

RE-PROFILING TEACHERS FOR FUTURE CHALLENGES IN NIGERIAN SCHOOL SYSTEM

Simeon S. Fowowe and S. T. Adebisin

Abstract

Over the last few decades, our understanding of learning and the conditions under which it is facilitated have substantially changed. Changes therefore occur in teaching and learning endeavour at a breakneck speed that profoundly affect fundamental changes in the way learners function, the way teachers relate to learners and the way school and society relate to one another. In most contemporary theories, as a result of which the roles of the teacher and the learner within the classroom have been redefined, development in technologies that can be used to enhance and support learning has been even more rapid. Rather than just being about school and curriculum design, this paper sets to offer some innovative ideas on how both the new technologies and learning strategies can be annexed and integrated into the Nigerian school system. The paper equally x-rays the future classroom and its characteristic features with the sole aim to equip the learners with the emerging tools that will prepare them to successfully compete in the ever-expanding high tech global world of work.

Key Words: high tech, future classroom, breakneck speed, contemporary theories, innovative ideas.

The new view about the concept of education is that, it is the major vehicle for the realization of socio-economic and political innovation and advancement in every society. This is so because the norms, values and socio-economic and political aspirations of the larger

society are transmitted to other generations through education, especially education with a capital "E." (UNESCO 2011).

Education with capital "E" promotes the all round development of the beneficiary in terms of physical, emotional, intellectual, psycho social and other multiple intelligences. In the twenty first century however, the teacher centred instructional strategy that was dominated by instructional process since the advent of formal education is no longer adequate for inculcating in learners, the knowledge, skills, emotional intelligence, attitude and values necessary for effective life in a knowledge driven society. (Akindolu 2012) The previous centuries were dominated by instructional strategies which made the learner a mere recipient of knowledge that emanated from the teacher. In most cases then, the learner memorised the knowledge and presented it to the teacher on demand. This instructional strategy used could not develop the learners the ability of autonomy, innovation, lifelong learning, needed to survive collaboration another in the twenty first century.

The school system today needs to be equipped with the emerging pedagogy, and transformational pedagogy for that matter, that can prepare learners for effective life in the twenty first century. The instructional process is now shifting from textbook driven and teacher centred methodologies to the digital learning, particularly the use of internet and web based communication which brings

significant change in the lives of the learners. The increased levels of integration of computer-mediated instructional element into the traditional face to face learning experience will definitely go a long way to solve many challenges being faced by the current learners and the school system.

The future classroom will practice transformational pedagogy described earlier to situate the practice of teaching squarely at level five the creative teacher level, which is the ultimate profile every efficient teacher aspires to be.

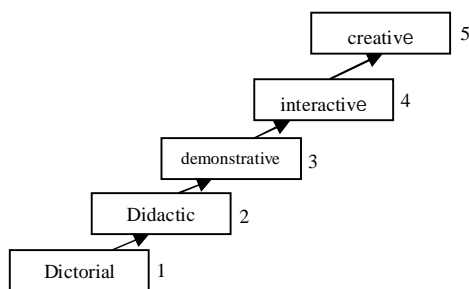


Fig. 1: Levels of teacher's profile Source: (Obanya 2014:479)

Level 1: Teacher (dictorial) – the all-knowing, stuffs the empty heads of students.

Level 2: Teacher (didactic): has learnt the formal pedagogical rules and follows them blindly.

Level 3: Teacher (demonstrated): Allows students input but only “say/do after me” type.

Level 4: Teacher (Interactive): encourages student participation, but “still in-the-box thinking” bound.

Level 5: Teacher (creative): creates responsiveness to specific teaching-learning challenges.

Operating at this Pedestal, five Level of Teaching Requires that:

- ❖ Discards the lecture approach to teaching;
- ❖ Capitalizes on the knowledge /experience /values and attitudes that students bring to the programmes;
- ❖ Practices resourcefulness by sourcing materials beyond conventional textbooks, inculcating and mobilizing students to source materials;
- ❖ Discourages dictation in favour of discovery;
- ❖ Makes activities (mental/practical) by teacher and learner, and particularly among learners, the dominant teaching method;
- ❖ Accepts that the learner is central and so plans and executes teaching activities with the learner in mind;
- ❖ Accepts that a teaching-learning situation is one in which both teacher and student are learning;
- ❖ Accepts that teaching can be considered successful only after the learner has learnt;
- ❖ Realizes that successful learning means a positive and lasting change in behavior, in outlook, in ways of going about life; and
- ❖ Realizes that successful learning begins when the student's capacity for

continuous self improvement has become a fully ingrained habit.

Transformational Pedagogy: A Panacea To School Challenges

According to Obanya (2014), to transform people requires creating and appropriate environment for transformative thoughts and action. This means that transactional, procedures that rarely replicate status quo practice will be discarded. It means doing things (in this case, promoting teaching and learning) differently, in ways we once thought were impossible. His new trend will start with a complete re-conceptualization of the roles and functions of the teacher. The transformational teacher would operationalize a paradigm shift in this direction:

- (a) From the “know all” to the “seeking to know how to know”;
- (b) From the talker to the listener;
- (c) From the purveyor of knowledge and information to the co-seeker of awareness and insight;
- (d) From the conductor of learning to the joint organizer of learning;
- (e) From “this is the answer” to “there are multiple ways of looking at the issue at hand”;
- (f) From dictating to encouraging the search for solutions; and
- (g) From promoting the solo learner to building up the team-operator (Obanya 2014:159).

The transformational pedagogy which characterizes the future classroom allows teachers and students to use both traditional and high-tech features that allows for a wild breadth of instructional opportunities. In this “smart” classroom, teachers have instant access to a vast array of electronic resources which enables other faculty/school members to connect their laptops for power point presentation, access to internet,

play DVDs, and other educational softwares (Panneer, 2014).

The problem associated with learning which the current learners face can be over, when the school system makes use of “smart” board. Because it allows students the opportunity to participate in lessons in a way that chalkboard and overhead projectors never did. While using smart board, students in science lab, for example, can dissect an earthworm or peel back the layers of the human body without ever using a tool. Teachers can also display websites, create their own visuals for customized answers to student’s questions and even change class note into text and print them out for students. Departments and faculties can argument lectures in large classroom using internet enabled video conferencing and podcasts. (Sukhjiwan, 2014).

This paper therefore proposes multiple perspectives that can shake up our own traditional way of thinking about classroom and the entire school system and to stimulate a real discuss concerning what the future classroom, the school system and a re-profiled teacher’s posture should be.

Future Classroom: Connecting Students and Teachers across the Globe

The future classroom demands from the teacher the power of technology to overcome the limitations of time, distance and resources. It is no longer a true that people possess different learning styles; learn in many different ways and at different times. Therefore, it keeps abreast and pace with such variations, high-tech learning tools that are potential to transact and exchange information and learning materials anywhere, anytime on demand (Sukhjiwan 2014).

In the future classroom, new technologies will create learning opportunities that will challenge traditional ways of teaching and learning in schools, colleges and

universities. These new learning niches, according to Gurpreet (2014) will enable people of all ages to pursue learning on their own terms. It is no longer a “wonder” that people around the globe now take their education in libraries, internet cafes, work places even on palm top where they can decide what they want to learn, when they want to learn and how they want to learn.

The rise of a global society, driven by technology and communication development are shaping children, the future citizens, of the world into “global citizens”, intelligent people with a broad range of skills and knowledge to apply to a competitive information based society on which the current education structure is premised.

Need for Re-Profiling Teacher

The term “re-profiling” assumes that there is a profile already in existence. The existing profile sees the teacher as an artisan personnel with a minimum of 6+3+3+3 years of general education and professional training in education, that is, in the Nigerian case, someone with a minimum qualification of NCE (Nigeria Certificate in Education). Such a person, according to Obanya (2014), is usually described as a qualified teacher.

But the problem here is that:

- An Artisan teacher is not necessarily a qualified teacher;
- A qualified teacher is not necessarily a competent teacher;
- A competent teacher is not necessarily an efficient teacher; while
- An efficient teacher is not necessarily an effective teacher.

A qualified teacher therefore is one with the requisite/prescribed minimum general and professional qualifications. A competent teacher is one who, in addition to being qualified, is also knowledgeable in methods and principles of promoting learning in students. An improved

variant of competent is the efficient teacher, who is able to apply the prescribed teaching methods “as directed”. But higher is the effective teacher, who is not only a master of the prescribed method, but applies them creatively and as a result of the creativity ensures quality learning in students.

The implication of the descriptions above is that teaching can be said to have taken place ONLY when the learner has learned something that, can transform intellect, emotions, perceptions and skills. Teachers’ qualifications, application of pedagogy, mastery of content therefore become significant only, when they are creatively and effectively applied to ensure positive transformation of classroom activities to practical life.

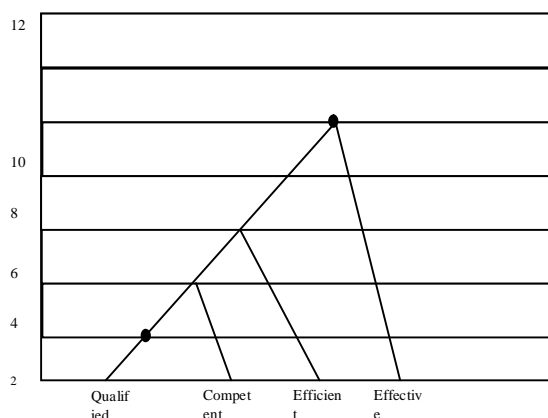


Fig 2 depicts the relative gains of the use of various types of teachers. (Source: Adapted from Obanya 2014)

Figure 2, illustrates the gains made in terms of student quality while learning with different categories of teachers. The gains become higher as student moves from the merely qualified to the fully efficient teacher. Government and authorities should ensure that

investments in teacher education at all levels should be with the ultimate aim of optimally focusing on effective teacher. It translates to mean that, promotion of the highest on the scale, effective teacher, should be promoted in all ramifications.

What Profile for Future Teachers

Re-profiling the teacher for the future world of work would require efforts at three levels – the person who should teach, the skills package required of such a person, and the pedagogical skills needed to respond adequately to the demands of the world that moves at a break neck speed.

The Person who should Teach:-

A successful teacher should possess the following key soft/personality skills.

- Love of learning and knowledge;
- Love of children;
- An eye (as well as an ear) for communication signals;
- Grooming (in appearance, in dressing, in talking, in relating to others, etc);
- Gender sensitivity;
- Acceptance of difference and avoidance of prejudice and stereotyping;
- Team play;
- Professionalism;
- Role model for integrity, morality, work habits; and
- Key emotional, cognitive and imaginative intelligences. (Fadoju, 2007)

Apart from the above personality skills, figure 3 explicates the other six areas of the skills package required of future teacher:

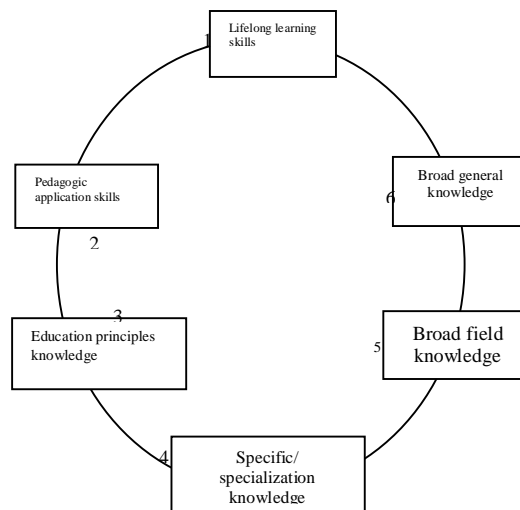


Fig 3: Six areas of skill package.
(Source: Adapted from Obanya 2014)

The six areas of the skills illustrated in the fig. 3 show that education entails:

- Foundation skill of “learning how to learn”;
- A broad general knowledge as foundation on which more specialized learning should be built;
- Specific area of knowledge, predicated on sound broad based knowledge;
- Specialized discipline knowledge where appropriate;
- Knowledge of education and pedagogy principles; and
- The ability to apply education/pedagogy principles in creative teaching.

Orthodox Profile and Future Profile of Teacher

Teachers are the valued professionals who make education happen and the society should understand this fact and be advised to restore the image of the teacher and the glory of teaching profession. Teaching is no longer an

all-comer’s affairs, the prevailing profile of teaching has been replaced with the desired profile illustrated in the table 1:

		Prevailing Profile	Desired Profile
1	Teaching	An occupation	A profession
		For just anybody	For the well educated, the interested
		Routine-repetitive job	Scientific-technical undertaking
		Last choice – low option	First-order choice and option
		Low pay	High pay
		Low on social scale	High on social scale
		Unfulfilling	Fulfilling
2	Teacher	Low on general education	High on general education
		Non-specialist/unskilled	Highly specialized/ highly skilled
		Low socio-economic status	Liberal professional status
		Can’t influence others	Guide and mentor to others
		Docile	Creative-imaginative-pushful
		Unambitious	Ambitious

Table 1: Prevailing and Desired Profile.
Adapted from Obanya (2014)

With quality education, teacher can achieve a lot because, he/she has been strategically trained to be a major dispenser of desired knowledge. To achieve this, the prevailing negative perceptions highlighted in the left hand column (prevailing profile) of Table 1 would have to shift radically to the positive markers in the right hand column (desired profile) of the table.

Conclusion

Whatever affects teachers would directly impact on teaching and would consequently impact on education. As the world witnesses numerous transformations due to rapid developments and information communications technologies in all walks of life, therefore, educational institutions and teachers in particular, need to strategize plans to improve teaching-learning process and to ensure that all teachers are well equipped to face these changes that occur at a break-neck speed which are profoundly affecting the way learners learn, teachers teach, school organizes lessons, etc.

One way teachers and the teaching profession can rise is a radical shift in focus and emphasis from teacher training to teacher education and on to teacher career-long professional development.

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Simeon S. Fowowe

Department of Early Childhood Care and Education,
Adeniran Ogunsanya College of Education,
Otto-Ijanikin, Lagos State.

and

S. T. Adebisin

Department of Early Childhood Care and Education,
Adeniran Ogunsanya College of Education,
Otto-Ijanikin, Lagos State.