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PILOTABLE FRAMEWORK FOR OVERCOMING BARRIERS IN LEARNING IN NIGERIAN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

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Background:

Learning is regarded as a process of action, reflection, and new (often modified) action. Learning is behavioural change. Objectives of learning institutions include providing support for student academic success sustainably, helping ensure students are retained at the same rate as the overall student population, and achieving a graduation rate no lower than the overall student population. Learning can often be like an obstacle course for students resulting in low self-esteem. Barriers to learning, in intersecting categories of educational environment; behaviours and actions; and individual attributes, are unmet needs of learners and obstacles to their participation in learning. These barriers could also be viewed from socio-cultural, economic, and institutional perspectives. In Nigeria's university system, it has been researched that upon admission, students are confronted with inadequate structures and facilities; inadequate housing; overcrowded classrooms; and a dearth of reading materials, leading lecturers to sell handouts and their own publications. Besides, many university teachers are unprepared and sometimes absent from duty, often without making alternative arrangements for their classes. Furthermore, a number of teachers are overwhelmed by grading responsibilities due to over-enrolment, leading to delayed or no feedback on assignments. Statistics also reveal that Nigerian Universities' Academic Staff Union has recorded above 35 months of learning-disruptive incessant strikes between 1999 and 2013 with 2010 topping the list (5.25) closely followed by 2013 (4.5) as at November 30, 2013. Stakeholders in Nigeria's university education system have always been engaged in pointing accusing fingers at one another as being responsible for (prolonged) industrial action. Students have missed examinations on health grounds leading to more credit units carried over to subsequent academic session(s).

Objective:

This paper presents a technology-based pilotable framework that organizes stakeholders in a designed learning problem space towards overcoming barriers in learning in tertiary institutions.

Results:

Typical elements of the framework include government, university expectations, practical constraints, learning cultures, support for learner, and technologies that support learners. The technology-based pilotable framework provides an environment to enable conversation. It demonstrates or elicits models and elaborates problem solutions. It acts to build models and assist in solving problems, and provides facility for practical model building. The learner consequently demonstrates understanding of models and problem solutions, and acts to build models and solve problems.

Conclusions:

The effects of family status, societal security issues, financial distress, low socialisation, under-funding by government(s), institutions' ownership structure, infrastructural provision and maintenance, unpredictable emoluments and staff welfare, incessant closure of institutions of learning, teaching quality vis-à-vis educational qualification and passion, medical issue, etc, are very disruptive for the learning ladder. The existence of a unified culture has been adjudged to reduce the barriers of communication and lead to closer co-operation within an institution. With tenacity of purpose in implementation by all stakeholders, ubiquitous technology-enabled learning promises seamless achievement of learning institutions' objectives.

keywords: barriers to learning, behavior, culture, educational environment, framework, individual attributes, incessant strike, institution, socio-economic.