

THE MANAGEMENT OF TEACHER EDUCATION FOR SKILLS ACQUISITION IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Teachers play an indispensable roles in the implementation of education programmes. They are the principal actors and the initiators of the learning process. Therefore teacher education needs to be managed very well for skills acquisition that would enable them to discharge their duties more effectively. On the basis of the above expositions, this paper examines, the concept of management and teacher education in Nigeria. Furthermore, the paper deals extensively with the objectives and problems of teacher education. The study also discusses skills acquisition in the teacher education programmes, teacher motivation, with recommendations for effective management of teacher education for skills acquisition in Nigeria.

There is a direct link between the quality of education and the quality of teachers. This view is observed in the National Policy on Education (2004:64), that, teacher education will continue to be given a major emphasis in all our educational planning because, "No education system can rise above the quality of its teacher". Hence, to have quality teachers in our schools therefore, proper management of the teachers for skills acquisition should be of high priority-by" every Nigerian. Adamu (2002) remarks that,- in Nigeria, teachers lie at the heart of educational crisis because without well trained professional teachers there cannot be any meaningful educational growth for the country either qualitatively or quantitatively.

Introduction

Teachers are the agents of development no viable development can be accomplished without competent teachers. This is as a result of the fact that it is through education that the various categories of manpower are developed. There cannot be meaningful economic and national development without competent teachers, and to train competent teachers requires competent educators. Adequate training cannot take place at any level without competent teachers, therefore, teacher education needs to be thoroughly managed to enable the teachers acquire skills that will aid them to discharge their duties efficiently and more professionally. This is because the effective performances of their jobs depend largely upon the quality of professional teaching techniques they received.

Conceptual Clarification (i) Management

There is no universally accepted definition of management since organization's management depends on what a particular organization produces. For instance management can be described as the ability of a manager to make his employees to do what he wants them to do at a particular point in time.

However, management of teacher education is the ability of educational providers or educational managers like the Ministry of Education or its delegated agencies to manage human and resources to achieve the stated objectives of education. Walters in Oyedeji (1998) defines management as the process of planning, organizing, managing, appraising and controlling an enterprise in order to attain certain goals and objectives. Management therefore involves thinking and doing right from the planning to the accomplishment stage.

(ii) **Teacher Education**

Teacher education can be described as all the training given to those who are prepared for the teaching profession in our educational institutions. According to Adoga (2002), teacher education is a type of education that prepares, or trains individuals to become teachers with the intellectual and professional background adequate for teaching and learning.

Teacher education is a system of education planned for the preparation of the would be teacher to discharge his functions effectively and efficiently in accordance with the needs and requirements of the teaching profession. It is a kind of training that provides the would be teachers with both necessary intellectual and professional background adequate for teaching, as well as to enhance their commitment to the teaching profession.

Teacher education programmes is structured to equip teachers for the effective performance of their duties of which the required professional training would be given through the designated teacher (raining institutions, like the Grade 11 Teachers' College, Advanced Teachers" College, College of Education, Institute of Education, National Teachers' Institutes and Teachers Centers.

Objectives of"Teacher Education

The objectives of Teacher education as stated in the National Policy on education (2004) are:

- i To produce highly motivated, conscientious and efficient classroom teacher for all. levels of our education system;
- ii. To encourage further the spirit of enquiry and creativity in teachers;
- iii. To help teachers fit into the social life of the community and society at large and to enhance their commitment to national objectives;

iv.

To provide teachers with the intellectual and professional background adequate for their assignment and to make them adaptable to any changing situation not only in the life of their country, but in the wider world;
To enhance teachers, commitment to teaching profession.

Problems of Teacher Education in Nigeria

One of the serious problems plaguing the teachers' training education programmes in Nigeria is in the area of recruitment for training. Admissions into a Teacher's Training College is often looked at as an inferior achievement by those who eventually get admitted into them. The selection of students for training is progressively, in the sense that, those that fail to get admission into secondary school can be selected to enter lowest level of teachers' training schools. And anybody who fails to get admission into the tertiary institutions like the University level can then go into the highest teacher training colleges. This method of teachers recruitment for training makes Nigerian schools to be staffed by the failures.

Another problem of teacher education is in the area of facilities. The facilities and equipment needed for training teachers have not been made available in the quantity needed to train the teachers. The reasons for this is because of inadequate finance from both the federal and state governments. In support of this, Ngada (2001) identified lecture halls, classrooms, laboratories, hostels, staff quarters, generating plants, and office equipment as being inadequate in most teacher producing institutions, which is more pronounced in state owned colleges.

In addition, many people see leaching as a career but as a step toward another goal because of economic reasons. This eventually results to a constant change of staff which indirectly affects the continuity of the pupils' education and undermine standards. Most

Skills Acquisition in the Teacher Education Programmes

teachers leave the profession simply because there are more financial opportunities in other professions and the demands of teaching also are more when compared with other types of work with similar pay.

More so, the social status of the teacher and negative ' attitudes towards the teaching profession is another problem affecting teacher education in the area of their retention in the profession. Very few Nigerians choose teaching willingly as a career. This general look down attitude of the society to teachers makes their social position looks inferior to that of other professionals. Also government's stand on the issue of teachers' welfare is not encouraging at all, because government does nothing to improve the image of teacher in Nigeria.

Lack of commitment to the profession borne out of little investment by the governments in preparing teachers for the profession is another problem of teacher education. Simply because those who are trained to teach and fail to teach do not feel sense of financial wastages at all. Some people choose teaching as a last resort because of their poor economic backgrounds.

Haphazard conduct of teaching practice exercises is another factor affecting teacher education in Nigeria. Teaching practice that should serve as effective means of preparing teachers for teaching profession is not taken seriously as it ought to be. The practice of assessing, evaluating and certifying teacher as competent to practice the profession is being replaced by merely written examinations. Students are hardly held behind as a result of their poor performance in teaching practice. The supervision of the teaching practice programme is not adequate. Some students may not be supervised more than once or twice throughout the period of teaching practice. This act has resulted to our employing all manner of people to partake in the critical task of teaching.

For teacher to acquire necessary skills that would enable him to perform efficiently and effectively in his profession, his preparation is very important. It is believed that only teachers who possess the necessary technical competence and professional skills through a well coordinated teacher education programme can rise to meet the challenges of the crisis that is affecting Nigeria's educational system. Teacher preparation for skills acquisition is expected to possess the necessary technical competence and professional skills in the following areas;

1. Teaching Practice

Teaching practice is one of the core techniques of training teacher for skills acquisition of the teaching profession. It is an integral part of teacher training and the only means by which we can access the competence of the student teacher. According to Oni (1996), teaching practice is a practical teaching exercise often designed for, and undertaken ' by, prospective teachers at certain stages of their training. Teaching practice is a medium through which performance can be measured in the general preparation of teachers for the task of teaching and it provides an opportunity for the intending teachers to put into practice, the theoretical knowledge they acquire on how to teach various categories of learners after graduation. It is a means of preparing students to become effective teachers. Hence, assessment of any teaching practice component of teacher education programmes should be based on its ability to provide useful, relevant, practical orientation for students' teachers who, on graduation, will be experienced, confident, perceptive and effective in the performance of their total roles as professional teachers.

According to Adamu (2002), teaching practice was conceived as the practical mastery of the art of teaching by actual participation in

classroom teaching under the critical eyes of an expert and experienced teacher as supervisor and tutor. It is a time to expose the student-teacher to the difficult art of teaching and a test of his innate potentials to adequately marry theory and practice together. This is a time to set teaching standard which will serve as foundation upon which subsequent teaching would be built. There is also the need to supervise and evaluate students' teaching practice because if foundation is well laid, there is more hope of producing teachers of good quality who would keep improving their teaching strategies and sustain teaching profession.

2. Micro-teaching

Micro-teaching is a skill training process of which the complexities of the real classroom situations have been reduced to bare minimum and the level of feedback at the same time is greatly enhanced. It is a training technique in which the trainee teaches for a short time a few number of learners of which the feedback from learners and supervisor is received by trained teacher immediately. The idea of micro-teaching exposes the student-teachers to techniques and at the same time encouraging them to apply the skills in their teaching. According to Lee (1975), micro-teaching does not exclude teaching practice. It seeks to provide a gradual controlled entrance into classroom with the hope that practicing teacher will synthesize his skills developed by micro-teaching experience and come up with a better performance. Examples of teaching skills are: the skill of questioning, the skill of reinforcement, the skill of probing, the skill of explaining, the skill of stimulus variation, the skill of introducing a lesson etc.

The content of micro-teaching in teacher education is a scientific technique to make the teacher education programme scientific in approach.

Process of micro-teaching in teacher education includes:

- i. The process through which a teacher trainee is trained to master teaching skills.
 - ii. It consists of orientation phase and practice phase.
- Impact of micro-teaching in teacher education include the following:
- (i) Micro-teaching is designed to improve teaching skills,
 - (ii) It is a safe practice that enhances quick understanding of concepts by the students,
 - (iii) It is a useful technique for providing continuous training to serving teachers.

3. Preparation of Instructional Materials.

Other skills that student-teachers are supposed to be well-groomed is in the area of preparation of instructional materials. They should be exposed to the techniques of improvising and the use of instructional materials for teaching. They should acquire skills on how and when to use the instructional materials while teaching. The training received should enable them to improvise the instructional materials for teaching where it seems not available.

Teacher Motivation

For teachers to be more committed and more dedicated to teaching profession they need to be motivated. A kind of driving force that will cause the teacher to perform very well must be created in them. Motivation is a tool of management and one of the ways of making teachers to put forth their best efforts in an efficient and effective manner in order to achieve educational objectives. This could be provided in the areas of creating a conducive environment, financial incentives in the form of residential quarters, extended educational opportunities and other incentives added to normal salaries, provision of extensive and meaningful materials to be used by the teacher.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made:

1. Federal government and authorities concerned should adequately fund the teacher-education programmes.
2. Conducive environment should be created for the teachers to work.
3. The teaching profession should be remunerated so as to attract and retain more committed, intelligent and dedicated teachers.
4. The training should enforce the teacher-to-be, to make a heavy investment in his preparation to become a teacher; by so doing he would either not enter the field in the first instance or not drop-out.
5. Government should develop a set of criteria that would enable her to authorize only qualified and competent person to teach, so as to protect Nigerian schools and colleges from incompetent and unqualified teachers.
6. The government and private individuals should endeavor to provide all the needs like infrastructural facilities, instructional materials and other materials that can make teaching a success within the school system.
7. Recruitment of teacher for training should be on merit not because of their inability to secure admission into other institutions.
8. People should not consider the teaching profession as a stepping stone to other careers,
9. The teaching practice exercise should be taken seriously and the student-teachers should be in the field for one year. The few weeks using for teaching practice before seems inadequate for them to acquire all the necessary skills for teaching profession.
10. Teacher education curriculum should make it possible for them to acquire skills that will enable them to be effective to the teaching profession.
11. Teacher education curriculum that would develop mental skills as well as bestow knowledge and understanding of the various disciplines in teacher should be the major priority of teacher education. And it should be reviewed from time to time so as to enable it to cope with the changes in the society.

Conclusion

Teachers play very crucial roles in the society in the area of implementation of educational programmes and national development. Their training therefore should be handled with care. The need for teacher education to produce highly qualified, competent, committed and dedicated professional teachers who could cope with the challenges of educating Nigerian children for a better tomorrow can not be underrated.

Therefore, teacher education should be thoroughly managed to enable them acquire necessary skills that would enable them perform their duties efficiently and effectively since the effective performance of their jobs depend to a large extent upon the quality of professional training they received.

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