

**THE ROLES OF TEACHER LEADERSHIP IN CONNECTING
STUDENTS' LEARNING TO REAL LIFE EXPERIENCES**

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Abstract

Teacher leadership is progressively becoming significant aspect of school improvement. Yet, in spite of its popularity and influence on school development, some teachers in today's classrooms do not seem to clearly understand its significance, and how it aids teaching and learning that links classroom knowledge to real life experiences. Rather, their focus is majorly concentrated on the causes of students' academic weaknesses and/or backwardness, which include: lack of textbooks, truancy, distractions from social media (Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Imo, Twitter, WhatsApp, etc.), and spending precious times using different gadgets for online gaming (e.g. Mobile Legend), than on academics. This article identifies and explains some in-classroom factors that can aid teachers' effective facilitations during teaching and learning practices. It also encourages teacher's adjustments in the classroom by making significant interrelatedness to the teacher's classroom facilitations and competencies, and their connection with the real world experiences.

Keywords: Teacher leadership, School improvement, classroom facilitations, Instructional materials

INTRODUCTION

On several occasions, teachers' pedagogical knowledge, practices and competencies have been questioned by parents, guardians and stakeholders, based on the students' (poor) academic performances. But, little do people know about the determinants of students' knowledge retention. Paradoxically, in this millennial era, classroom teaching and learning processes have greatly advanced, most significantly with the use of technology in making genuine clarifications when lesson/lecture is ongoing. Nowadays, teaching is not "just" to impart knowledge in abstraction. That is, through "chalk and talk" method of teaching, (the prominent "old"

traditional method of teaching), when teaching was basically – (1) Teacher centered with long lectures; (2) Sequential learning with no or limited use of technology, and; (3) Focusing on students’ individualistic learning with few assessments and delayed feedbacks. Rather, numerous active and/or innovative teaching and learning methods have been developed to enhance students’ learning. In retrospect, *“teacher leadership”* was seen as *“optional”* (that is, teacher leaders were perceived as being followers rather than being agents of change), and yet, teacher leadership remained a prominent way to monitor and evaluate students’ academic performances. Meanwhile, nowadays, in global context, teacher leadership is no longer perceived as optional. It is very consequential to classroom teaching and learning processes and, greatly appreciable in a number of ways, such as: students’ achievement, teacher collaborative learning and retention, school culture, teacher motivation and/or rewarding teachers with Professional Based Bonus (PBB) – (the Measurement of Teachers’ professional Performances) and overall school improvements. It has therefore become very important to elucidate how *“teacher leadership”* enhances classroom facilitations, improves students’ knowledge retention capacity and also assists the students to link the concepts learnt in the classrooms to real world experiences.

DEFINITION OF TEACHER LEADERSHIP

According to (Akert & Martin, 2012), over the past few years, teacher leadership has become a popular concept of educational reform. Its culture entails that teachers engage in professional dialogue with colleagues, share ideas, knowledge, and techniques, participate in collaborative problem-solving around classroom issues, hone provocative lessons in teams, exhibit passionate professionalism and enjoy extensive opportunities for collegial professional dialogue (Ghamrawi, 2010). A recent model of leadership is one in which teachers, both as learners and teachers, contribute to the policies, vision and mission of school and take the initiative in and outside of the classroom to improve educational practices (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009). In reality, teacher leadership is a very composite concept to define. It demands teachers’ commitments, collaborations and excellent mastery of various aspects of school activities to achieve success. Undoubtedly, scholars across the globe have conducted many researches on the concept of *“teacher leadership”* from varying perspectives, and have also established numerous facts accordingly. For instance, Harris, A. & Muijs, D. (2005) state that the primary focus of teacher leadership is to develop a high-quality teaching and learning environment in school

settings. That is, the teacher leadership's views on school community's development are highly subjective to the school potential capacity in terms of sufficient material resources provisions, school preparedness, and availability of professionally trained teachers who are self-motivated and greatly inspired to bring innovations into the school environment. It therefore requires that, both the teachers and school administrators should independently possess the necessary leadership skills which are essentially supportive to school development. A successful teacher leadership model would be the one that provides the teachers with professional support and material resources to make appropriate clarity during teaching and learning processes. Katzenmeyer & Moller, (2009) define teacher leadership as teachers leading in-and-outside their classrooms, their contributions to a community of learners and positive influence on improving educational practices. This expresses that, teacher's volition is earnestly, and directly having influence on the majority of activities that occur within school environments. To simply put, the teachers' efforts on: school improvements, students' academic achievements and the students' moral uprightness cannot be underestimated. York-Barr and Duke (2004) state that teacher leadership reflects the notion that teacher's knowledge, skills and expertise can effectively be used to increase school improvement and student learning. It is assumed that, the professional knowledge of teacher greatly determines both the school developments and students' academic achievements. Teachers are the important drivers of school success. Through teacher's classroom facilitation and students' active participation in lessons, teachers do carefully determine the potential capabilities of individual students based on regular assigned tasks and tend to assist the students wherever necessary. According to Childs-Bowen et al. (2000), teacher leaders are perceived as potential sources of knowledge that ensure students' success in schools, where teacher leadership is supported. This is to ascertain that, whenever teachers are provided with the overarching opportunities to render their teaching services professionally, there is a guaranteed success on the students' academic performances and the overall school improvement, with adequate supervision. However, the teacher leadership's responsibilities do not only focus on students' academic performances and school improvements, but also extend to their colleagues (fellow teachers) through knowledge sharing, interpersonal communication and character developments. Teacher leaders can help their colleagues to design, implement and evaluate teaching practices effectively (Harrison & Killion, 2007). This would further help to increase the capacity of a school to improve students' learning and achievement (Harris & Lambert, 2003).

Teacher leaders are expected to design innovative classroom practices that best serve the diverse learning of needs of students (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009). As asserted by Gronn (2000), school improvement depends heavily on teacher leaders who continuously improve their teaching skills and enlarge their professional knowledge. Also, Harris and Muijs (2003) summarized teacher leadership as follows: (1) the leadership of other teachers through coaching, mentoring and leading working groups, (2) the leadership of developmental tasks that are central to improved learning and teaching and (3) the leadership of pedagogy through the development and modelling of effective forms of teaching. All these simply explain that, in a school setting, teacher leadership involves actively playing roles, such as – motivational, inspirational and transformational teacher leaders. Thus, encouraging and promoting teaching and learning processes through good interpersonal relationships, effective teaching strategies and professional ethical conducts. Similarly, Little (2000) expressed that teacher leaders may also efficiently operate in evaluating and praising student learning and success. That is, the sustainability of teacher leaders is embedded in the teachers' proficient classroom facilitation, continual improvement of students' active participation in lessons and the overall assessment of the intellectual capability of individual students, through the teacher's effective collaboration.

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

It has been said by Harris & Muijs, (2006) that, successful school improvement is dependent upon the ability of individual school to manage change and development. This further rests on the ability of individual school to independently initiate, coordinate and manage change as well as fostering its development. Meanwhile, achieving the desired school improvement requires that both the school administrators and teachers should structure a unique interactive system that could develop and promote learning. In fact, it could be emphasized that, school improvement and students' achievements are greatly dependent on the teachers' professional practices, availability and efficient use of instructional materials, willingness of the students to learning and the collaborative students'/teacher's interactive system. These, therefore, necessitate building the capacity for change and development within the school as an organization (Harris & Muijs, 2006). According to Mitchell & Sackney (2000), in their studies of school improvement, they explained that where individuals feel confident in their own capacity, in the capacity of their colleagues and in the capacity of the school to promote professional development, school

improvement is more likely to be achieved (Harris & Muijs, 2006). This reveals that, school improvement is a complex phenomenon that is interconnected, and begins with the individual teacher's willingness and internal motivations, self-determination and love for the profession. This can be explained further as, building capacity for school improvement is not limited to the school administrator's solitary efforts, but, it also involves the cooperative and collaborative efforts of other staff where knowledge sharing plays a prominent role. As such, school standards could easily be elevated to attain a new level of change with distinct professional education community. To expatiate, when teachers are provided with opportunities to acquire more knowledge and skills through professional trainings and teacher's creative teaching and learning techniques, effective classroom facilitation often mirrors in the students' behaviors toward learning. In such education communities, leadership is generally distributed throughout the entire learning system, and improvement occurs from an internal search for meaning, relevance and connection (Mitchell & Sackney, 2000) between teachers and their students. Furthermore, building the capacity for teachers for school improvement encompasses the potential capabilities of individual teachers to effectively lead classroom facilitations and make appropriate clarifications during lessons. In such cases, the quality of teacher's professional practices become well-proven by the following characteristics – (1) innovative methods of teaching with the use of instructional materials to impart knowledge; (2) students' active participation in lessons; (3) individual student's comprehension of the taught concepts; and (4) the students' application of the concepts in their day-to-day activities. The aspect of the teacher leadership model that is essentially required to connect the classroom activities to the existing world realities is the effective in-classroom facilitation. This is what I simply termed "*classroom teacher leadership*". It is a teacher leadership model that operates within the classroom setting, in which a teacher pays careful attention to his/her students' academic performances through the students' mental responsiveness toward classroom information and data processing capabilities, together with how proficiently a teacher is able to connect the classroom activities to real world experiences.

TEACHER LEADERSHIP IN CLASSROOM SETTING

For more than two decades, scholars across the globe have studied teacher leadership concept from various perspectives, and they have been able to establish numerous facts. So far, many discernible researches conducted on different aspects of school development focused on – school

success and improvement; teachers' cooperation and collaboration; teachers' interactive modes and knowledge sharing; teachers' involvement in school decision-making processes; and so on. But in all these studies, none of them have focused on the independent in-classroom functionality of teachers as a leader, and how they particularly link the students' classroom learning to real life experiences. As a matter of fact, an understanding of school leadership that views teachers as a leadership resource seems urgently required (Kilinc, 2014). To expatiate further, in a classroom setting, teacher being a classroom leader, primarily serves as a facilitator of teaching and learning, knowledge initiator and socio-cultural guardian of the students in all good manners of behaviors. Teachers stand as the fountains of knowledge to their pupils/students. They gather relevant experiences, acquire distinct pedagogical skills, learn good behavioral practices, and apply all to promote students' active participation during classroom facilitations. When teaching and learning are in progress, the classroom activities performed by teachers, and how students respond to the teacher's facilitation usually explains the extent to which the students have assimilated the taught concepts. Teachers as leaders in the classrooms are expected to be self-inspired and self-motivated individuals, who have been tasked with the responsibility of a leader to arouse the interests of their students toward greater academic achievements through professional teaching practices. Fullan (1994) remarks that teacher leaders may play a significant role in building positive relationships among colleagues, facilitating professional learning for themselves and leading improvement processes in schools. In the same vein, Katzenmeyer and Moller (2009), assert that teachers' perceptions of themselves as leaders inspire them to discover their own potential to influence student learning, put less blame on students or external factors for failures, become less resistant to school-wide change, make better use of opportunities to expand their influence, improve their own teaching and practices in their classrooms and influence others to improve their teaching. Apparently, it is assumed that teachers' views on teacher professionalism are ideologically challenged. That is, individual teacher should consider him/herself as a change agent who has been vested with the opportunities to take initiatives and readily prepared to – improve his/her competencies, impart knowledge on students, focus on school improvement, as well as promoting staff's oneness, based on the laid down principles and practices of teaching profession. Now, one crucial question to ask is – what factors can promote teacher leadership in the classroom?

Pedagogically speaking, teaching as a profession, is a practice that is procedural in nature. And based on the concepts' designs, teaching requires that, a teacher uses appropriate techniques to convey information to learners. Teachers as leaders – instruct, mentor, motivate and supervise students to participate, improve and achieve academic excellence. Thus, these four (4) basic in-classroom factors have been identified as ways to engage and improve students learning processes. These factors include: (1) Introducing a concept. (2) Teaching a correction. (3) Establishing a perfection, and (4) Connecting classroom teaching to real life experiences. These four (4) factors are interconnected and play vital roles in classroom facilitations which indirectly determine the teacher's success during teaching and learning processes. Unfortunately, many teacher leaders still do not understand how these four (4) parameters can aid their teaching and learning practices in their day-to-day activities. Hence, some teachers' professional practices are perceived as blunt and fail to invigorate learning.

1. INTRODUCING A CONCEPT

In pedagogical assertion, in an organized classroom setting, it is generally assumed that, students are not completely devoid of, unaware of or neophyte to the phenomenon that is being introduced to them by their teachers. If not all the students, at least, a good number of the classroom population might have had some conventional knowledge about the concept or topic being introduced to them. For example, a teacher who prepares to teach a topic on “Nutrition and/or Dietetics” cannot deny the fact that his/her students already had an idea of different food substances, since food is a basic need, and its consumption is a prominent part of our daily activities. But the reality remains that, the students might not have gotten sufficient facts about the nutritional values of each of the food items they consume on daily basis. Hence, teacher's effort is essentially required to widen the scope of the students' knowledge on the introduced concept by making some clarifications on the topic and providing relevant examples to buttress the explanations.

Professionally, teachers are distinct personnel who are academically trained, mentally equipped, socially motivated and psychologically developed, to strategically use different teaching methods to impart knowledge into the students/pupils in the classroom. But, out of the numerous teaching methods known, the most appreciable one is through the use of instructional materials/teaching aids. In fact, some professional educators believe that, instructional materials

could be introduced either in the beginning, middle or at the end of a lesson, depending on the teacher's discretion of the students' learning behaviors. A teacher is a classroom leader who facilitates teaching (and learning processes), and utilizes instructional material as a powerful tool to bring about instructional effectiveness. Instructional materials/teaching aids include all the tools that a teacher can use to make adequate clarifications during in-classroom facilitations, and thereby making learning more interesting, comprehensible and memorable.

According to Farombi (1998), instructional materials include books, audio-visual, software and hardware of educational technology. He further opines that the availability, adequacy and relevance of instructional materials in classrooms can influence quality teaching, which can have positive effects on students' learning and academic performance. The insight from Farombi's work on linking instructional resources to students' academic performance serves as a critical point in the provision of quality education by efficient teacher leadership through effective in-classroom facilitation. To clearly analyze, in the classroom arrangement, effective teaching and high knowledge productions often emanate from the school's ability to provide adequate instructional materials; teacher's accessibility to the materials; and the teacher's capability to successfully handle them to deliver meaningful lectures, knowing fully that they are well-organized before lesson commences. In the work of Archibong (2013), he argued that, quality education does not just occur miraculously but can be achieved through continuous and improved efforts by the stakeholders in the education enterprise, especially by enhancing teachers' commitments with essential teaching materials. The use of appropriate instructional materials for classroom facilitations often help to elaborate a concept that appears too difficult for students to comprehend while applying theoretical knowledge sharing techniques, and which could not be perfectly clarified without the provision of considerable empirical evidence to support the classroom argument. Instructional materials do arouse students' interests toward learning because of its physical easement to quickly comprehend the seemingly dry concepts. It also enables students to have clearer pictures of the introduced concept; it enhances long term memory retention of the taught concept; and thereby influencing their academic performances.

2. TEACHING A CORRECTION

In reality, teacher leadership development includes all, but not limited to, equipping teachers with the skills necessary to lead school and classroom initiatives and projects, such as – teachers'

cooperation and collaborations, professional teaching and learning facilitations, effective classroom control and/or management, enhancement of school based knowledge productions, improvement of societal ethical conducts in students, assessment of individual students' problem solving skills and implementation of new technology. It also includes that, teachers should stay in their respective classrooms where their passion is, and where they feel they can make the greatest impact to expand their careers into roles that are key to facilitating improvements in instruction, student outcomes, and peer development.

It is worthy of note to express that, some of the potentialities of being a good teacher leader is intrinsically embedded in the capability of a teacher to – assess and identify each of the students' problem solving skills; understand individual student's attitudes toward learning; and recognize their potential capabilities beyond classroom participations and activities. Teacher, as a classroom leader and facilitator, should clearly understand, the following parameters: – (1) how individual student is independently responding to the utilization of teaching aids, (2) how rationally they solitarily ask relevant questions related to the introduced concept, (3) how patiently they devote their time to solve problems independently, and (4) how carefully they can manage to control their emotional intelligence anytime they encounter difficulties on the assigned tasks. All these factors would make the teacher to be able to identify, the; – where, when, and how to assist and/or improve the students' learning behaviors.

In an effort to inspire, motivate and modify the individual students' behaviors toward learning. This second step, *“Teaching a Correction”* is introduced, and could be explained using Lev Vygotsky's (1896 – 1934) Concept of Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). Lev Vygotsky was a Soviet Psychologist and Social Constructivist. In his book titled (*Mind in Society: Development of Higher Psychological Processes*). He developed the concept of **Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)**, which is best understood as the difference between what a learner can do without help and what he or she can do with help. His definition of **ZPD** presents it as the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving student and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under teacher's guidance. Vygotsky stated that a child oftentimes follows adult's or teacher's examples and gradually independently develops the ability to do certain tasks without help or assistance. That is, in terms of knowledge acquisition, intellectual development and academic performances, students often primarily follow teacher's instruction in problem solving situations

without seeking assistance or a helping hand from anyone. This occurs at the independent problem solving phase. But, once they begin to encounter difficulties/challenges while trying to provide solutions to a problem, then, the situation would eventually demand that they need to seek for additional knowledge from a more intellectual person in order to complete the desired tasks. At this point, teacher's guidance is essentially required, because it is obvious that such student is already in a state of confusion and the teacher's support has become indispensable to make proper clarifications. Hence, the teacher's direct involvement in students' learning and intellectual development becomes absolutely necessary. Success is not often achieved alone. Projects and tasks completion mostly require social connections. While mentoring the students to complete the tasks independently, teachers need to get more familiarized with the individual students' problem solving capabilities, assesses them based on their emotional intelligence control, as well as correcting their mistakes or errors accordingly.

In a well-organized classroom, successful teacher leaders effectively teach corrections to their students after which they have clearly identified the students' actual limitations on a concept's comprehension and its possible application to solving daily problems. Hence, teachers are expected to develop the appropriate strategies to simplify the concept to the understanding of the concerned students. This is referred to as the student's level of potential development as determined through problem solving under the teacher's guidance, as explained by Lev Vygotsky's ZPD.

Characteristically, in all institutions of learning, (public and private) schools, it could be asserted that, all the students at varying levels of education possess diverse intelligences which they apply independently in different problematic situations. However, a task assigned to students in the classroom can eventually become challenging once students begin to have an unimaginable clear-cut solution to such problem. As a result of that, it becomes the ultimate responsibility of a teacher, to; – intervene in the problem solving process, simplify the concept by applying different teaching strategies, use relevant instructional materials, and provide long-lasting solution to such problem. It is not an assumption that, the experiences of an efficient, competent and professionally trained teacher leaders are relevant in driving the students' learning behaviors above, and beyond the challenging zone in problematic situations, both during classroom activities and other home-based encounters. This, however, makes it possible for students to constantly reminiscent the corrections made by their teachers, and thereby, giving

them good retentive capacity and easy applicability of a concept to solving societal problems. It is evident that, when students lack the basic understanding of a concept, it would be difficult for them to recapitulate it, talk-less of subsequently personally applying it to real life experiences. As classroom teacher leadership is concerned, during classroom facilitations, when corrections are not well-explained to the understanding of the students, they tend to lose focus on the topic and consider it a hard concept which cannot easily be learnt or understood. At times, the affected students would become biased and tend to attach elements of masculinity to the situation, expressing that, such concept can only be undone/mastered by male students, and that it is not a female subject/topic.

3. ESTABLISHING A PERFECTION

As a professional teacher and classroom facilitator, it is consequential that teachers get acquainted with different types of instructional materials that are appropriate for teaching and learning in any situation. The long term cognitive effects of using instructional materials in facilitating classroom activities cannot be under-estimated. Instructional materials constitute a clear and alternative channels of communication, which a subject teacher or facilitator can use to convey, clarify and concretize a concept to learners during classroom teaching and learning processes. In fact, globally, educationists have often emphasized that, the impact of instructional materials on effective teaching often leads to successful learning by students. This is contrary to the traditional method of teaching, when teachers used to rely heavily on the “*chalk and talk*” method. The use of instructional materials in conveying information or idea to students makes the learning of concept more meaningful, useful and memorable. The adequate use of instructional materials for teaching and learning often help the teachers to establish enough facts about a concept, broaden the students’ knowledge, as well as giving more opportunities to students to think beyond classroom activities.

Frankly speaking, even if a teacher is awarded excellent remarks for his/her effective teaching during classroom activities due to his/her observable competences and teaching strategies. Yet, no teacher can confidently express that he/she has greatly achieved a lesson’s objectives, unless otherwise it has been proven by students’ positive responses through active classroom participation. During lessons, students become motivated, attentive and willing to learn new things when a concept is concretely introduced and properly clarified with detailed

explanations of how the concept applies to day-to-day activities. A teacher, being an oracle of in-depth knowledge to students, does not only introduce a concept to familiarize the students with new terminologies but also delineates how the knowledge is applicable in problem solving situations in various day-to-day encounters. To be candid, it could be asserted that, the knowledge of students is tantamount to the knowledge of their teachers. For example, a hardworking teacher with high degree of expectations is more likely to propel the students' learning above, and beyond average performance levels. Students learn a concept/topic, reflect on it and transform it into unimaginable creative experiences. Once a concept is well-taught by the teacher in the classroom and clearly understood by the students, it is easy for students to assimilate it and then re-create a meaningful knowledge from the existing ones.

To exemplify, for a teacher to effectively teach the “*Areas of Triangle*” he/she must have first clearly taught the students “*Types of Triangle*”, using different possible strategies and be rest assured that the students have had an in-depth understanding of how different shapes look like without making any assumption. Thereafter, the knowledge could be expanded to identifying various objects that share similar features in the society and why each of the shapes is molded in different special ways. E. g. Set square in Mathematical set, Shape of roofs of some houses, **C** – Caution used by motorists, Ice-cream cone, Slices of pizza, Hangers used for arranging clothing materials, etc. In all these examples, directly or indirectly, the classroom activities have been connected to life outside the classrooms. These are some of the possible ways to improve learning in students, most especially the weak ones.

Explicitly, classroom is a dynamic learning environment that brings together students from different cultural backgrounds with various intellectual capabilities and personalities. It is therefore significant for a teacher to identify the academic limitations of each student in his/her classroom when assigning tasks to them. Practically, to the precocious students, a more difficult task can be assigned, while less difficult tasks could be assigned to the weak students. But, to avoid discrimination, the students could be assigned same seemed to be difficult tasks, and allow the talented student to lead and teach the weak students in a group through collaborative learning. This is parallel to what Lev Vygotsky explained in his concept of **ZPD** as collaboration with more capable peers. However, since the current global teaching strategies also recognize both collaborative and cooperative learning, in which teachers have eventually become professional facilitators. Teachers are expected to lead the classroom facilitation, and strictly

with respect to “*the needs*” of the individual students. Otherwise learning may not occur. In other word, for learning to occur in a classroom, it is expected that, teachers become more creative and innovative; to – apply multimedia learning; give frequent assessments; give prompt and timely feedback; engage in collaborative learning; and make the classroom to be student centered rather than becoming a teacher centered. By so doing, effective learning with lasting retention of the acquired skills/knowledge can be assured on the students’ learning behaviors through effective classroom teacher leadership.

4. CONNECTING CLASSROOM TEACHING AND LEARNING TO REAL WORLD EXPERIENCES

According to Christopher Pappas (2014) in his presentation titled “*Instructional Design Models and Theories: Schema Theory.*” He discussed the concept of “*Schema Theory*” which was propounded by a British, and Cognitive Psychologist, Sir Frederic Charles Bartlett in 1932. In the work of Pappas (2014), Schema Theory describes the way in which knowledge is acquired, processed and organized. On the other hand, Byerly, (2001) states that, Bartlett developed schema theory in an effort to explain the structures that individual humans create to organize new knowledge and understandings and to fit them into their evolving views of the world. Apparently, this reveals that, individually, human beings often have certain levels of independent rational thinking that drive them to make adjustment on emerging circumstances, and which also ensure that the developed initiative supports the existing human ways of living.

The four (4) key elements of a Schema as identified by Pappas include:

1. An individual memorizing and utilizing a schema without even realizing of doing so.
2. Once a schema is developed, it tends to be stable over a long period of time.
3. Human mind uses schemata (plural of schema) to organize, retrieve, and encode chunks of important information.
4. Schemata are accumulated over time and through different experiences.

Empirically, Schema theory emphasizes on the importance of general knowledge that often helps the formation of mental representations (Pappas, 2014). In classroom settings, parts of the major tasks of teachers as leaders, involve: introducing a concept to students with adequate clarifications; identifying the existing knowledge of the students and understanding their limitations; initiating new knowledge/skills in students; and establishing connections between the

theoretical classroom knowledge gathering and real world practices – something that would eventually improve their memory. It is therefore evident that, to successfully teach a concept to students, teacher's efforts in re-invigorating the students' prior knowledge is very important. The prior knowledge forms the basis of knowledge productions to students. It inspires the students' intelligences. That is, it gives the students a hint to quickly independently link previous knowledge or experiences to the newly acquired knowledge, thereby leading to creativity. Pearce (2016) emphasizes that, to prepare students for life outside school, we need to develop them to make meaning of their learning, and this could be done by linking their previous learning to new learning, from one subject to another. Based on the individual students' learning strategies, and as could have been possibly identified by a subject teacher. A teacher leader should be able to determine the likely outcomes of a lesson. That is, teacher leader should clearly understand the extent to which the objectives of a lesson are achieved, and also ensures that the taught concept is connected to real life occurrences. For instance, (the outcomes of) the objectives of a lesson could be linked to – running a business, designing of graphics, cultivation of lands, solving of environmental problems, controlling of traffics, and so on. All these and many more are different ways through which a teacher as classroom leader can use to connect the classroom teaching and learning to real world practices.

Similar to the schema theory, educators also speak about “*experiential learning*” which involves three primary components, including: modeling, collaborating and simulating (Byerly, 2001). Modeling simply refers to a specific behavior through which the teacher demonstrates a skill to be learned for students. Collaborating is when a teacher works with a group of students or students working with their peers. While simulating entails enticing a skill within a context, often created by the teacher that mirrors the real-world contexts in which the skill is used.

To cite an analogy to the above concepts of “*Schema Theory*” and “*experiential learning*” respectively. An Agricultural Science teacher who practically allots a portion of land to his/her students for cultivation during teaching and learning processes, is concretely building confidence in the students, and evidently connecting their theoretical “*chalk and talk*” knowledge acquisition/learning to the real-world experiences. Hence, such a teacher can therefore be assumed to have bridged the gap between the abstract teaching and learning, and reality. Pedagogically, such teacher could be described as a facilitator who is both initiating and creating professionalism in the students. As such, learning becomes authentic as teacher leader designs it

to connect what students are taught in the classroom to real-world issues, problems, and applications. Pearce (2016), emphasizes that learning experiences should mirror the complexities and ambiguities of real life.

Nowadays, in the United States of America, it is difficult to have a conversation about education without using the phrase “*college and career ready*” (P21, 2014). This points out that, the present day classroom teaching and learning processes have been essentially connected to organizational practices. In fact, the Partnership for 21st Century Learning (P21) has advocated for more than a decade that in order to be ready for college and careers, students need both proficiency in the core subjects as well as the ability to think critically, solve problems, communicate, collaborate, create, and innovate. Students are expected to possess relevant knowledge and be able to apply it to foreseeable and unforeseeable real-life challenges. This is a reflection of teacher leadership’s capability and competence in the manners in which he/she imparts knowledge in the classroom. A typically true, and professionally driven innovative classroom can not only instill knowledge in students but also develop their abilities to think critically and apply that knowledge to real-life situations.

P21 believes that students should develop the attitudes, skills and knowledge to understand and participate in a globally connected world, including the capacity to improve their perspective-taking and research skills.

Meanwhile, to ensure that students are prepared to effectively innovate, compete, collaborate, communicate and address complex issues in a global society. It is the function of teacher leaders to:

- ✓ Create and sustain creative learning environments.
- ✓ Continually develop understanding of, and applications for inquiry-based pedagogical approaches.
- ✓ Integrate global content into classroom instruction, and.
- ✓ Utilize next-generation technologies in curricular practices.

It could therefore be assumed that, with accommodative, caring and skillful classroom teacher leadership’s applicability, there is assurance that students’ proficiency would be elevated above average performance levels. Arteaga (2012) explained in his research that what is needed in teacher’s collaboration in formulating pedagogy, is educators’ professional learning that adopts social interactive practices.

CONCLUSION

In reality, '*teacher leadership*' concept is a popular and complex phenomenon that brings about the assemblage of different personalities for the all-round development of a school community. Teacher leadership could not be discussed without paying proper attention to the interrelationships that occur between and among staff, school administrators, education supervisors, students, parents, stakeholders, religious leaders, political leaders and other community leaders. Meanwhile, as more actions, efforts and strategies, on school improvements are expected from the school administrators (e.g. principal), much more are also demanded from the respective subject/class teachers whose work is to facilitate lessons for the students.

However, besides the excessive precious time the millennial students spend on social media for their personal indulgences, there are other aspects of in-classroom facilitation processes in which if a teacher should ignore during his/her classroom pedagogic practices, it could possibly jeopardize his/her teaching strategies, and hence, lead to learning difficulty or academic backwardness for students. These in-classroom facilitation processes include: (1) Introducing a concept. (2) Teaching a correction (3) Establishing a perfection. (4) Connecting classroom teaching and learning to real world experiences.

As a professional teacher leader, and a well-trained classroom facilitator, a teacher must get familiarized with different teaching methods to introduce a concept to students. A teacher should be able to adequately handle different instructional materials. By so doing, he/she would be able to capture the minds of the students and fully engage them in learning. Subsequently, for a teacher to effectively teach a correction to students, he must have properly introduced the topic to them. A clear correction teaching is an indication that the students have been exposed to a new knowledge which is expected to have been perfectly mastered and fully assimilated by them. After a correction has been taught/done to the students, a teacher can then confirm the authenticity of his/her teaching and learning by placing the concept on concrete learning materials. This will make the students to retain what have been taught by their teachers in their memory for longer period of time. It is important that a teacher leader should end a lesson by connecting the classroom theoretical learnings to real-world experiences. This always gives the students a mind that, learning is not only about classroom academic performances and grading systems alone but also to help building connections to the world around them, while they are genuinely becoming more creative in nature. A teacher leader should design learning to become

meaningful experience (Pearce, 2016). Experiences that do not encourage the students to make meaning from their learning will quickly be forgotten. Teacher leaders need to teach the students to be adaptable and creative thinkers who will be able to utilize the skills and knowledge they have to create new solutions to problems.

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