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# REPOSITIONING TEACHING PRACTICE FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT: FOCUS ON FINE AND APPLIED ART EDUCATION

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**Gabriel Salemkaan Amokaha**

*Department of Fine and Applied Arts  
Federal College of Education,  
Obudu,  
Cross River State*

**Okah Eric Okah**

*Department of Fine and Applied Arts  
Federal College of Education,  
Obudu,  
Cross River State*

**Rhoda Ijeoma Akaegbu**

*Department of Fine and Applied Arts  
Federal College of Education,  
Obudu,  
Cross River State.*

## **Abstract**

*Nigeria as a nation needs to adequately plan, prepare and provide for the future. To this end Nigerian youths need to be adequately trained, and treated well to be able to hold the nation's future high. Education, precisely teaching practice needs to be repositioned to ensure the production of quality teachers for tomorrow. Qualified and skilful teachers will ensure quality teaching. Quality teaching will provide for effective learning. Effective learning hopefully will make way for qualitative, functional education. Fine and Applied Art Education as a vocational course if properly repositioned will lead to self-employment, self-reliance, and effective acquisition of employable skills for the need of the society and her citizens. This is the concern of this paper. Strategies for a positive repositioning are also part of the paper's concerns.*

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The major objective of Fine and Applied Art Education is to train, develop and equip the individual student with efficient and creative skills required to prepare him for future challenges of self-reliance, improvement of the environment and contribution to the building of the nation and the world at large.

According to the National Policy on Education (2004), Education shall continue to act as a cartelist to National Development. The National Policy (2004) also has it that all teachers in tertiary institutions shall be required to undergo training in methods and techniques of teaching. Fine and Applied Art Education is not an exception. It is keeping in line with this that teaching practice is provided for in the teacher training programme. The teaching practice objective is to give the teacher in training an opportunity to practice in an actual school environment. At present, teaching practice is gradually but, dangerously being watered down. The student teachers are either not provided with the required learning environment while on teaching practice, or that they do not have the facilities with which to practice, or that the cooperating school(s) do not have the competence to train the student teachers for lack of personnel in the various fields in which the student teachers intend to specialize.

For Fine and Applied Art Teachers' preparation programme to meet the aspiration of the nation, it should be properly coordinated, consistent and colorant to the improvement of education today and in the future. For one to be able to understand the curriculum of the discipline (FAA), implement substantive aspects of the curriculum, by the selecting and organizing orderly the learning experiences that will be meaningful, valuable and interesting to the learners; such individual must first understand the processes and fundamental elements of curriculum organization that are vital in the teaching of Fine and Applied Art. These include among others:

- a. Statement of educational purposes: objective, goals and values.
- b. The definition of content or subject matter(s)
- c. Learning experiences compatible with purposes and content
- d. Evaluation

This is where there is need for a professional (FAA educationist) to be in the cooperating school where the Fine and Applied Art student teacher intends to practice. Based on the rapid changes affecting humanity, societies and nations, educational and training systems need to be redefined and repositioned. This can better be done beginning with the teacher training processes since this is where teachers are nurtured and trained to train others. It is against this background that this paper intends to discuss the need to reposition teaching practice with focus on Fine and Applied Art Education.

### **Teaching Practice**

Teaching according to Segun, Daramora, Talabi (1989) is an attempt to help someone acquire or change, some skill, attitude, knowledge, idea or appreciation. According to Nnadozie, the role of the teacher is to create or influence describable learning experiences.

Every profession has its practical side, the training of lawyers, doctors, engineers, make adequate provision for practical work. The practical side of teaching profession involves direct knowledge of and contact with students (learners), classroom encounters, actual teaching of the subject to be acquired, the management of the classroom and a study of methods best to employ. Good teaching comes as a result of imagination which can be made more concrete through practice. Practice it is said makes for perfection.

Improvement of teaching practice student is based on constructive criticism, clarification, verification and justification of existing teaching activities. Segun, Daramola, Talabi (1989) asserted that teaching practice supervision simply refers to those activities which involve helping, directing, and guiding student teachers to improve the quality of their teaching practice experiences. It can be summed up that teaching practice is the practical side of training in the teaching profession, while teaching practice supervision is the studying and improving the conditions surrounding the learning and professional development of the student teachers.

### **National Development**

Development is growth either in size or way of doing things, improved living standard, improved life style, equipment, facilities, ways of life, relationship among citizens. In the words of Amokaha and Akan (2012) in “Introduction to Vocational and Technical Education” National development is an improvement in the various sectors of the nation’s economy. This refers to viable and affordable education, better road networks, better transport systems, effective and affordable health services, improved and available employment and better security in a given sovereignty where better products and better services of all kinds are available and affordable. National development can therefore be seen as improved standard in all areas of human endeavor. All that makes living interesting is readily available and affordable to all citizens without barriers and discrimination. In a nut shell, the gap between the haves and the have-nots either does not exist or is hardly noticed.

### **Fine and Applied Art Education**

Fine and Applied Art can best be defined by its processes and products. Originally, craftsmanship, skill in building, weaving, smithing and painting trades were best referred to as Fine Arts. The term was beyond mere reference to beauty or beautiful

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things. The term was used to describe the creative skills, creative process and the products of such skills and processes.

With the rise in demand for products of processes of weaving smithing, building, pottery, carving, painting and leather works, the role of art as a mere craft expanded to that of creativity and design. Thus, the term “Applied Arts” was married to the original phrase “Fine Arts”. This brings in the expression “Fine and Applied Arts”. Babangida (2007) saw Applied Arts as Art for utilitarian purpose, an aspect of Art that designs products like Adire cloth, batik, ceramic pots, cups, plates, flower vessels, posters, signboards, cards, banners, and many others which are used by man to satisfy his daily needs. Yusuf (2007) on the other hand looks at Fine Art as a study of drawing, painting, sculpture and crafts; and it is an art that appeals to man’s sense of beauty and satisfaction in addition to the joy he derives from its beauty.

From the above discussion, it is clear that Fine and Applied Arts is a broad subject area that serves two educational purposes. There is Art in general education where Art is studied through Fine Arts, cultural Art and Art History, Art philosophy, Aesthetics and Art criticism. There is also Art as a vocational subject where emphasis is on technical production of utilitarian articles. Such Art forms include all forms of Applied Arts such as crafts, industrial Arts, graphic design, textiles, ceramics, metal works, wood works, clothing/fashion design, weaving and dyeing, printing and creative photography. These forms involved scientific principles of observation, investigation, testing and experimenting with physical and chemical materials and finally as a technology by applying the acquired knowledge in producing useful and new art products. From the above discussion it is clear that Fine and Applied Arts is an essential part of Vocational and Technical Education.

### **Fine and Applied Arts and National Development**

The relevance of Fine and Applied Arts to national development can not be over emphasized. Art as a versatile field of learning which has diverse branches such as graphics, ceramics, textile design, metal design, painting, sculpture have major contributions to national development. Fine and Applied Arts touches man’s daily life. The interior decorations in houses, the household utensils, the clothes we wear, tea cups, sauces, breakable plates, books, posters, newspapers, packages are all objects of Art which man consumes daily to make a difference from other animals.

Fine and Applied Art Education serves in the following was to the development of the child.

- i. It serves as an aid to technological advancement.
- ii. It serves as a lingua franca. The language of drawings, diagram and illustration is understood by all.
- iii. It develops one’s skills in diverse fields
- iv. It helps man to learn, see, understand and appreciate the world around him.

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- v. It serves as a core of other school subjects and life generally.
- vi. It teachers morals and helps man to differentiate between good and bad.

### **The State of Teaching Practice (FAA Student Teachers)**

National Policy on Education (2004) has it that no education system may rise above the quality of its teachers. It went further to affirm that teacher education shall continue to be given major emphasis in all educational planning and development. But teacher education at present has series of factors militating against it. This work shall limit itself on factors militating against success in teaching practice.

### **Posting**

The posting of student teachers to schools for teaching practice is at the instance of the student teacher. That is the student chooses where to go for the practical teaching skill acquisition. Such student teacher(s) mostly make choice based on nearness to place of either residence or origin.

This is in disregard to consideration of the necessary conditions for effective teaching practice.

- i. Is there any teacher in my field that I can learn from?
- ii. Is there curriculum in my subject of study?
- iii. Is that a conducive learning environment?
- iv. What am I likely to gain/learn from there?

These questions need to be answered by the student teacher(s) as he/she decides where to go for teaching practice.

Experience has shown that most cooperating schools request for and consider student teachers posted to them as subject masters and qualified teachers. They are allocated classes, lessons and allowed to go on from day one to the end without orientation or guidance.

### **Role of Cooperating School**

The expected role of cooperating school is to help train the student teacher on practical teaching skills. Provide the required environment/student/pupils for the practice; provide working materials such as curriculum, textbooks, schemes of work, record of work, exercise books, biros, chalkboard, poster colors, cardboard sheets, studios, studio equipment, clay, weaving material etc these expectedly would bring the student teacher to the actual work place experience required.

Unfortunately, in most cooperating schools, there are no curriculum, no recommended textbooks, no scheme of work, no record of work, and no qualified teacher to learn from. The student teachers who are posted to come and learn become teachers overnight. They teach without any guide or supervision except the hurriedly done supervision of the parent institution. To make things worse, the parent institution

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sends supervisors out without adequately equipping them (with allowances) for thorough job on the field.

### **Curriculum**

Curriculum which is a guiding tool for teaching any subject is not provided for student teachers reason being that there was no teacher in that subject and so the cooperating school did not acquire the curriculum, and that the Syllabus and recommended textbooks are not available. In some few cases where these are available, these student teachers need to be guided as to the understanding and interpretation of the curriculum. This will give way for the careful selection and organizing orderly learning experiences which shall be beneficial to the learners on who the student teacher practices.

The scarcity of qualified teachers in subjects like Creative Arts makes matters worse. Cooperating schools request for student teachers with the hope of filling-in the gaps that have been created in such subject areas. This does not make way for effective teaching practice.

In summary, the student teachers go to teaching practice (cooperating schools) and are faced with series of challenges which either make the expected practical teaching skills ineffective or not acquired at all. NPE (2004) has it that every education depends on the quality of teachers.

### **Strategies for repositioning teaching practice for national development**

For teaching practice to be able to achieve the goals for which it was set, the following strategies need to be adopted.

Posting of teaching practice students need to be done with regard to the available facilities. The Fine and Applied Art student teacher be guided at the selection of where to go for the acquisition of practical teaching skills. Whatever choice made should be where there are facilities. Such facilities as Fine and Applied Art curriculum, scheme of work, record of work, textbooks, studio and more others.

There should be qualified and certificated Art teacher(s) who would serve as guide to the incoming student teacher. Such Art teacher should remember that the student teacher is a learner and so needs to be guided.

Cooperating schools(s) who intend to use student teachers as qualified teachers should remember that the minimum entry teaching qualification is National Certificate in Education. Those in training are yet to acquire the required training.

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Teacher training institutions whose responsibility is to supervise their students during teaching practice excise should ensure that thorough supervision is done. This can be achieved by proper financing of the supervisory excise, and requires her supervisors to:

- i. Conduct pre supervision assembly
- ii. Conduct post supervision assembly

These are necessary as most corrections require explanations for clarity. The nation's future and quality of education depend on the success of each teaching practice excise. The Academic staff who will supervise this excise should be conscious of this.

The Nigerian government should ensure that her role of ensuring that the nation has a future is applied to the teaching practice.

Nongovernmental organizations will do well to assist in financing the skill acquisition aspects of the teaching practice excise.

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