

ENHANCING TEACHER EFFECTIVENESS FOR QUALITATIVE PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

The paper focused on enhancing teacher effectiveness for qualitative primary and secondary educations in Nigeria. An effective or a competent teacher is one who possesses adequate knowledge in his discipline; professional teaching skills and adequate administrative skills. For teacher to be effective, adequate training programmes must be provided for the available teachers, the teaching profession must be made attractive by the government to attract best brains, adequate number of teachers must be employed to match with the teaming student population, adequate orientation must be given to the newly recruited teachers, there must be professional development of teachers, teaching must be professionalized in Nigeria, teaching environment must be made conducive in all circumstances. The concerned relevant authorities must exercise 'effective supervision, both personnel and instruction, and finally, teachers must be motivated adequately in all spheres of life. It is the belief of the writers that if all the above is done, teachers in our primary and secondary schools must automatically become effective and qualitative education in primary and secondary school must be achieved.

Introduction

The repaid-increasing enrolment of children of school age at the primary and secondary school levels keep tasking the already inadequate resources available for these levels of education in Nigeria. Government at all levels and the people of Nigeria have actually realized that the burden of educating is enormous that of not educating is not only worse but also self destructive. The question on the lips of every concerned citizen 'therefore is whether the objectives of the primary and secondary education as stipulated in the National Policy on Education are being efficiently and effectively achieved, if at all.

Nigeria being one of the countries of the world that are committed to the ideals of education for all and hopes to achieve 100% functional literacy comes 2015. While the society is working seriously towards attaining these goals a number of questions arise. These questions include; 'whether the graduates of these schools meet the required standards at these levels and where they can be said to be functional.

How the current educational system responds to the above questions depends on the interplay of many factors. These factors include: the quality of pupils enrolled at each level in terms of their physical, mental and psychological well being; the quality and quantity of teachers at these levels of education; the friendliness of the school environment and the ability of parents to contribute their own quota towards the education of their children.

The focus of this paper is to do justice to the issues to teacher's competency or teacher's effectiveness in both primary and secondary levels of education in Nigeria.

Multidisciplinary Journal of Research Development Volume 15 No 2 September, 2010

Teacher Effectiveness

Teaching is no doubt a complex task and this makes it difficult for school administrators and managers to agree on who is a competent teacher. However, it has been discovered that effectiveness in teaching and learning is equally a complex interacting factors of teacher characteristics--Level of training experience and personality. Pupil's characteristics—age, family background and exposure; methods of teaching; materials used in teaching, facilities available, favourability of the environment and methods of evaluation employed.

A lot of findings have supported the above in Nigeria. For instance, Coomb (1964) opined that the teacher is not only an 'important educational input but is one of the most important indicators of efficiency. Apart from students, teachers are largest most crucial input of any educational system. Also Bar (1982) pointed out that teacher's effectiveness depends on the relationship between teachers, pupils, materials and other stakeholders in the educational enterprise. Seweje (1996) equally lent his voice to this by noting that the competency of a teacher also depends on other variables like physical, social and cultural environment in which the teacher operates apart from his knowledge.

In this same vein, Okeke (2004) said that effectiveness of teachers is a major determinant of the quality of education in a nation because the quality of teaching is dependent among other things, on the effectiveness of teachers. Nwanna (1993) also opined that the teacher is the most important resource in the educational system, and for teachers to be effective, they must be adequate in number. This implies that if teachers are not adequate in number, the realization of any educational goals will be difficult.

Other correlates of teacher effectiveness according to Otu (2002) include physical environment, quality, quantity variety and appropriateness of facilities and instructional materials. Furthermore Ahmed (2004) was of the view that effective job performance results namely: physical, financial and human. He however maintained that productivity only occurs when the human component is present in the equation as financial and physical resources on their own, cannot bring it about. At this juncture, let us answer the question: who is an effective teacher? For the purpose of this paper, the following according to Ahmed (2004) will be taken to approximate the pre-requisite skills of a competent or an effective teacher that can bring about an effective teaching act: possession of adequate knowledge in his/her discipline in 'terms of breath and depth; adequate communication skills (oral, written, comprehension and interpretation of messages ability to read, comprehend and interpret materials), and Possession of professional teaching skills. Basic principles of the learning process interest in learners and awareness of the patterns of their physical, social, psychological and intellectual development.

Demonstration of effective teaching techniques: Ability to construct, select, adapt, and use appropriate instructional materials to meet instructional objectives and students learning needs. Facilitator of learning and not a master.

Commitment to teaching as a career; Understanding of the role of the schools in the society, possession of administrative skills; can effectively manage the classroom. Has a conflict resolution skill. Adequate record keeping skills, sound inter-personal skills, neat and decent appearance, patient, fair, firm, humorous and open minded. Has a self concept and assists learners to develop positive self concept. Demonstrates skills that will enable students develop their own values, attitudes and beliefs. The above listed qualities for an effective teacher are not very easy to be possessed nowadays as a result of poor treatment accorded to teachers in Nigeria.

Ahmed (2004) opined that getting such teachers at all levels of our educational system seems herculean, but the fact remains that we had teachers with such traits in the past a few of them are still

within the system and we can produce more of them in the future with seriousness and singularity of purpose towards enhanced teacher effectiveness in our classrooms.

Enhancing Teacher Effectiveness

Teacher effectiveness can be enhanced through a variety of ways such as teacher's preparation, recruitment, induction, professionalization of teaching, professional development, teaching environment, effective school supervision and motivation of teachers.

Teacher Preparation

Quality of training available. The federal government of Nigeria (2004) in the National Policy on Education stipulates the Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE) as minimum teaching qualification in Nigeria and also lists the goals of Teacher Education as follows:

1. To produce highly motivated conscientious and efficient class room teachers for all levels of the educational system;
2. To encourage further the spirit of enquiry and creativity in teachers.
3. To help teachers to fit into the social life of the community and society at large and enhance their commitment to national goals;
4. To provide teacher background adequate for their assignment and make them adaptable to changing times.
5. To enhance teachers commitment to the teaching profession.

This connotes that pre-service training of teachers should adequately prepare them for the level of education they are to teach. The Federal Government of Nigeria further states that all teachers in educational institutions should be professionally trained. Federal Government Nigeria in NPE (2004) lists the teacher education providers as follows: Colleges of Education, National Teachers Institute (NTI) Institute of Education, Faculties of Education.

Appropriate curriculum:- The curriculum contents of teacher education should focus on the level for which the teachers are prepared. Being the minimum teaching qualification (NCE) curriculum should focus on primary education studies (PES) with emphasis on supervised teaching practice. FGN (2004) in NPE states that: teacher education shall continue to take cognizance of changes in methodology and in the curriculum. Teachers shall regularly be exposed to innovations in the profession. Jegede (2003) commented that our concept of teaching must move with shifting global paradigm and be reflected in the teacher education curriculum. He proposed further that a holistic and integrated model for teacher education and distance learning mode be developed to be able to produce the required teachers in the required quantity and quality in a record time for our educational system.

Quality of Intakes to Teacher Education Institutions: The policy of admitting less quality candidates into teacher education programmes does not encourage quality teacher education. For instance in most of the universities in Nigeria, the cut off marks into Faculties of Education are usually very low compare to other faculties. Furthermore, policy of re-admitting never do well students in other faculties into faculty of education does not also encourage quality of education. To ensure quality intakes into the Faculties of Education, NCE should be the entry point while the programme should last for four years.

But if through Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB) the programmes should last for five at least. Experience has shown that incentives such as scholarships and employment with handsome pay and good conditions of service attract quality trainees into teacher education. Of course, the sponsored students should be bonded to teach for the number of years commensurate with

their years of sponsorship. Government at all level should therefore use various forms of incentives to attract the best brains into teacher education programmes.

There should be a clear-cut recruitment policy. NCE is the minimum teaching qualification. A situation where so many NCE and university graduates roam the streets while the Local Government Education Authorities recruit grade II teachers and secondary school leavers as primary school teachers for lack of funds is under-cutting the national policy. Quality teachers should be recruited in the required quantity. Researches have shown where schools are understaffed to the extent that a teacher teaches as many as 100 to 150 students in a class. Teachers should be deployed according to need. Experience shows that urban schools are often over staffed at the expense of the rural schools. These cases are certainly not helpful in enhancing teacher effectiveness. The policy of one teacher to 30 pupils and one teacher to 40 students respectively should be strictly adhered to in Nigeria to ensure teacher effectiveness.

Induction: Newly recruited teachers should be given proper orientation no matter the length and level of their pre-service training. It enables the new entrants benefit from the old seasoned colleagues and start right. It helps them to learn from others' mistakes and be acquainted with the ethics of the profession.

Professionalizaiton of Teaching

Teacher effectiveness can be further enhanced by the professionalizaiton of teaching. The need for this cannot be overemphasized. It is gratifying to note that the Teacher's Registration Council has effectively taken off. Teachers are urged to take opportunity of the establishment of this body to contribute their quota towards professionalizing teaching in Nigeria.

Professional Development of Teachers

Teachers need to update their knowledge because of rapid increase in the body of knowledge, advances in pedagogical sciences, the use of computer, changes in policies and changes in teacher work situation. Teachers require refresher courses for job proficiency and strengthened commitment. All these could be taken care of by granting study leave with pay to teachers on regular basis. National Teachers Institute (NTI), Distance learning system provides ample opportunities for the various categories of teachers to upgrade themselves without leaving their jobs. NTI now runs the following programmes for qualitative teacher education by distance learning system. Teacher Grade II Certificate (TCII), Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE), Post Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE), Refresher courses on Better school management for Head teachers, etc.

TC.II, Distance Learning Studies (DLS) is for training auxiliary teachers in primary schools to obtain the TC.II in order to qualify them for NCE programme. NCE (DLS) is to up grade serving TC.II teachers to NCE level. Post Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) is for upgrading non-professional graduate teachers. Refresher courses are to makes serving teachers proficient and renew their commitment to the job of teaching.

Other in-service education providers are Colleges of Education and the Institute of Education Faculties of Education of Universities. They provide Sandwich NCE programmes in Colleges of Education during the long vacations for TC.II holders and auxiliary teachers. Continuing Teacher Education in the institute/faculties of Education leading to B.Ed, B.a (ED), M.Ed, M.A (Ed) M.Sc (Ed) and Ph.D for NCE, holders. From the foregoing, it can be seen that opportunities abound for the professional development of teachers. Employers of teachers should make it mandatory that teachers at all levels upgrade themselves at least every three years.

Professional development should enhance teacher's status and self esteem. The situation whereby a teacher in primary school is looked down upon even if he has a Ph.D in Education is an unpleasant phenomenon. This had led to the irresistible desire of primary school teachers to transfer to teaching at the secondary school level as soon as they acquire a higher qualification. Similarly those teaching at the secondary school level would wish to shift to tertiary institutions once they acquire post graduate qualification. Teachers should be able to upgrade themselves and earn enhanced emoluments without necessarily leaving the level of school at which they are teaching. Some states in Nigeria have started allowing their teachers to rise up to level 16 without leaving the classroom (Isyaku 2004). This is encouraging as not only does it enhance teachers motivation, it enhances their retention within the system and level. This will equally enhance effectiveness in classrooms.

Teaching Environment

Teaching environment refers to those infrastructures and facilities that enhance teaching. They include classrooms, furniture, libraries, laboratories workshop playfield school farms as well as provisions for water and toilet facilities. They have to be of the appropriate quantity, size and quality, to meet the minimum standard for promoting any meaningful teaching and learning. A number of research findings have shown that private schools perform better than public schools even though public schools have better qualified staff, but the private ones have more conducive teaching-learning environment and are better supervised.

Effective School Supervision

Supervision serves as external source of motivation. Regular supervision of teachers by the head teachers will give the teacher necessary reinforcement- an immediate feedback of his teaching. Teachers may be highly qualified but their effectiveness would need to be encouraged through interactive supervision by the head teachers as well as the inspectors of schools. It is a common knowledge that public schools are seldom supervised. If at all, only a few of the urban schools are fairly supervised. This is one of the areas where private schools outshine public schools. Constant supervision of teachers and schools propels teachers to always want to put in their best and indeed put in their best (Nwakpa 2005).

Supervision should assist in solving the problems of the teacher in classroom and not to witch hunt him. Cases of inadequate school plant and teachers; indiscipline and breakdowns should be immediately looked at to enhance teacher's efficiency and effectiveness.

Motivation of Teachers

Motivation in teaching profession is very low. Isu (2007) was of the view that the indicators of this are:

1. Lack of job security. Teachers are often retired or dismissed at will. Their postings at times do not follow official procedures. Their retirement benefits and gratuities are often delayed if not denied.
2. Poor conditions of service. Teacher's salaries are very poor and not paid regularly. This is also the same with their leave allowances. Thus, teachers are poorly treated.
3. Poor social recognition. Teachers are hardly recognized and are rarely appointed into any meaningful position in Government or even considered for into special national awards. All this contribute to make a teacher ineffective in his job. The removal of all these anomalies in the life of teachers will go a long way making teachers to be effective in their job. Teachers

are human beings, they need recognition, fat salaries and adequate care from their employers and the general public.

Conclusion

In the light of these essential ingredients for efficiency and effectiveness in the classroom, the major stakeholders of education at these levels, are urged to do more by providing more funds for the provision and sustenance of a qualitative primary and secondary education in Nigeria.

Recommendations

In the course of this work the writer has highlighted what it would take for teachers in the primary and secondary schools to be effective. These include:

- Effective and qualitative teachers education
- Good recruitment policy
- Induction programme
- Professionalization of teaching
- Conducive teaching environment
- Effective school supervision
- Professional development of teachers and effective motivation of teachers.

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