PrepClass: Introducing educational tutoring 2.0 in Nigeria

At over 80 million, Nigeria has the world’s third largest population of youth under 15 year. Yet, in terms of quality education and enrolment rates, its primary to higher school system is ranked 120 out of 135 countries globally. Currently, the government allocates only 7.1 per cent of its expenditure to education, less than a third of the UN’s recommended minimum of 25 per cent for countries seeking rapid development. This significantly affects the quality of education and results in poor teacher remuneration, low teacher attendance rates in public schools and lack of basic infrastructure and facilities.

To tackle some of these issues, PrepClass launched a digital platform matching students to teachers. PrepClass enables face-to-face tutoring, either one-on-one or in groups. Through the platform, a pool of teachers who have been interviewed and thoroughly vetted offer their services to learners, providing a source of income for tutors while improving the education of Nigeria’s students. PrepClass tutors work with students aged 4 to 16 years old (K-12 learners) as well as with 16 to 35 year olds with a focus on test preparation (in maths, English and science), language learning and vocational education.

As of October 2018, PrepClass had over 5,154 tutors registered on its platform available to be matched with learners. On average, tutors work with five learners per month. Between May 2017 and August 2018, over 143,000 hours of face-to-face tutoring have been delivered through the PrepClass platform. In January 2018, PrepClass launched a mobile app called PrepTest, which provides tutors with a platform to upload educational content for learners. As of October 2018, over 312,000 learners have downloaded the app and accessed nearly 83,000 hours of downloaded educational content.

PrepClass uses an online web platform to recruit, manage and connect tutors to learners seeking academic support. This is how the tutoring service works:

For parents/learners

1. Parents/learners access the PrepClass website or apply via SMS, WhatsApp or by calling PrepClass and entering the learner’s details.
2. PrepClass calls the parent/learner to schedule a visit. PrepClass then visits the parent/learner to validate the request and set monthly tutoring goals.
3. Parent/learner pays a registration fee by cash or via bank transfer (3,000 Naira per learner, or $8.25).
4. PrepClass matches learners with the most suitable tutors and notifies learners by SMS and a phone call that they have been matched with a tutor.
5. PrepClass calls the parent/learner to schedule lessons between tutors and learners. A match is made between the tutor and learner(s).
6. PrepClass bills the parent/learner at the end of the month. Upon receiving the bill, the parent/learner pays PrepClass and rates/reviews the service in a phone interview.

For teachers/tutors

1. Tutors complete a registration form on the PrepClass website.
2. At the discretion of the PrepClass visitation officer, tutors are invited to be interviewed for further vetting and due diligence. During the interview, tutors complete three tests (personality, academic and teacher-student simulation) to establish a cumulative score and tutorial rank. The PrepClass visitation officer gives the tutors feedback on their score.
3. PrepClass provides orientation training to tutors. Tutors are notified of a match with learners in a phone call and are given the opportunity to accept/reject the lessons. If the tutor accepts, a match is made between the tutor and learner(s).
4. Tutors hold the tutoring classes with the learner(s).
5. At the end of each month, tutors send PrepClass feedback, parents/learners are billed and tutors are paid within 48 hours (PrepClass retains a 30 per cent service fee).

Number of hours of PrepClass in-person tutoring lessons

Table: Number of hours of PrepClass in-person tutoring lessons

- [Image: Number of hours of PrepClass in-person tutoring lessons]

6. Olumide Ogunlana – Co-Founder and CEO
7. PrepClass conduct due diligence before placing tutors in learner’s homes. Tutors provide two guarantees and learners/parents sign a contract agreeing an adult must be present during tutoring sessions.

### How the service works

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Working with mobile operators

In January 2018, PrepClass launched a native Android mobile app to enable students to prepare for the JAMB exam, a Nigerian entrance examination for prospective university undergraduates, through video courses.

Partnering with local mobile operators is instrumental to allow PrepClass to scale up its services across Nigeria and beyond. PrepClass team is currently in advanced discussions with the country’s largest providers.

Changing lives

The EdTech start-up is helping to address the issue of overcrowded classrooms that currently undermine the quality of education in Nigerian schools. According to The World Bank, the pupil to teacher ratio in Nigeria is 1:34 compared to the world average of 1:24. Between May 2017 and August 2018, over 143,000 hours of face-to-face tutoring have been delivered through the PrepClass platform.

Through in-person tutoring, PrepClass unlocks financial opportunities for teachers. Between January 2015 and September 2018, PrepClass has enabled 5,154 teachers to generate additional income through its platform. The minimum monthly wage for a Nigerian primary school teacher is 18,000 Naira ($41) while high school teachers earn 37,000 Naira ($102).

Since 2015, the average amount received by PrepClass tutors per month is around 64,000 Naira ($175).

“I’m very impressed with Mr. Blessing’s (PrepClass tutor) method of teaching. My children enjoy his sessions and they have helped improve their performance in school.”

– Mrs Stevenson, parent of two PrepClass learners

“Ms Anthonia (PrepClass tutor) has been a very effective teacher for my daughter. She is patient and understanding. The lessons have significantly improved my daughter’s numeracy.”

– Mrs Amosu, parent of a PrepClass learner

Working with the GSMA Ecosystem Accelerator

PrepClass received a grant from the GSMA Ecosystem Accelerator Innovation Fund in April 2017 to increase the number of tuition sessions completed through the platform by connecting more learners and tutors via a web and mobile app and to develop the digital education content available on the mobile app.

Beyond funding, the Ecosystem Accelerator is supporting PrepClass in engaging with local and regional mobile operators to assess and plan potential partnerships.

8 The World Bank, Pupil-teacher ratio, primary: https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.PRM.ENRL.TC.ZS