

**IMPROVING TEACHING LEARNING USING INSTRUCTORS DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA****Temilola Apena PhD**

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t_apena@yahoo.co.uk**Abstract**

The objective of this study was to ascertain the impact of instructors' development on learners' academic performance, find out the difference in the performance of instructors with online teaching background and those ones without online teaching background and also confirm the influence of quality teaching on learners' attrition. Descriptive research design of the expose facto was used for the study. Lecturers involved in academic affairs of Universities running online learning programmes in Nigeria formed the population of the study. University of Nigeria, University of Lagos, University of Ibadan, University of Abuja and University of Ilorin. 20 staff members were randomly selected from the five institutions thus having a total of 100. Three research hypothesis were formulated for this study, which were tested at $p < 0.05$. The instrument used was Improving Online Learning and Intensive Instructor Development Questionnaire (IOLIDQ) with a reliability coefficient of 0.89 improve Cronbach Alpha. The data were analysed with inferential statistics and the result showed that a good number of instructors were not trained in online learning improve but were improve the knowledge of conventional mode to teach the online learners. Developing improved capacity among Online Learning (OL) Instructors should be continuous and on a regular basis.

Key words: Support services, Learners, Training, Instructors and Attrition.**Introduction**

The online learning is different from face-to-face learning and it entails some technicalities. It is important that the Instructors are well grounded in the nitty gritty of what online learning entails. According to Thorpe (2002) learner support services, such as instructors, is the element of open and online learning which responds to individual learner's needs. Usun (2024) asserted that more resources should be invested in the learner support system if online education is to be successful. Gao (2022) corroborated this assertion when he reported that besides cognitive support, an institution is expected to provide for example: affectional support, more comprehensive support to online learners, emphasising on humanitarian concerns. Facilitation is a core element of online learning that should be handled professionally if positive outcome is to be achieved.



Online learners are separated by time and space from their institutions and peers during the course of their study. Facilitation as viewed by Tait (2024), Gallien & Oomen-Early (2018) is used to mediate the separation between online learning institutions and their learners. Loneliness, boredom, fatigue and demotivation are common among online learners and due to prolonged periods of self-directed learning. Thus, facilitation helps to effect change and complement the system of learning. It is an essential complement to the course materials or learning resources that is used by all learners. Apena (2019) asserted that facilitation gives learners the opportunity to ask questions, clarify issues and learn more. The category of learners in the mode under discussion are young adults or youths (from 20 years) up to the middle old (45-65 years) who desire to commence a new field of endeavour, learning for placement, recognition or leisure. They are people with various social and religious commitments, who have limited time to spare. So, any time spent must be meaningful and gainful too. The competence, commitment and comportment of the Instructor is imperative in order to assure learners of a worthwhile session and a successful outcome. Maturity of online learners as asserted by **Apena & Osikomaiya** (2025) also play very important role in the academic achievement of the online learners when combine with instructors competence. Olubodun and **Apena** (2023) affirmed the role the age and maturity play in the achievement of teaching objectives in the research carried out on social impact of ageism on learning. On the other hand, **Apena and Olagunju** (2025) affirmed in the study carried out on working-class adults in Osun state that readiness for online learning is important for individual and national development

People who will impact knowledge in online learning should be trained because of the peculiarity of the mode and learners and as such must be handled appropriately (Buczynski, 2020). The role of the Instructor in online education is sometimes undervalued, resulting in an adverse performance of online learners and the weakening of OL's reputation (Lentell, 2023). This seems to be one of the factors responsible for the poor perception of online learning. online learners must be adequately tutored by Instructors to support the course materials provided. Instructors need to be trained to handle the online learners because as adults they differ from regular students, their nature must be understood. Theory of change was considered for the study, it is the most appropriate for the achievement of the desired change. The study examined how to improve the teaching of online learning using instructors' development programme. Effective online learning can only be achieved with competent and qualified Instructors who understand the nature of the learners. The training of instructors will not only guaranty the success of online learning process but, it will also reduce the attrition which is a major problem in online learning.

The quality of online learners' performance is intricately linked to the quality of teaching support received over the course of their studies. If the instructor is unable to write appropriate didactic comments, which are capable of promoting learning, the online learner might become more confused by the teaching process (Furnborough and Truman 2019). This inefficiency and its resultant effect can easily get learners discouraged. Attrition and drop-out syndrome results when there is ineffective mediation.



Competent Instructors know best how to achieve excellent results and they have strategies of controlling the learning sessions positively with their appearances. Effective facilitation as affirmed by Darling-Hammond, Hyler & Gardner (2017) encourages and builds creativity and innovation, it can also serve as a panacea for change in learners. Instructors need continuous development for capability and adaptiveness. Instructors as explained by Feldberg-Dubin (2019) need to be prepared for any situation concerning the group being handled; essential knowledge of participants' personality, creating participatory activities that leave no one behind; setting generally approved guidelines that will help the group; cultivate the habit of active listening with the help of (MPT) mirroring, paraphrasing and tracking during class discussion; good time management; preparation of varied strategies for activities; ability to read learners' morale (or class tempo) and match or lower it; flexibility and adaptability of Instructor, and identify your role as Instructor, let it fit in without creating confusion.

However, the development may be limited by inadequate resources; lack of vision about what high quality instruction entails; lack of time for implementing new instructional approaches during sessions; failure to align both state and local policies for a coherent set of instructional practices; dysfunctional school culture; and inability to monitor and analyse the quality of skill development to mention a few. Salawu, Ojo Adedapo and Apena (2024) in the study conducted on Effects of selected non-formal education strategies in curbing adolescents social vices declared that incompetence and lack of commitment on the part of instructors can cause discouragement on the part of learners thereby resulting in attrition. The authors were of the opinion that efforts should be made to ensure that such group of people are self sustained in on way or the other rather than becoming nuisance in their communities.

The study investigates the impact of quality online learning using continuous Instructor development on learners' performance in Nigeria online learning institutions. It assesses the impact of intensive training of tutorial Instructors on online learners' academic performance and course completion. Effective online learning can only be achieved with competent and qualified Instructors who understand the nature of the learners. The development of Instructors will not only guaranty the success of online learning process, but it will also reduce attrition which is a major problem in online learning. According to EvalCommunity Academy (2025) theory of change is an on-going process of reflection to explore change and how it happens – and what that means in a particular context, sector, and/or group of people. Change moves stakeholders from being passive collectors and reporters of the information to active users of information for system planning and delivery (Fullan, 2019). It helps make better day-to-day decisions and requires research to find specific strategies. It also facilitates integrating data with needed change.

Statement of the Problem

Many online learning programmes lack effective support services to support online learners. Some support services are limited to administrative support, while academic support and counselling are extremely limited or non-existent. Even when instructors exists, it can be counterproductive when it is not



done by professionally trained academics. Lee (2003) opines that online students' learning experience will not be complete without the support, that is, administrative, instructional, technical and counselling supports which is the holistic approach idea as opposed to supplementary approach idea that limits learners to add-on to course materials or other learning experience. He identified three important issues among others in learner support services which are: cost effectiveness, lack of empirical research findings as a result and the importance of a learner-centred approach in learner support. Availability and utilization of holistic support service with regular training of Instructors are the bedrock of any successful online learning system. Unfortunately, this hardly exists due to a number of factors that are peculiar to the country ranging from lack of finance to lack of commitment and continuity on the part of government. It is against this background that this study sought to assess how online learning can be improved using Instructor development.

Research Hypotheses

Ho₁: Instructors' development will not have a significant impact on online learners' academic Performance in Nigeria.

Ho₂: Instructors' development will not significantly impact on attrition rate in Nigeria.

Ho₃: There will not be any significant difference between Instructors that have OL background and those that do not have it in Nigeria.

Methodology

The objective of this study was to ascertain the impact of instructors' development on learners' academic performance, find out the difference in the performance of instructors with online teaching background and those ones without online teaching background and also confirm the influence of quality teaching on learners' attrition. The descriptive research design was used for the study. Lecturers involved in academic affairs of Universities running online learning programmes in Nigeria formed the population of the study. The institutions randomly selected, are National Open University of Nigeria, University of Lagos, University of Ibadan, University of Abuja and University of Ilorin. 20 Instructors were randomly sampled from each of the institutions selected, thus giving a total of 100 respondents. A structured questionnaire was used for data collection. The validity was ensured using face and content validity by a group of experts in open and online education. The reliability of the instrument was ascertained using a pilot study which included a different population but similar characteristics. The instrument 'Improving Online Learning and Instructor Development Questionnaire' (IOLIIDQ) was pilot tested with a group of academic staff from Covenant University, Ogun state with sample of 30. The instruments yielded a correlation coefficient (r) of 0.89, it was therefore deemed suitable for use in this study. Data collected were



analysed with inferential statistics. The hypotheses were analysed with Pearson's Product Moment Correlation, two-way analysis of variance and t-test analysis at 0.05 level of significance.

Result

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between Instructors' development on online learners' academic performance in Nigeria

Table 1- Correlation between the impact of Instructors' development and learners' academic performance in Nigeria.

Variables	No.	Mean	Stand Dev	r-cal	Sig.	Remark
Instructors' development	100	39.37	2.36	0.840*	0.00	Significant
Learners' academic performance	100	42.13	1.29			

*p<0.05

Table 1 revealed that the r-cal value is significant at 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected. The implication of this is that there is a significant relationship between Instructors' development and learners' academic performance.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant main effect of instructors' development on attrition of students in Nigeria.

Table 2- Analysis of variance of Instructors' development on attrition.

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model				87.740	
	507.075 ^a	11	46.098		.000
Intercept				58089.411	
	30519.776	1	30519.776		.000
Level of Instructors' Development				43.521	
	45.732	2	22.866		.000
Attrition				5.250	
	16.551	6	2.758		.000
Level of Instructors' development*				.417	
	.657	3	.219		.741
Attrition					



Error	46.235	88	.525
Total	155553.000	100	
Corrected total	553.310	99	

a.R Squared =.916 (Adjusted R Squared =.906)

From Table 2 above, the p-value of 0.000 is less than 0.05 level of significance ($p < 0.05$). This necessitates the rejection of the null hypothesis. Therefore there is a significant main effect of Instructors' development on attrition of students.

Hypothesis 3: There will not be any significant difference between Instructors that have OL background and those that do not have it.

Table 3- t-test Analysis of difference between Instructors that have OL background and those that do not have it.

Variation	X	SD	df	t-cal	P
Instructors with DL background	38.30	2.86	98	3.693*	0.00
Instructors without DL background	40.00	1.76			

* $p < 0.05$

Table 3 reveals that t-cal value of 3.693 is greater than t-tab value of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance. This implies that the null hypothesis is rejected, there is a significant difference between the two groups. It shows that Instructors with online learning background get a better result than their counterparts without online learning background. Adedapo (2021) corroborated this result in the study on Teachers' attitudes towards teaching of basic science and technology and students' achievement at junior secondary school level in Ibadan metropolis where he wrote extensively on the imperative of quality in online learning.

Discussion of Findings

The study reveals that there is a significant relationship between Instructors' development and learners' academic performance. This is in line with Millard (2020)'s assertion that Instructors' feedback motivates learners. Competent and experienced performance of instructor helps learners to gain confidence and encouraged to continue and improve. The quality of learners' academic performance is what is most



germane as opined by Apena (2019) in the study on Ensuring Quality in Lifelong Learning through Learner Support Services. So, Instructors' development has great impact on learners' academic performance.

It also reveals that there is a significant main effect of Instructors' development on attrition of students. The result reveals that there is significant difference between the performance of Instructors with OL background and those without it. This is in line with the research of Nwogbo Kadiri & Okoronkwo (2026) in which institutional policy, targeted professional development and reliable support services were recommended among other things. The authors also recognised the leadership of National Open University of Nigeria in the nation's online learning mode. Thus, the rejection of the third hypothesis that says there will not be any significant difference between Instructors that have OL background and those that do not have it. This is in line with Sahu, Dalcik, Dalcik, Gupta, Chattu, and Umakanthan (2022) who asserted that understanding of learners is imperative for successful facilitation.

Conclusion

As online learning continues to grow in popularity across the global developing world context, there is need to ensure that the gains of the past couple of decades are not discounted. Tutorial teaching is an important rubric of the quality assurance process in online learning and the quality of teaching is at the centre of this process. Continuous training, monitoring and evaluation of Instructors are directly linked to the performance of online learners.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. All new instructors need to participate in an orientation seminar to understand the nature and dynamics of online education;
2. An instructors' performance evaluation scheme must be agreed with newly appointed instructors and contract renewal must be based on satisfactory rating;
3. Provision of tutorial facilitation is essential for all online learning courses either using face-to-face meetings or teaching; although students have the option of not attending.

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