VALUE RE-ORIENTATION IN SECONDARY SCHOOL EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Functional education is education that is of value to the learner, community and the nation. It is the education that exposes the learner to knowledge that is of value and education that equips the learner with relevant skills needed by him to be functional and productive. For national growth, education must be functional, have values and skills. In this paper, the author has attempted to present what functional education is, the lost and need for functional and value re-orientation in the secondary education in Nigeria. He has discussed what are values and the core values in a functional education and how to balance them. The paper reviewed true and value-based education, how and why values got lost, and the effects of lost values in education on the lives of Nigerians and Nigeria and how to bring back those values. Finally, recommendations are made with a view to achieving them and restoring education that provide true knowledge and equips the learner with life lasting skills that would make him functional and able to contribute to the nation’s development.

Key words: Education, Functional, Value, Learner.

Value is importance, significance, worth or usefulness of an item that is real like stone or abstract like air. Value is a construct man places on an item. In this discuss, value is attached to usefulness of Secondary School Education in Nigeria. The positive development of any individual, group and society is a function of value outcomes. Education is a requirement for societal formation, societal change and transformation. It is a deliberate action that has power to add value to the life of its seekers and those who posses it. Education that is of value is education that has worth, power, strong, useful, desired, quality, important and desirable for its own sake. It is education that combines both knowledge and skills, thereby making it education that is required for national development.

Functional education is that that equips the learner with useful knowledge and skills that the learner, after leaving school, can put the knowledge and skills into use when employed or for self employment and or creating jobs for others. Functional education makes the graduates productive. Productivities of these graduates count toward economic development of the nation. Functional education in its true meaning is a worthy activity that prepares an individual for useful life now and here and for the future. It is a good commodity for an individual, community and the general society. It is a weapon that helps those who are faithful and wants to equip themselves with it for better now and the future. It is a weapon for fighting the power of ignorance. Secondary School graduates in Nigeria are expected to exhibit some results of the worthy education received.

A look at the curriculum of Nigeria’s secondary education leaves no one in doubt that graduates of this level of education would be graduates with added values provided the contents of the curriculum are effectively taught and there is mastery of what is taught to the students (National Policy, pp 13 – 29).

Value re-orientation is a re-assessment, take a look again and put something back on course because it has gone off-course. Education has gone off-course in Nigeria and the values expected
from it, lost. There is therefore the need to redeem education in Nigeria through value re-orientation in the system now. Re-orientation is to bring back the lost values in the secondary school system of education in Nigeria. A periodic evaluation of Nigeria’s secondary school education system is needed to keep the system on track. It is a check to make sure that what values education should give to the learners at the secondary school level is of worthy quality that meets the need of the learners and his society. The mere mention of value re-orientation in Nigeria’s secondary education is an acceptance that the value expected to be given out through secondary education to its students is not the reality on ground. Values that were known before are not the same being those experienced today. Today’s values are now put to question, hence the need for a re-orientation of education and its values at this level. Re-orientation is to make education functional again, in terms of values, knowledge and skills for national development.

**Value-Based Education**

Value based education is education with contents that are of worth to the learner. Education that equips the learner with values that become embedded in him/her for life. The values are indices for the learner and his nation’s economic and other positive developments. Value re-orientation in Nigeria’s secondary schools education is an affirmation that the value education was known for in the past at this level has eroded down. The re-orientation is a strategy and means of returning to value-based education. Three major components of value-based education are inputs into education, expected outcomes and ultimate outcomes. Teachers are to make value-based inputs into the system. The values should be those that would bring development and advancement of the students and the society.

There are expected outcomes from a student who has gone through education that is value based. Patriotism, loyalty, politeness, kindness, tolerance, acceptance, courage, friendliness, trustworthy and dependability according to Ikonne (2012) are some of the expected outcomes. The ultimate outcomes, Ikonne (2012) stated, may include competence, diligence, discipline, orderliness, integrity, selflessness, cooperation and unity. Interest in development, growth and advancement are functions of functional education. Furthermore, value-based education is expected to produce men and women that value what their society holds as values. Different people hold different values in a particular behaviour or thing, but the society expects value-based education to make the learners functional and or productive and uphold the society’s values. The nation in turn expects its educational system to turn out products that are knowledgeable, skillful and can contribute to national growth.

Value is the worth education offers to its learners. Value is the importance education gives to individuals, communities and societies. The importance is observed and measured in terms of economic growth, health improvement, and employment opportunities to graduates of the educational system, advancement of secondary school graduates to further studies in universities and other tertiary institutions and the general improvement in all aspects of life of the individuals, communities and larger societies.

Value-based education is true education. White (2000) stated that:

> True education means more than pursuing a certain course of study. It has to do with the whole person, and with the whole period of existence possible to human beings. It is the harmonious development of the physical, mental, and spiritual powers (p. 9).

Value-based or true education takes care of the social environment of individuals too. White (2000) commented on the recipients of true education, thus:
The men and women in whom this power is developed are those who bear responsibilities, who are leaders in enterprises and who influence character. It is the work of true education to develop this power, to train young people to be thinkers, and not mere reflectors of other people’s thought (p. 12).

True and honest men and women are the products of value-based education. Value has to be taught at home and school. Graduates of value-based education are not expected to steal what is for the general good of the society and entrusted under their care. Their names should not be heard and even listed as suspects and above all, confirmed persons defrauding their society by diverting government funds meant for the people and for their personal use. Those at the helm of affairs of the Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) and the Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC) in Nigeria must prove that they are products of value-based and true education. Leadership and followership based on acquired true education, would make the society better. What Nigeria and the world need today is what White (2000) described as:

The greatest want of the world is that of those men and women who will not be bought or sold, those who in their innermost souls are true and honest, those who do not fear to call sin by its right name, those whose conscience is as true to duty as the needle to the pole, those who will stand for the right though the heavens fall (p. 38, 39).

Public Expectation of Value-Based Educated Persons

Secondary school education that is value-based is interested in turning out graduates that the system has contributed and successfully built their characters and competences, changed and transformed them for good. Generally, values expected that education should impart on the learners are life lasting values. It is expected that education should provide knowledge and skills in different fields of man’s endeavours to the learners.

Graduates of value-functional education should be trustworthy, dependable, loyal and patriotic; graduates that are industrious and productive. Graduates of functional educational system are those who are ready to contribute toward making their society and nation a better place to live in. The why value that existed in secondary education in Nigeria is now eroded or none existing today is a question to be answered. Value is education and education is value. Loss of values in education is loss in its worth which could be explained as education with no usefulness to him/her who claims to have such education. Citizens that should move the society to grow should be given education that is proper. Without proper functional education, there would be no national development.

Core Values in Functional Education

Core values are central in this discourse and they form the heart, basic or main variables that make education valuable and functionally useful to man. Which values are core and which are just values? How can these values be obtained and retained. What is the relationship between value and education? What values existed in the secondary school system of education in the past which do not exist today? Where did the managers and operators of the educational system at the secondary level get it wrong in Nigeria? What orientation and re-orientation are needed to bring back the lost values that would make secondary education functional again?

Core values that existed in the educational system are summarized as quality knowledge and skills. These were imparted into the graduates of yester years. The graduates produce now are limited in knowledge and skills. They cannot defend their certificates in writing or verbally.
Value has been defined in this work and may be summarized as the worth or importance, education is expected to teach and offer its students. Education is meant to give values that prepare its graduates to be functional, leading to economic growth, healthy society, employment chances, access to higher education and skills development, education for the whole person and for life, and education that will solve problems. People, who are true and honest citizens, are seen and counted as those who know what value is. Such people are good models to the younger one. Model citizens won’t sell their consciences for nothing less than value. These are some of the values in Nigeria’s education that are lost. The absence of these values is what went wrong with the system of education under consideration in this article. Many secondary school graduates now cannot demonstrate in practical terms what education has given them after a minimum of twelve (12) years stay in primary and secondary schools. Majority of these graduates of the system cannot get admitted into tertiary institutions or get employed and add values to their lives and contribute to nation’s economic developments. There is therefore a need to bring back values into the education system in order to make education functional.

Core values are seen in well-educated individuals who are able to effectively participate in the political, social and economic institutions that are the foundation of a democratic society. Educational core values should be able to:

i. Mold the behaviours of the youths to meet societal standards.

ii. Shape the future of individuals and society.

iii. Expose students to diversities and different points of views of other people.

iv. Have positive influence of peers on students conduct and achievement.

v. Provide variety of experiences through parents and community engagement in the schools, such as the Parents Teachers Associations (PTA) in primary and secondary schools and Parents Consultative Forum (PC) as in Babcock University, where parents and school administrator meet to share their valuable experiences and agree on which values be passed to the students for positive development.

vi. Give individual benefits that include acquisition of academic knowledge and skills.

vi. Introduce collective welfare of societies, institutions and freedoms to succeed and continue into the future.

viii. Equip graduates with knowledge and different skills that they would apply into diverse endeavours with the aim of developing themselves and the nation. (ed.fullerton.edu/doc/core%20values.doc).

Ethical, moral and natural goods are among core values education should teach learners. Moral goods are values that have to do with the conduct of persons, usually leading to praise or blame. Kant who lived between 1724 and 1804 thought of moral value as a unique and universally identifiable property. A moral good is anything which one is obligated to strive towards. Natural goods in the other hand have to do with objects and not praises. Ethics lean itself on moral rather than natural goods. Different people have different values on particular behaviour or thing. In everything and every conduct of an individual, value should be introduced for a worthy society (wikpedia, the free encyclopedia).

**Erosion in Functional Secondary Education in Nigeria**

The decay observed in the Nigerian society is as a result of erosion in educational values. The establishment of institutions like the Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC), and the
Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC), are efforts to forcefully make citizens bring out their values for the betterment of the Nigerian society and to shun evil ways. Confirmation that values have been eroded and are still being eroded in the educational sector and other sectors and of the society are:

i). Examination malpractice: This is no longer news or something strange in the secondary and tertiary schools in the country. At the secondary level, examination malpractice start at internal examinations and graduate to the external examinations like the West African Examination Council (WAEC), the National Examination Council (NECO) and the Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME). At the tertiary level, records of students caught in examination malpractices abound as of WAEC, NECO and JAMB.

ii). No regular school calendars in many schools due to constant strikes by teachers. This is applicable to all public educational institutions in the country (Primary, Secondary and Tertiary).

iii). Decay: Classroom furniture, text books. Workshops and tools, laboratories and other teaching materials are not maintained or in deplorable conditions. The decay may include, short supply and in some schools, complete absence of infrastructure and teaching materials.

iv). Armed robbery and Kidnapping

v). Fraud and Stealing from government coffers.

vi). Organized “export” of young girls to foreign lands for prostitution. The National Agency for Prohibition of Traffic in Persons (NAPTIC) has been fighting the war to stop this ugly trade but due to loss of value in homes, schools and society, merchants of this trade and the young girls who are the stock in trade are finding ways to avoid being caught and remain in the trade.

vii). Low quality of teachers due to the absence of Teacher Training Colleges (TTC) which were the good foundations for training teachers who kept value as a requirement in education.

Balancing Core Values in Education

Education is a function of the government of Nigeria. Private individuals and groups can assist government in providing education to citizens but this does not remove the responsibility from the hands of the government. Because of its value to the citizens, the government of Nigeria budgets for education every year.

Education that is of value should provide foundation of good citizenship. It should awaken children to cultural values, provide tools for preparation for professional training, expose the environment to students and how to adjust in it (http://www.aesaprepacademy.org/). Education that is of value exposes the students to careers and vocations that are fitting, careers and vocations that will bring success. Because of its importance, no child should be denied education and because of its value, it should be made free and compulsory from nursery to secondary school level. Educational system loaded with values that are received from nursery to secondary is sufficient to produce worthy men and women who would contribute to the general development of the society.

Functional education is important for the individual and collective interest for all in sharing common educational experiences; hence it should be balanced across the society. Education is a requirement in the performance of our basic public and private responsibilities. The civil servant, the public servant, armed forces, police and all security agencies require functional education to perform their duties. It is the foundation for planting and harvesting values. Citizens that are of worth build worthy and valuable society because they can balance education and the needs of the society (http://www.elc-pa.org/pubs/Balancing_values_of_Education).
Duty of Government in Providing Education

There are three tiers of governance in Nigeria; federal, state and local. It is a constitutional provision that the government makes education available to its citizens. (Olakanmi, 2008). The local government assists in providing education at the primary level, while states and federal look after secondary and tertiary levels.

It is the duty of government to lead in funding, regulating and setting standards in public schools attended by most children in any community in Nigeria. Private individuals and groups can assist governments by establishing and running their schools side by side those of governments. In whichever school children are opportune to attend, the school should create high quality opportunities to learners and prepare them for successful career options, democratic citizenship and social participation. This is functional and value oriented education.

Equity should be practical in the schools and at all levels. A common set of educational experiences for all the children should be shared in a socially cohesive manner. Every child should have free access to education that is based on fairness, not privileged or favouritism.

Parents who are stakeholders in education should have influence over the education of their children within limits imposed by the overall needs of democratic governance system for schools. Any influence must be of positive values and values that adds and not lowers the quality of education. Education is a “mixed” good. It has essential benefits for society in general, local community, individuals and families. Both public and private have stakes in education.

Conclusion

Value re-orientation in education suggests a fall in value of secondary education in Nigeria. This could mean a decrease in the standard of education. The value secondary education was known for in this country is not what it is today. Most of the leaders that fought for the country’s independence were secondary school graduates or its equivalent. The rot in the Nigerian society is the result of erosion in educational values. Since it is known what went wrong, it shall be easy for us to find solutions to the fallen standards and values. The time to fix back education at the secondary level and all levels in Nigeria is now.

The current rise in unemployment especially as it affects school leavers at all levels is due to their inadequacies or lack of deep knowledge and practical skills in their subject areas. Not many organizations are ready to employ unskilled labourers and then, send them for basic training which they suppose to have acquired in school and before graduation. Reintroduction of functional education that has values, provides knowledge and skills for national development is the only way that would make the nation grow. Engagement of people with skills to produce, is the sure way to national development and a barometer for value education.

Recommendations
1. The curriculum of today and of old, what is it that has been taken out of the old that has affected the values today? Returning to the values is the option.
2. The quality of the teachers and instructors today is nowhere near those of the old time, therefore, the need to upgrade the training of teachers so as to reintroduce values into the secondary school level.
3. The Teacher Training Colleges were the foundational institutions for training teachers. The colleges did good work in preparing teachers for the primary schools. It is recommended that these colleges be brought back so that persons called into teaching profession are well prepared from the foundation. Teachers who are chanced to go further, either for the National Certificate
Value Re-Orientation in Secondary School Education in Nigeria

in Education (NCE) or for university degrees in readiness to teach in secondary schools, would graduates with value-laden teachers.

4. The mentality of individuals, communities and entire society should be re-oriented toward value.

5. Value re-orientation should be taught in homes, worship places, schools and at cultural gatherings.

6. Violators of values should be punished appropriately so as to deter others from any violation of educational and societal values.

References


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Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia.