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Author	Fasuyi, Ayotomi
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British Council  
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# The impact of OSS modules on teacher effectiveness

Ayotomi Fasuyi, Nigeria

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### School context

**Charles Dale Memorial International School**, Port Harcourt, Nigeria, is a full-boarding, co-educational secondary school founded in September 2006. It is a multicultural community that admits students from various parts of Nigeria as well as internationally.

The school mission is to produce the total child – children that are physically, socially, spiritually, morally and academically sound, using state-of-the-art facilities. In order to achieve this, we deliver a blended curriculum that encompasses the Nigerian and the Cambridge secondary curricula. We are currently developing our STEAM programmes to have more robust dimensions as we raise lifelong learners that will proffer solutions to global challenges.

As a purpose-built educational institution on a 40-acre expanse of land, our facilities are world-class, accommodating special classrooms and spaces for practical learning. In addition to our academic offering, Charles Dale Memorial International School explores very rich extracurricular activities and sports.

### About the author



**Ayotomi Fasuyi** is principal at Charles Dale Memorial International School, Port Harcourt, Nigeria. With over three decades of experience in education, Mrs Fasuyi's core interest is in classroom pedagogy and English language teaching (ELT).

She has worked as an English teacher at a number of secondary schools. She was appointed the Cambridge exams coordinator for one of the schools she worked in and that exposed her to the professional development opportunities provided by the British Council. For her, that was the changing point in her career. Seeing the need for continuous professional development of teachers in Nigeria, she went on to obtain a Diploma in Teacher Training from London Teacher Training College, London, UK. She went

on to become a British Council-certified teacher trainer for the Cambridge Teaching Knowledge Test (TKT).

She has a Bachelor's degree in English and a Master of Arts in Communication and Language Arts. She also possesses a postgraduate diploma in Education. She is committed to enhancing teacher quality, which she believes is crucial for revitalising Nigeria's education sector.

### Key findings

- More teachers than expected (97 per cent of all teachers questioned) accessed and had taken a number of modules on the Online Support for Schools platform.
- However, the Action Research revealed that for CPD to be impactful, definite steps need to be taken to help teachers connect their learning with their practice. The follow-up physical workshop after the OSS module on 'Understanding lesson management' created a forum for teachers to share their thoughts, have their questions answered, collaborate and exchange ideas on their classroom behaviour management concerns.
- Teachers observed that most classrooms and learning spaces within our school environment have no visible rules on display. Little wonder then that classroom behaviour management has been a challenge for teachers. Sixty-two per cent of the teachers resolved to improve on how they give classroom instructions, while 40 per cent were going to come up with their class contracts and rules.

## Action Research rationale

Continuous professional development (CPD) is key to teacher effectiveness. For many teachers in Nigeria, CPD mainly consists of a few days of whole-school workshops organised by the school management at the beginning of a new session or term. Many teachers do not take personal responsibility for their professional development. This might be due to a lack of awareness on their part or inability to access qualitative teacher training.

The British Council, through the Partner Schools programme, has developed several self-access workshops as part of the Online Support for Schools (OSS) platform. This research seeks to explore the extent of awareness of teachers about these self-access workshops and how well they engage with the platform. In addition, the research seeks to find out how teachers perceive the OSS as being relevant to their professional development. It will also explore how their learning from the OSS modules translate into better teacher effectiveness, with specific focus on classroom management.

It is hoped that as teachers continually engage with the OSS modules, their classroom skills will improve.

## Exploratory Action Research questions

1. What are my perceptions about teachers' awareness of and engagement with the CPD modules on the OSS platform?
2. How do teachers perceive the OSS modules as being relevant to their classroom effectiveness?
3. How do teachers engage with the OSS modules in their day-to-day activities?

## Data collection tools

### Methodology

To determine my perception about teachers' awareness of and engagement with the CPD modules on the OSS platform, I will be using my **reflection journals** after face-to-face engagement with the teachers in my school.

For my second Exploratory Action Research question about how teachers perceive the relevance of the OSS platform to their effectiveness, I will be having a **focus group discussion session** with six heads of department in my school. They have already given their consent to be respondents.

My final question seeks to explore how teachers

engage with the OSS modules on a day-to-day basis. To collect data for this, I intend to administer a simple **questionnaire** to about 30 teachers in the school who have also given their consent.

These are the data collection tools for my exploratory action research questions.



## Data analysis for the exploration stage

### Key findings from exploration

The findings from the data analysis revealed that contrary to the researcher's opinion, the teachers at Charles Dale Memorial International School, Port Harcourt, are well aware of the OSS, and many of them had taken a number of training modules on the platform. Nearly all (97 per cent) of the teachers had taken at least two modules on the OSS, of which 24.2 per cent had taken more than ten modules. All (100 per cent) of the teachers admitted that the OSS modules they had taken improved their knowledge about classroom practices in various aspects such as:

- classroom management and positive class control
- learners' evaluation and assessment
- 21st-century lesson delivery
- collaborative learning
- student-centred teaching
- motivation techniques for students' engagement
- behaviour management
- coping/dealing with SEN

The findings also revealed that teachers encountered a number of challenges in accessing the OSS modules. Four out of five teachers (81.8 per cent) complained of lack of time due to their workload, while 51.5 per cent complained of poor internet connection.

From the discussion with the six heads of departments, it was unanimously agreed that newly employed teachers especially need to be supported to implement their learning from the modules in their classrooms. This is the thrust of this Action Research being further validated by this exploratory research.

## Action Research

### Action plan

My action plan aims at facilitating CPD workshops for all the teachers in my school. Fifty teachers took the OSS module 'Understanding lesson management 1' with a view to improving classroom management skills after the exploratory stage of this research.

The workshop will focus on three major classroom management strategies:

1. giving instructions
2. establishing procedures and routines
3. establishing classroom rules.

Using the British Council OSS resource 'Managing the lesson' booklet, workshop participants will have practical sessions on what makes 'good and not so good' instructions in the classroom. They will also examine their classroom procedures and come up with manageable routines for their students. These will be role played using classroom scenarios. Lastly, teachers will collaborate in group activities to produce samples of posters depicting five to six classroom rules.

Participants will complete a feedback questionnaire to be used in follow-up sessions to ensure sustainable practices within the school. Classroom observations will be carried out by heads of departments to provide support for teachers as needed.

### Action plan evaluation tools

**My action plan evaluation tools are as follows:**

1. Post-workshop questionnaire to be completed by teachers after the in-school workshop on 'Understanding lesson management'.
2. Lesson observation data – With the collaboration of heads of departments, classroom observations will be carried out to determine how teachers are able to directly connect their learning from the workshop with their classroom practice.
3. Focus group discussion with heads of departments to review the lessons observed and draw up an action plan for further training.

## Data analysis and conclusions

### Action plan implementation

A total of 52 teachers attended the Action Research workshop on Friday 31 January 2025 at Charles Dale Memorial International School. The workshop was facilitated by the researcher, Mrs Ayotomi Fasuyi. Before the workshop, 49 teachers had taken the OSS module 'Understanding lesson management 1'. Copies of the British Council OSS resource 'Managing the lesson' were made available for all participants.

The workshop focused mainly on three classroom management strategies:

- giving explicit instructions to learners
- establishing classroom routines and procedures
- establishing classroom rules.

The facilitator projected some examples of instructions, and teachers had to critique them. It was interesting to hear teachers commenting that they did not quite realise how important classroom instructions were. Various scenarios in the classroom were presented, and teachers were asked to role play the instructions for each scenario. Teachers gave feedback to one another regarding the effectiveness of their instructions.

The last session had teachers working in groups to create posters of five to six classroom rules. It was a shocking revelation to all participants that there were no visible rules in most of our classrooms, laboratories, workshops and studios. Class teachers agreed to spend their next week tutor time to establish classroom contracts with their students. These would be made into posters for their class display boards.

The workshop was followed by two weeks of lesson observations by heads of departments. The focus of the observation was to follow up on how teachers give instructions and how they maintain control of their classrooms.

**'I got my first training as a teacher through the OSS modules. Coming from an Engineering background, I took several modules on OSS. By the time I went for my Diploma in Education, I was already familiar with a lot of educational concepts.'**

Mr Israel Salifu, HOD ICT, speaking on the benefits of the OSS



**‘The lessons I observed after the workshop are much better than they used to be. These are the same teachers that used to give us a lot of concern.’**

Mr Uchechukwu Madu, HOD Science.  
Statement made at the focus group discussion with heads of departments after the Action Research workshop

## Key findings

The action research at Charles Dale Memorial International School has been a most enlightening experience not only for the researcher but for almost all of the teachers in the school. At the exploratory stage, it was revealed that 97 per cent of the teachers had accessed and taken a number of modules on the OSS, contrary to the researcher’s initial opinion.

The Action Research also revealed that for CPD to be impactful, definite steps need to be taken to help teachers connect their learning with their practice. The follow-up physical workshop after the OSS module on ‘Understanding lesson management’ created a forum for teachers to share their thoughts, have their questions answered, collaborate and exchange ideas on their classroom behaviour management concerns. Three-quarters of the teachers (75.5 per cent) rated the overall quality of the module as ‘Excellent’, while 22.4 per cent rated it ‘Good’. These were the only two ratings.

In relation to the aspect of the module which they found most valuable, ‘Giving instructions’ rated highest with 75.5 per cent, ‘Dealing with disruptive learners’ came next with 69.4 per cent while ‘Creating a positive learning environment’ had a 55.1 per cent rating. Participants found the aspect on ‘Differentiating tasks for learners’ least valuable with a 24.5 per cent rating. This might not be unconnected with the fact that our learners are in streamed classes.

During the workshop, the session on ‘Establishing classroom rules’ revealed that most classrooms and learning spaces within our school environment have no visible rules on display. Little wonder then that classroom behaviour management has been a challenge for teachers. Almost two-thirds of the teachers (62 per cent) resolved to improve on how they give classroom instructions, while 40 per cent were going to come up with their class contracts and rules.

## Conclusions

All the teachers at Charles Dale Memorial International School that were involved in the action research found the British Council OSS modules relevant, easy to access and rich in content. In order to further enhance its value, it would be necessary for school leaders to establish a structure whereby teachers can connect their learning from the OSS modules to their classroom practice. It is obviously not enough to have teachers complete the modules and present their certificates as evidence. The discussion with heads of departments during this Action Research suggested a possibility that teachers were taking the OSS modules mainly to submit the certificates to the school management, without the learning translating into improved teaching practices.

Going forward at Charles Dale Memorial International School, teachers will take modules recommended by their heads of departments during school holidays. Teachers feel overloaded with school work during term time and do not think it is the best time to engage with the OSS modules.

In addition, there will be physical workshops to review the OSS modules. The workshops may be departmental or collective and they will be facilitated by teachers to further empower them. Depending on the focus of the workshop, heads of departments will follow up with focused lesson observations to ensure teachers are implementing what they have learned.

In conclusion, we will embark on a drive in the school to put up visible instructions and signages in our classrooms and around the school premises. Establishing classroom contracts with the students will definitely produce better behaviour. Well-managed classrooms lead to improved academic achievement. This is the desire of every good teacher and school.

## Future actions

Engaging in Action Research is an eye-opener to the unlimited opportunities within the school system. It was quite interesting how a simple hypothesis led to several revelations that had been unnoticed all this while.

### Conclusions

The British Council Online Support for Schools (OSS) is a versatile, engaging and dynamic platform suitable for teachers' continuous professional development (CPD) at all levels of growth. The variety of modules available on the OSS provides adequate learning opportunities for teachers. However, school leaders need to be intentional about their deployment of the OSS to meet teachers' varying needs. From the results of this Action Research, CPD at Charles Dale Memorial International School will be deliberate and better structured to have a more holistic impact.

## Future actions

At Charles Dale Memorial International School, Port Harcourt, Nigeria, these are the steps we intend to take to improve our teaching effectiveness.

- Create departmental/general training schedules using OSS modules based on an assessment of teachers' needs. Heads of departments will work with school heads to determine the OSS modules that teachers need to take individually or collectively.
- Organise termly teacher-led physical workshops, after individual studies on the OSS, to further entrench professional development. When structured this way, teachers will have at least two in-school workshops to attend every term.
- Schedule focused lesson observations and feedback sessions on specific aspects of teaching for improvement.
- Encourage school leaders to provide more support for teachers with regard to students' behaviour management.
- Implement further Action Research on other aspects of school improvement.

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