

Food For Thought: Are We Getting The Mixing Right?

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There are many who believe that the mere provision of school buildings would necessarily lead to quality education. There are others who will posit that this should be matched by teaching and learning resources and the use of a teacher centered approach.

However the current education performance despite genuine efforts to eradicate schools under trees and various interventions, especially to provide resources for literacy, still leaves much to be desired. BECE pass rate are just about 50% of those who take the exams while NEA scores for literacy and numeracy are still low. Something therefore simply is not right.

What makes it more complex is the new thinking that technology simply solves everything. So we are on a "ITrization" process. All schools all pupils must have different kinds of IT gadgets to learn with.

It is all well and good to have the beautiful school blocks, libraries; both digital and physical, both open source and proprietary. It is good to have a teacher centered approach and deploy the latest technology but what really matters is what happens when 'the rubber meets the road'. At a point in time the resources, technology, the teacher, the pupil, all will have to 'meet and mix'. It is the quality of that meeting and what happens in that mix that results in quality teaching and learning. Think about it.

Our mothers will tell you that if you do have all the needed condiments to prepare a particular meal but you do not put them in at the right time in the right quantities sometimes even in a certain manner you will not get the desired end product.

Is there something wrong with the way we do the mix? Are we so obsessed with what goes into the mix rather than how we do the mixing? Personally I think we have enough of what it takes to make the mix. Whiles we may want to improve upon their quality we need to be equally, if not over, obsessed with how we do the mix

For starters I will suggest that Technology must be friendly to the rural pupil and to the not so tech savvy teacher. It should not be internet and national grid dependent and the recurrent costs must be extremely low. Teaching and learning resources must be at the right level, must naturally elicit learning from the learners, must be free, open and accessible to all regardless of where one might be. Teachers, need a new kind of support in order to successfully integrate technology into teaching and learning and also make appropriate use of the available resources

Resources and co are all good but they are only a means to an end and not the end itself. It is how we bring them to this end that needs to be addressed now.

Think about it.