

Kindergarten teacher delivers television lessons during COVID-19 lockdown

It's 9:45am and a television studio in Ghana is busy with teachers, editors and other technical staff busily getting ready for lessons to begin.

In studio four, two teachers are going through a PowerPoint presentation and rehearsing a lesson on rhyming. One of the teachers is particularly animated as she sings rhymes while gesturing as though she is teaching pupils in a classroom.

At exactly 10am, the cameras roll, and she is teaching live on national television.



Agnes is a kindergarten teacher. Since the COVID-19 outbreak she has been teaching pupils remotely as schools have been shut to prevent the spread of the virus.

Watching her however, you would think she has been teaching on television her entire career such is her confidence and eloquence.

Agnes, along with around 50 other teachers, has been selected to teach as part of a programme run by the Ghana Education Service (GES) alongside Plan International which provides lessons to pupils who must stay at home due to the pandemic.

“When GES called me to partake in the online teaching, I doubted my capabilities, but I decided to give it a try,” says Agnes.

“We were given a brief orientation and asked to prepare some lessons to be presented to a panel. As we took turns to present, they gave us feedback on our slides and presentation skills, and we used the feedback to put whatever we have into shape and that has brought us this far”.

Agnes says there are many differences in teaching in a classroom compared to teaching in a television studio. She says, "It is not easy. Your teaching is centred on the learner and the learner is not around. So, we always imagine how the learners would react.

"Even in choosing pictures, we imagine how the learners would react. Will they be interested? will they move away five minutes into the lesson?"

"We use our instincts and then put the lessons together to make it captivating. Then we engage the learners by asking questions, even though they are not physically present."

Agnes has also had to overcome challenges in the time she has spent teaching remotely. She says, "My major challenge has to do with the studio. The studios have colour restrictions and it is not a typical kindergarten setting. I can't set it up because the next person after me will have everything pulled down.

"Another challenge is how to measure the students' comprehension of lessons and get feedback. We've given the timetable out to parents to enable them to be part of the process. They sit with their children, follow us and give us feedback.

"It has been very challenging, but it has been wonderful so far. Within these few weeks, my level of PowerPoint designing and presentation has significantly improved.

"We don't have the learners with us, but we move into their shoes, and we deliver the lesson."

The programme produces lessons for children from kindergarten age all the way up to senior high school which are broadcast on a free-to-air national television channel. So far, over 300 lessons have been broadcasted and it is estimated that over 19,000 students will have benefitted from the lessons by the time schools reopen in September.