is referred to as *social capital development*.

Social capital according to Michael (2001), “is an element of intellectual capital which consist of the stocks and flows of knowledge available to an organization which are intangible resources when combined with tangible resources (money and physical assets) to make up the total value of the business”. Bontis (1998) defines intangible resources as “the factors other than financial and physical assets that contribute to value generating process of an institution and are

under its control, which comprise the value of all relationships inside the organization". Putnam (1996) said social capital is the "features of social life, networks, norms, and trust that enable participants to act together more effectively to produce common objectives".

The Nigerian school system needs to imbibe the good principles of social capital formation to reduce the level of crime and violence in our schools. Therefore the objective of this study is to identify and educate people on the relevance of social capital development in establishing a good relationship among individuals in the teaching learning process.

### **Conceptual Review**

#### **Teaching/Learning Process**

Education is the key to success for young students. A teacher's duty is to motivate student to ascertain their inner strengths and abilities and discover what truly inspires them. To create a stimulating learning environment that encourages students to trust their own opinions, while fostering confidence to realize full potential. Education has two main purposes: To empower learners to think for themselves, and to promote in the next generation ways of thinking and acting that are deemed important by the present generation. Empowering the learner means that teachers should relinquish some of their power and hand it over to the learner and let the learner being actively involved. (Clement 2004; Huitt 2003).

Knowledge does not belong to a teacher who is supposed to deliver it as plectrum; it is rather the result of social interaction and the meaning the teacher and the students construct together. This process is not a linear sequence of events but a dynamic phenomenon, whereby the teacher, who is more knowledgeable, is called upon to act, among other things, as a mediator, influencing and being influenced by the students, who happen to lack this knowledge. This is the teacher/learning process. (Thanasowas 2005)

#### **The Principal as Supervisor in the Curriculum**

To do well in supervision, the principal must develop good rapport with classroom teachers. Hostility and mistrust have no role to

play when developing a quality curriculum. Negative attitudes towards others, hinders interactions among the principal and teachers. A feeling of acceptance needs to be in the offing. The school climate needs to emphasize politeness, feelings of belonging, and honest praise for quality work performed. The latter helps individuals to meet esteem needs. Too often, teachers and principals come to school each day of the calendar year with little or no attention being given to that which is done well by any one individual. The routines of these situations must be broken to bring in a school climate which encourages and welcomes faculty members as well as support personnel (Ediger, 2001).

This sets the stage then for principals and teachers working together to develop the best curriculum possible for students. The stated objectives for pupils to achieve must be attainable if the mandated objectives which help pupils to achieve the desired end. These enabling objectives assist pupils to sequentially realize the original complex goal. Another approach for assisting teachers in teaching is for principal to stress the concept of scaffolding. Thus, for example, the objective is too difficult for pupils attain. However, with scaffolding, pupils are aided with a series of sequentially arranged learning activities to realize the complex objective or goal. Thus, there are definite strategies for aiding pupil to achieve difficult learning, either through enabling objectives or through scaffolding.

The principal needs to guide teachers to study these two concepts in depth. Then too, the principal may use demonstration teaching to show how to put these two and other strategies into operation. When classroom teachers use either or both procedure, they need to report back to school professionals what they did to implement and how they felt the new procedures affected pupil achievement (Ediger, 2007).

Teachers may need assistance in stressing knowledge (knowing about enabling objectives and scaffolding), as well as skills objectives (strategies to use in implementing the acquired knowledge in teaching and learning situations). Attitudes as objectives result from

learning experience involving knowledge and skills ends.

If the following occur during teaching and learning situations, the chances are negative attitudes have been developed:

- Excess drill which takes the joy out of the ongoing experiences
- Pressure to achieve beyond what the learner can possibly attain
- A lack of challenge
- Dull learning activities
- Inadequate explanations given within the learning activity (Ediger, 2008).

### **Alignment of Learning Activities**

School principals must guide teachers to align learning experiences with the stated objectives. Learning activities need to be aligned with the chosen objectives to optimize pupil achievement. The objectives provide direction for changes to be made within the learner. The learning activities assist in bringing about the necessary modifications. Too frequently, the objectives have been stated too broadly and thus provide little help in knowing what the objective means. The other extreme is to write objective which are too specific, resulting in facts, only, being taught.

Thus, a happy medium must be sought whereby objectives are specific enough to agree upon what will be taught and, at the same time, possess adequate leeway to provide for higher cognitive levels of subject matter being taught such as critical and creative thinking as well as problem solving (Guilfoyle, 2006).

School principals need to help teachers choose learning activities which are varied to develop maintain learner interests reading experiences, audio visual aids, discussions, small and large group work, as well as the integration of technology need to be incorporated into the curriculum. Individual differences must be provided for including interest differences, diverse learning styles, and multiple intelligences. Teachers must assist students to develop

- Quality self-concepts whereby there is confidence for achieving
- Feelings of curiosity in knowledge and skills being taught
- Habits of being responsible for objectives to be attained
- Traits of friendliness in learning to accept each student in the classroom and school
- Polite behavior avoiding rudeness, and negative judgmental statements made about others (Ediger, 2008).

A school climate needs to emerge which encourages optimal student learning. This implies, too, that the environment for learning encourages quality teaching. Learners need to feel respected in a relaxed environment for learning. Pupils must be actively engaged in learning. Interest needs to be a major factor in teaching pupils in securing their attention. Any learning experience may be made interesting with appropriate selections made. Methods used along with the learning experience must be varied such as using inductive, deductive problem solving textbook, multi-media, and project method approaches. Principals should assist to guide pupils to perceive purpose for learning.

Thus, learners are assisted to perceive reasons for achieving objectives of instruction. Facts, concepts, and generalizations taught and achieved, need to be meaningful. They must be understood by pupils since each becomes a building block for ensuing activities. Quality sequence stresses that pupils are able to relate previous with subsequent subject matter. A good school climate then emphasizes providing for individual differences in an environment conducive to learning (Tighe and O'Conner, 2005).

### **Social Capital and the Teaching - Learning Process**

The following processes and principles of learning has a great impact in the behavior if students if done with love, trust and fellow feelings. It will train students to understand the practice of social values and the relevance of

fellow feelings in the society. These principles are not the foundations of social capital but executing them with the concept of social capital will build its foundation in the minds and perceptions of the students.

### **Principles of Learning**

Cognitive research is revealing is revealing that even with what is taken to be good instruction, many students, including academically talented ones, understand less than we think they do. With determination, students taking an examination are commonly able to identify what they have been told or what they have read; careful probing, however, often shows that their understating is limited to distorted, if not altogether wrong.

This finding suggest that parsimony is essential in setting out educational goals: Schools should pick the most important concepts and skills to emphasize so that they can concentrate on the quality of understanding rather than on the quantity of information presented.

### **What Students Learn is influenced by Their Existing Ideas**

People have to construct their own meaning regardless of how clearly teachers or books tell them things. Mostly, a person does this by connecting new information and concepts to what he or she already believes. Concepts – the essential units of human thought – that do not have multiple links with how a student thinks about the world are not likely to be remembered or useful. Or, if they do remain in memory, they will be tucked away in a drawer labeled, say, “business course, 2011,” and will not be available to affect thoughts about any other aspect of the world. Concepts are learned best when they are encountered in a variety of contexts and expressed in a variety of ways, for that ensures that there are more opportunities for them to become imbedded in a student’s knowledge system.

But effective learning often requires more than just making multiple connections of new ideas to old ones; it sometimes requires that people restructure their thinking radically. That is,

to incorporate some new idea, learners must change the connections among the things they already know, or even discard some long-held beliefs about the world. The alternatives to the necessary restructuring are to distort the new information to fit their old ideas or to reject the new information entirely.

Students come to school with their own ideas, some correct and some not, about almost every topic they are likely to encounter. If their intuition and misconceptions are ignored or dismissed out of hand, their original beliefs are likely to win out in the long run, even though they may give the test answers their teachers want. Mere contradiction is not sufficient; students must be encountered to develop new views by seeing how much views help them make better sense of the world. This is what Essien (2005) called interactive learning in relation to the effect of social capital on learning.

### **Progression in Learning is usually from the Concrete to the Abstract**

Young people can learn most readily about things that are tangible and directly accessible to their senses – visual, auditory, tactile, and kinesthetic. With experience, they grow in their ability to understand abstract concepts, manipulating symbols, reason logically, and generalize. These skills develop slowly, however, and the dependence of most people on concrete examples of new ideas persists throughout life. Concrete experiences are most effective in learning when they occur in the context of some relevant conceptual structure.

The difficulties many students have in grasping abstractions are often masked by their ability to remember and recite technical terms that they do not understand. As a result, teachers – from kindergarten through college – sometimes overestimate the ability of their students to handle abstractions, and they take the students’ use of the right words as evidence of understanding. Social capital helps teachers to build good relationship in students. This will help them to understand the students and ascertain their true level of understanding the subject.

### **People Learn to Do Well only what they Practice Doing**

If students are expected to apply ideas in novel situations, then they must practice applying them in novel situations. If they practice only calculating answers to predictable exercises or unrealistic “word problem”, then that is all they are likely to learn. Similarly, students cannot learn to think critically, analyze information, communicate scientific ideas, make logical arguments, work as part of a team, and acquire other desirable skills unless they are permitted and encouraged to do those things over and over in many contexts. Through teamwork, trust and honesty, virtues, only social capital can promote, such students will love to associate be committed in group projects and develop critical thinking.

### **Effective Learning by Students Requires Feedback**

The mere repetition of tasks by students' whether manual or intellectual – is unlikely to lead to improved skills or keener insights. Learning often takes place best when students have opportunities to express ideas and get feedback from their peers and teachers. But for feedback to be most helpful to learners, it must consist of more than the provision of correct answers. Feedback ought to be analytical, to be suggestive, and to come at a time when students are interested in it. And then there must be time for students to reflect on the feedback they receive, to make adjustments and to try again – a requirement that is neglected, it is worth noting, by most examinations – especially finals. To achieve this effective interaction, respect for students view and background, love and honesty must be introduced by the teacher to create the needed protection for feedback (social capital).

### **Expectation Affect Performance**

Students respond to their own expectations of what they can and cannot learn. If they believe they are able to learn something, whether solving equations or riding a bicycle, they usually make headway. But when they lack confidence, learning eludes them. Students grow in self-confidence as they experience success in

learning, just as they lose confidence in the face of repeated failure. Thus, teachers need to provide students with challenging but attainable learning tasks and help them succeed. The concept of social capital promotes understanding which in turn promotes reasonable expectation within the limits of the students.

What is more, students are quick to pick up the expectations of success or failure that others have for them. The positive and negative expectations shown by parents, counselors, principals, peers, and – more generally – by the news media affect students' expectations and hence their learning behavior. When, for instance, a teacher signals his or her lack of confidence in the ability of students to understand certain subjects, the students may lose confidence in their ability and may perform more poorly than they otherwise might. If this apparent failure reinforces the teacher's original judgment, a disheartening spiral of decreasing confidence and performance can result.

Arts, science, mathematics, and technology and vocational studies are defined as much by what they do and how they do it as they are by the results they achieve. To understand them as ways of thinking and doing, as well as bodies of knowledge, requires that students have some experience with the kinds of thought and action that are typical of those fields. Teachers, therefore, should do the following in relation to the social capital concept:

#### **Start With Questions about Nature**

Sound teaching usually begins with questions and phenomena that are interesting and familiar to students, not with abstractions or phenomena outside their range of perception, understanding, or knowledge. Students need to get acquainted with the things around them – including devices, equipment, organisms, materials, shapes, and numbers – and to observe them, collect them, handle them, describe them, become puzzled by them, ask questions about them,, argue about them, and the try to find answers to their questions (this is purely an interactive session).

### **Engage Students Actively**

Students need to have many and varied opportunities for collecting, sorting and cataloging; observing, note taking and sketching; interviewing, polling, and surveying; and using hand lenses, typewriters, computers, microscopes, thermometers, cameras, and other common instruments. They should dissect; measure, count, graph, and compute; explore the chemical properties of common substances; practice the keys, plant and cultivate; and systematically observe the social behavior of humans and other animals. Among these activities, none is more important than measurement, in that figuring out what to measure, what instruments to use, how to check the correctness of measurements, and how to configure and make sense out of the results are at the heart of much of science and engineering students.

### **Concentrate on the Collection and use of Evidence**

Students should be given problems – at levels appropriate to their maturity – that require them to decide what evidence is relevant and to offer their own interpretations of what the evidence means. This puts a premium, on careful observation and thoughtful analyzing evidence, and in building arguments based on it. However, if such activities are not to be destructively boring, they must lead to some intellectually satisfying payoff that students care about. It will not be boring only when there is love, trust, good communication, respect for one another and moral values in the class.

### **Provide Historical Perspectives**

During their school years, students should encounter many scientific ideas presented in historical context. It matters less which particular episodes teachers select than that the selection represents the scope and diversity of the scientific enterprise. Students can develop a sense of how science really happens by learning something of the growth of scientific ideas, of the twists and turns on the way to our current understanding of

such ideas, of the roles played by different investigators and commentators, and of the interplay between evidence and theory over time.

History is important for the effective teaching of science, mathematics, and technology and arts also because it can lead to social perspectives – the influence of society on the development of science, art and technology, and the impact of science and technology on society. It is important, for example, for student to become aware that women and minorities have made significant contributions in spite of the barriers put in their way by society; that the roots of science, mathematics and technology go back to the early Egyptian, Greek, Arabic, and Chinese cultures; and that scientist bring to their work the values and prejudices of the cultures in which they live. (Osokoya 2010)

### **Insist on Clear Expression**

Effective oral and written communication is so important in every facet of life that teachers of every subject and at every level should place a high priority on it for all students. In addition, science teachers should emphasize clear expression, because the role of evidence and the unambiguous replication of evidence cannot be understood without some struggle to express one's own procedures, findings, and ideas rigorously, and to decode the accounts of others.

### **Use of Team Approach**

The collaborative nature of scientific and technological work should be strongly reinforced by frequent group activity in the classroom. Scientist and engineers work mostly in groups and less often as isolated investigators. Similarly, students should gain experience sharing responsibility for learning with each other. In the process of coming to common understandings, students in a group must frequently inform each other about procedures and meanings, argue over findings, and assess how the task is progressing. In the context of team responsibility, feedback and communication becomes more realistic and of a character very different from the usual individual textbook-homework-recitation approach.

### **Teaching should Reflect Scientific Values**

Science is more than a body of knowledge and a way of accumulating and validating that knowledge. It is also a social activity that incorporates certain human values. Holding curiosity, creativity, imagination and beauty in high esteem are certainly not confined to science, any more than skepticism and distaste for dogmatism are. However, they are all highly characteristic of the scientific endeavor. In learning, students should encounter such values as part of their experience, not as empty claims. This suggests that teachers should strive to do the following:

**Welcome Curiosity-** Curiosity breeds interest and interest motivates the desire to learn to interact, to investigate, to probe, to ensure, to confirm and to be convinced. This is personal study, meditation, creative thinking, and self-actualization and awareness that are had learned. A good teacher should accept it, foster it, incorporate it, reward it, and discipline it – and so does good teaching. Thus, teachers should encourage students to raise questions about the material being studied, help them learn to frame their questions clearly enough to begin to search for answers, suggest to them productive ways for finding answers, and reward those who raise and then pursue unusual but relevant questions. In the classroom, wondering should be as highly valued as knowing.

**Reward Creativity-** Artists, scientist, mathematicians, and engineers prize the creative use of imagination. The classroom ought to be a place where creativity and invention – as qualities distinct from academic excellence – are recognized and encouraged. Indeed, teachers can express their own creativity by inventing activities in which students' creativity and imagination will pay off.

**Encourage a Spirit of Healthy Questioning-** Science prospers because of the institutional skepticism of its practitioners. The central tenet is that one's evidence, logic, and claims will be questioned, and one's experiments

will be subjected to replication. In classrooms, it should be the normal practice for teachers to raise such questions as: How do we know? What is the evidence? What is the argument that interprets the evidence? Are there alternative explanations or other ways of solving the problem that could be better? The aim should be to get students into the habit of posing such questions and framing answers.

**Avoid Dogmatism-** Students should experience learning as a process for extending understanding, not as unalterable truth. This means that teachers must take care not to convey the impression that they themselves or the textbooks are absolute authorities whose conclusions are always correct. By dealing with the credibility of claims, the overturn of accepted beliefs, and what to make out of disagreements among scholars, teachers can help students to balance the necessity for accepting a great deal of thought on faith against the importance of keeping an open mind.

### **Teaching Should Aim to Counteract Learning Anxieties**

Teachers should recognize that for many students, the learning of mathematics and science involves feelings of severe anxiety and fear of failure. No doubt this results partly from what is taught and the way it is taught, and partly from attitudes picked up incidentally very early in schooling from parents and teachers who are themselves ill at ease with science and mathematics. Far from dismissing math and science anxiety as groundless, though, teachers should assure students that they understand the problem and will work with them to overcome it. Teachers can take such measures as the following:

**Build on Success-** Teachers should make sure that students have some sense of success in learning and they should deemphasize getting all the right answers as being the main criterion of success. Understanding anything is never absolute, and it takes many forms. Accordingly, teachers should strive to make all students – particularly the less confident ones – aware of

their progress and should encourage them to continue studying.

**Provide Abundant Experience in Using Tools-** Many students are fearful of using laboratory instruments and other tools. This fear may result primarily from the lack of opportunity many of them have to become familiar with tools in safe circumstances. Girls in particular suffer from the mistaken notion that boys are naturally more adept at using tools. Starting in the earliest grades, all students should gradually gain familiarity with tools and the proper use of tools. By the time they finish school, all students should have had supervised experience with common hand tools, soldering irons, electrical meters, drafting tools, optical and should equipment, calculators, and computers.

**Support the Roles of Girls and the Poor-** Because the medical and engineering professions have been predominantly male and the rich, female and poor students could easily get the impression that these fields are beyond them or otherwise unsuited to them. This debilitating perception – all too often reinforced by the environment outside the school – will persist unless teachers actively work to turn it around. Teachers should select learning materials that illustrate the contributions of women and poor ones, bring in role models, and make it clear to female and minority students that are expected to study the same subjects at the same level as everyone else and to perform as well.

**Emphasize Group Learning-** A group approach has motivational value apart from the need to use team learning or promote an understanding of the subject work. Overemphasis on competition among students for high grades distorts what ought to be the prime motive for studying: to find things out. Competition among students in the classroom may also result in many of them developing a dislike of the subject and losing their confidence in their ability to learn. Group approaches, the norm in education have many advantages in for instance, they help youngsters see that everyone can contribute to the attainment of common goals and that progress

does not depend on everyone's having the same abilities.

### **Teaching Should Extend Beyond the School**

Children learn from their parents, siblings, other relatives, peers and adult authority figures, as well as from teachers. They learn from movies, television, radio, records, trade books and magazines, and home computers, and from going to museums and zoos, parties, club meetings, rock concerts, and sports events, as well as from schoolbooks and the school environment in general.

Teachers should exploit the rich resources of the larger community and involve parents and other concerned adults in useful ways. It is also important for teachers to recognize that some of what their students learn informally is wrong, incomplete, poorly understood, or misunderstood, but that formal education can help students to restructure that knowledge and acquire new knowledge.

### **Teaching Should Take Its Time**

In learning, students need time for exploring, for making observations, for taking wrong turns, for testing ideas, for doing things over again; time for building things, calibrating instruments, collecting things, constructing physical and mathematical models for testing ideas; time for learning whatever mathematics, technology, and science that they may need to deal with the questions at hand; time for asking around, reading, and arguing; time for wrestling with unfamiliar and counterintuitive ideas and for coming to see the advantage in thinking in a different way.

Moreover, any topic in art, science, mathematics or technology that is taught only in single lesson or unit is unlikely to leave a trace by the end of schooling. To take hold and mature, concepts must not just be presented to students from time to time but must be offered to them periodically in different contexts and at increasing levels of sophistication.

A Chinese proverb said "Tell me and I forget, show me and I remember, involve me and I understand."



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### Conclusion and Recommendation

The main focus of this study was to find solution to the problem of students' criminality in schools taking place around the country. The researcher believed that a fair attempt to build Social Capital formation among school children at their early age through the numerous school activities will reshape the criminal tendencies exhibited in schools by the students. The teachers and school managers has a great responsibility to do so because the home front has failed to do it. A simple way of doing it is by performing the normal functions and processes of school activities with love and concern for one another to be demonstrated by the teachers.

The fairly comprehensive literature review revealed that a teacher has multiple functions in the classroom management. He acts as a teacher, guidance, a friend, a planner, a psychologist, and educator, a friend, a custodian of traditions and norms and examiner. All these functions require patience, self-control, endurance and care on his/her part towards the students. All these qualities can be seen in a teacher only when the teacher has a good amount of social capital in his/her lifestyle. Again students can only follow, listen and obey a teacher as a role model and carrier builder if he/she is able to build in them the values of having social capital.

At the end of the exercise, this study has shown that social capital builds a lasting relationship. The lack of social capital had informed the reason for increase in school crises, youth disturbance, social violence and lack of respect and trust for one another in the society at large. Since the school is the bed rock of education not only for academic purposes but also for moral values and customs, a lack of such training in the school affect the social and global community at large.

It is recommended that Social Capital should be taught as a subject in the secondary schools at SSIII level and as part of General

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