

# REPOSITIONING EDUCATION FOR EMPLOYMENT IMPLICATIONS FOR EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT

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## Abstract

Successful repositioning education for employment will strengthen the administrative capacity of both the nation, state and Local Ministries of education. The purpose is to identify indicators of quality that are beyond using students achievements but an added value of getting employment at the end of schooling. The exercise will involve strengthening of the policy of education in Nigeria and institutional policies, development of competent staff, clear structural support to co-ordination, an adequate information and monitoring system and also availability of adequate resources. Educational managers must take ultimate responsibility for managing repositioning as they are accountable for its institutional impact.

## Introduction

Educational management cannot be untied with repositioning indeed, it is better to say that effective management equates with productive repositioning. In this present dispensation where policies are increasingly being driven by political concerns and the society at large, and also meeting with global economic challenges, repositioning management skills are very crucial. Problems arise when repositioning is resisted because, it seems threatening rather than evolving a process of developing new ideas. Repositioning in education is often difficult because the school system is strong in its ability to generate and sustain traditional policies. To continue with tradition seem to be stronger than introducing new ideas. As a result of this managing repositioning becomes a difficult task and therefore poses a challenge to both the leaders and the followers. According to Sue and Derek (2000:127), "if management is about moving institutions rather than helping them 'tick over', then a theory of management equates with a theory of innovation'.

Educational managers take ultimate responsibility for managing repositioning and are accountable for its institutional impact. The students achievement must be paramount in any educational repositioning yet because the process of translating policies into practice is so difficult to achieve the reality of repositioning, as opposed to what we expect of change, is often loosely connected to the progress of the students.

In this millennium, we should reflect on what has gone on in education before and the tasks ahead. The question we have to ask, is how well has our current system of education contributed to meeting the needs and aspirations of individuals (Learners)? How is our present education system approaches adequately meeting the challenges of the world of work today? What do we mean by repositioning education for employment in this context? Generally, a lot of changes have taken place in our educational system. There are new directions in policy formulation nationally and internationally. The new directions in education means that some issues have assumed greater significance. According to Sloll, Macbeath and Motimore (2001: 192).

Knowledge base, it is said is doubling every four years technological advances have made information accessible in a way, we could not have

dreamed of only a few years ago and which is unimaginable in the social world ten years from now. With the homes and classrooms connected to the internet, young people's learning opportunities have dramatically expanded..... We are already living in a society where people move several times in their career and often hold a career portfolio of different jobs. People are increasingly working from home or in a different town or city from their family, and employers have greater expectations that employees will be mobile and will take responsibility for their own professional development.

In a situation like this stated above, what should education do in order to cope with these challenges?. What should be the aim of education? For education to succeed in the future, it has to reposition its programmes by not only depending on literacy and numeracy but should depend more on technological competence. This is because we cannot predict change and there is need to rebuild our skills. Such skills include flexibility, problem solving approaches, collaboration, empathy, self awareness, ability to deal with complex problems and develop love for learning. Delor, Mufti, Amagi et al (1996:85) are of the opinion that "each individual must be equipped to seize learning opportunities throughout life, both to broaden his or her knowledge, skills and attitudes, and to adapt to a changing complex and interdependent world".

This paper look forward to the possibilities of what management can do in future to ensure that there is effective teaching and learning in schools to ascertain that the products of education are gainfully employed. The purpose is to identify indicators of quality that is beyond using students achievements but an added value of getting employment at the end of schooling. This paper will be useful to all educational managers practitioners, policy makers, researchers, parents and other educational partners.

### **Considerations for Repositioning Education The Emphasis on Learners Learning**

Effective teaching and learning situation in our schools must be emphasized during the process of repositioning education. Learners progress must be demonstrated in the classroom. Effective learning involves both learning processes and learning outcomes. Bently (1998:1) is of the opinion that

education must be broader and deeper, because it must include a wider range of learning experience, experience of roles and situations and mirror those • we value in society. Deeper because, it must nurture a greater understanding in young people understanding of themselves, their motivations and goals in life, and of the subjects and discipline they study.....it must be able to use **human**, financial, **socials**, cultural and informational resources from the whole society to stimulate and develop young people's ability to learn and understand for themselves.

Schools cannot be expected to undertake the challenge alone, if learners are to be properly prepared for their future employment. Learning will not only take place inside the schools alone, but in communities, workplaces and families. Repositioning education requires a shift in our thinking about the fundamental organisational unit of education, from the school setting where learning is organised, defined and contained, to the learner being an intelligent agent with the potential to learn from anywhere in all his/her encounter with the world around her. Watkins and Mortimore in Mortimore and Macbeath (2001:95) stated that "schools and the formal organisations for learning will just be seen as one element of learning in the future.

### **The Learners<sup>1</sup> Input**

Repositioning can also occur in the relationships between the teacher and the learner with the changes going on in recent times. In education, there exists some aspects where the learner is more knowledgeable than the teacher, this will affect the learner - teacher relationship. For example, the recent information and communication technology, where children are often more knowledgeable and skilled than their teachers and can even teach their teachers, is a way of helping to develop staff. In the areas of advise, consulting on internet resources, the children can help to design and construct the schools' website or even help in teaching their peers, parents, teachers, school management team. In repositioning education, there should be a greater respect to the learners input, this does not imply disrespect for the teacher, if the teacher sees himself as a learner also, but this practice will increase his respect and strengthen the teacher's credibility.

Some researchers, for example Dereck (1985), Rudduck, J, Chaplain, R and Wallace G (1996), and Perkin's in Mortimore and Macbeath (2001:196) see the primary role of the teacher as helping learners to think and to articulate their thinking effectively.

There are numerous tasks outlined in the National policy on education. These tasks needs an exceptional teacher to be able to cater for intellectual, social and emotional needs for more than 30

learners in a class, given all other constraints, for example, environmental influence on learning. This has necessitated the growth of out of school learning (extra lessons, club activities, curriculum enrichment activities etcetera, to compliment school activities. Learners, learn from these out of school activities to broaden their knowledge. These gives the learners more scope to take charge.

### **Staff Development**

At all stages of the repositioning process, there must be personnel available along the line, who have the expertise to carry out the tasks. There should be specification of what the actual task is, what has to be done, the requirements of the task and the role of teachers. Achievement of the tasks will depend on the capabilities of those who carry out the tasks. Also the methods or procedures to undertake must be specified.

Teachers professional development will enhance their capacity to deal with the process of repositioning education. Quality is assured in the school when there is a clear and practical focus for staff development effort. Hopkins in Ribbens and Burrige (1994:79) is of the opinion that "it is important for the staff of the school, to see it as their right that opportunities are provided for them to develop". The staff requires training in order to be able to take on the control of improvement of the processes of teaching and learning.

Staff development plan should focus on what the staff needs in terms of skills and ideas that would help the school in achieving the stated tasks. Training will improve the services of staff. Opportunities should be provided for in-service training in our higher institutions. These institutions should organise intensive programme of courses, in all aspects of teaching techniques and equip trainees with the basic teaching skills that will be required for them to become efficient teachers for quality improvement. By training, upgrading and utilizing the abilities of staff, job satisfaction for individuals can be improved and more harmonious relationships will be established to achieved the stated tasks in schools.

### **D. Self Assessment**

To ensure that success is achieved in repositioning education, there should be self-assessment by the teachers to reflect on whether the objectives are being achieved or not. This exercise will assists the teachers to identify their weaknesses and strengths and to direct their training and development around identified needs. This exercise should be directed to relating the level of performances to the achievement of the tasks stated. Teachers should assess themselves on the extent to which their methods, procedures and processes used in teaching are achieving the desired objectives. Also the behaviour of teachers in relation to teaching effectiveness should be assessed.

### **E. Leadership and Management**

Leadership in this context is looked at in terms of the quality of interpersonal relationships that exists in the school system, and it examines the role leadership plays in the achievement of success in repositioning education. Leadership is defined in terms of openness, acceptance, sharing and exchange of ideas. It is about the person occupying management position and his relationship with others. The leader should use a number of strategies to bring out the best from his staff. All those occupying management position in the school (School Principals, school management Board, Heads of Departments, teachers etc, needs to demonstrate their commitment to standards. The leaders has to mentor, guide, coach, counsel, educate, train, encourage their staff to see that achieving the objective of repositioning education, is a<sup>1</sup> way to increase the opportunities they have to succeed, and also increase their job satisfaction. The leader should see his leadership as that of controlling and ensuring the implementation of a given policy. Morgatoyd and Morgan (1994:67) are of the opinion that a manager who wants to achieve total quality should ask himself these questions "how can I secure support of all staff for the work we have to do?. How can I align the interest of all staff so that we are all working towards a common goals?". Harris (2002:19) reported that such strategies as power of praise, involving staff in decision-making and giving professional autonomy are very essential for improving quality. The leader in a school system should develop and maintain a good relationship with his staff and students. For the leader to be effective, he must generate high level of commitment in his staff, through openness, honesty and his quality of interpersonal relationship. To be able to succeed in repositioning education, the staff should be empowered in areas of importance for them. Teachers cannot create and

sustain the conditions for productive development of learners if these conditions do not exist in the system.

#### **F. Effective School Community Relationship**

Repositioning education for employment will depend on people working collaboratively. There are other social contexts on which the repositioning exercise impinges. It will be wise and necessary to gain co-operation of the interested parties; especially if they are the ones to regard their prerogatives as being violated or threatened. Failure to involve them or inform them can undo the repositioning process, *it* is very necessary to identify all the interest groups and to enter into an agreement with them. Louis et al in Macbeath and Mortimore (2001:203) reported that in schools with genuine sense of community, such endeavour leads to increased sense of work efficacy, which in turn results in heightened classroom motivation, more satisfaction at work and greater collective responsibility for student learning.

In a community where there is mutual agreement, teachers understand what the goals are, they engage in professional discussions and maintain an open door policy to colleagues. Clarke (2000:16) suggested that as schools continue to improve, they will eventually come to appoint where they need to communicate and examine what other schools are doing. He argues that it is easier for schools to establish a working partnership with other school, to work co-operatively and share ideas, than trying to pursue individualistic agenda but try to gain from the experiences of other school. There should be a network of relationship existing between schools especially where the schools have similar objectives. There should be constant exchange of visits amongst schools to share experiences and this will also help in staff development.

#### **G Sustainability of Repositioning Education**

Repositioning education is time consuming. Generally it is slow to welcome changes in our society because it is often regarded with suspicion. Differences exist from school to school as they engage in and sustain learning experiences necessary for repositioning process. Schools embark on repositioning process from different starting points. While some schools may be ready to deal with the new challenges, other may not. For schools to succeed in the new challenges, they must have the resource (human and material), the resilience and the will to engage in and sustain continuous learning of teachers, and they must have a clear understanding of the task to be able to improve teaching learning. Time spent in planning the sequence and co-ordination of events, is not wasted. The more precise the co-ordination, the faster the process of repositioning.

There may be influences in the internal structure of the school at the individual teachers level, departmental level, faculty level and also at the external context of the school. The process of repositioning education is very challenging. At the initial stage, there may be excitement, but this excitement wears off as teachers start facing other demands and difficulties presented by the tasks and the schools internal structure. Examples of such difficulties include; class size, work load, internal power struggles, lack of resources and the impending inspection. These situations create a lot of problem. Havelock and Huberman (1997:227) are of the opinion that "many innovations fail because, innovators fail to appreciate the process-of innovation, but they pay little heed to the lessons that can be learnt from the process, particularly, the fact that innovation is a matter of system change and system building within a social context".

#### **The Need for Repositioning Education**

Before repositioning of education begins, there must be some problem, some situation which is causing dissatisfaction and which, it is hoped some repositioning will solve or at least ameliorate. In this case, the problem is unemployment of school learners which is the root cause of dissatisfaction. Repositioning entails alteration in the structure of educational provisions in its curriculum content, teaching learning processes or the goals of education, such repositioning include the revision of the rule, the introduction of new procedures or the revision of purpose or direction of organisational Procedures. Haipin 1966 in Otamiri, Enaowho and Okeke (2000:102) defined change as a planned systematic controlled efforts to alter more than one of the following aspects of the organisation. Its task; its structure; its technology and its participants.

The need for repositioning education must be clearly defined. The relevance of repositioning education to the beneficiaries of education, must be clearly indicated and the new must have a positive advantages over the current practices, and must be significant. Infact the new must be feasible. Ehiamentalor (1984:33) is of the opinion .^hat "the objective of an innovation must be clearly spelt out so that everyone involved understands what is required for accomplishing the goals stipulated. For effective repositioning of education to take place, we must accept a set of shared values, which all stakeholders hold about the school and its .aims and objectives. Achievement of values is dependent on the leader, the culture of relationship existing in the schools and the communication of the vision which must be understood by the teachers, learners, parents and other stakeholder. For repositioning to be effective, it demands not only strategies and tactics in planning, but also developmental planning.

### **The Process of Repositioning**

Repositioning education needs effective change in management processes, and this process according to Sue and Derek (2000:151) comprise three stages;

- (1) Establishing targets
- (2) Rational planning to achieve objectives
- (3) Monitoring and evaluation

### **Establishing Targets**

The establishment of clear aims' against which plan can be developed is very essential in repositioning education for employment These aims or mission statements, depending on the ones identified, needs to be translated into specific objectives. These objectives must be properly defined and understood before it can be properly implemented. It is important that every students should know these objectives to his/her finger tips, for them to apply it daily. Statement of objectives inspires people to work towards its achievement. White ly (1991:28) rightly pointed out that a "a truly integrated and permeating vision, energises people....it provides true challenges and purpose. It makes each person feel that he or she can make a difference to the world, it becomes a rallying cry for a just course-their- course".

Statement of objectives acts as a guide to decision-making. As each staff and students leaves the school each day, they assess themselves to see how they have contributed to goal achievement for that day. The important thing in repositioning education for meaningful employment is that all those involved in improving quality must keep the objectives clearly in mind. This is important because when all efforts aimed at repositioning loses focus during implementation it often results to frustration. That is why Murgatroyd and Morgan (1994:23) stated that "quality is a function of strategy... until you have defined the strategy your school is pursuing, quality is secondary".

### **Planning to Achieve the Objectives**

In repositioning education for employment, it is very essential to apply rational planning process if objectives are to be achieved. Once the objectives are clearly stated, informations should be disseminated on the available alternative methods through which the objectives could be achieved. The selection of the most appropriate action that would lead to achievement of goals is very essential. There must be participation by all stakeholders in the statement of the objectives. Schools need to plan their development at the school level, departmental level or sub unit level across time. Once all the stake holders are well informed about these objectives through participation, achieving the goals will then become a reality,

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

As the objectives are being implemented, there should be evaluation or monitoring to check the progress of plans as actions are being carried out in schools. Everybody in the management team should be involved in this exercise. Evaluation is necessary to assess the impact of the plans of action on the achievement of the goals to decide whether or not to continue with the exercise. The following areas must be looked at while evaluating or monitoring the progress of a new task.

1. The political climate of the nation, the school itself and the local community in which the school is situated.

The availability of human and material resources to sustain it.

3. The priority given to the tasks.

### **Monitoring Through Supervision**

While the effectiveness of the schools resources management is underpinned by monitoring and evaluation of its administrative efficiency, it limits its focus by supervising students behaviour and personnel development. Nnabuo (1996:145) perceived supervision as a process for monitoring if the policies, principles and objectives of the school are being achieved. Supervision involves using expert knowledge to oversee the action of workers in an establishment to ensure that they are working co-operatively towards the achievement of the stated goals. Supervision is done in the areas of subject content, organisation, teaching and learning, quality assessment of procedures, recording of progress and procedures, special education needs, management and administration, guidance, welfare of personnel, school and community relationships as well. Repositioning education should follow an approach that is based on team development, and achieving broader vision by all participants, but it must be backed by sound monitoring and evaluation.

### **Evaluating Resource and Finance Management**

In all aspects of educational management, resource and financial management is a means to an end. There must be equipment and facilities (buildings) needed for the new tasks to be able to function. Lack of resources hinders action. Louis and Miles (1992:230) stated that

"change by definition cannot be managed through a status quo level of resource. It makes new demands, creates unsolved problems and is resource hungry.....above a certain floor, the level of resource is less important than how resources are acquired and where they are applied".

Since facilities and equipment are part of repositioning education, the means of purchasing and delivering them must be made possible. Each provision in educational organisation; staffing, facilities equipment (instructional materials), specialists expertise etcetera is deployed in other to facilitate teaching learning process for educational achievement.

The government should alleviate its financial stringencies by enhancing educational spending in the present dispensation. For education to be able to function effectively in an effort to repositioning its programmes, budget planning must be operated according to a letdown time table. Since financing education is closely scrutinized and controlled by the government and its agencies, there should be emphasis placed on accountability for the use of public funds. For repositioning education to be meaningful, the amount of money allocated to education, should now be much greater than previously is. There is need for consultation while budgeting for school fund. The systems and mechanism for the release and control of money should be made more acceptable by all stakeholders. The long-term impact of resource allocation, should be assessed by evaluating the outcome of the educational system, on the basis of quality output and the products being gainfully employed either by self or other employers. Evaluation of resources and finance should be concerned with resource allocation strategically, as well as operationally to support the aims and objectives of the school.

### **Management Strategies for Successful Repositioning Education for Employment**

Successful repositioning education for employment will strengthen the administrative capacity of both the nation, state and local ministries of education. This exercise will involve strengthening of the policy and planning institutions, the development of competent staff, clear structural support to co-ordination and an adequate information and monitoring system, and also availability of adequate resources.

### **At the National and State Ministries Level**

Policies should be driven both internally and externally. Repositioning education will depend on a permanent and logically available in-service teacher training system, and an effective system of supervision and support. This should form a regular part of school work. There should be high teacher motivation and commitment. Teachers should be empowered through delegation, staff

development and support. If all these are put in place, it will ensure that the teachers will be highly dedicated and committed to the achievement of objectives. The Local communities should also be encouraged by involving them in decision-making.

### **At the School Level**

1. Teachers should be assisted through in-service training. This helps the teachers in the mastery of facts which is very essential to understand changes in education. When teachers are aware that they will be assisted, and this assistance is regular, locally available, and its on going and it is linked with practice that would give them opportunities of practicing the new behaviour, it motivates them. This practice is supported by a climate of co-operation.
2. Constant supervision should be carried out by the management team and local inspectors. This exercise should be seen as helping teachers to improve their practices. It should be done in an atmosphere of trust.
3. Management should employ the practice of decentralization and delegation of authorities to the subordinates. This practice leads to empowerment and commitment to the achievement to objectives. It also leads to adaptation and shared decision-making. Both the head teachers and staff share in decision-making.
4. Adequate provision should be made for teaching learning materials, this will enhance mastery and improved classroom practices in the country. The teachers should be involved in the development of local materials, this is because the more they get involved the more it leads to mastery.
5. There should be high experience in successes achieved by the school, ensure there should be improved achievement and increased scholarship so that products of the school are gainfully employed.
6. There should be good school/community relationship. The school should get more support from the community; the parents should be more interested in the schooling of their children. The community should support the school materially and financially.
7. There should be team spirit developed in the schools, the teachers should co-operate with each other, the students attitude towards change should be positive and teachers should assist each other with instructional materials.

### **Conclusion**

Repositioning education implies that the introduction of new strategies that will help to alleviate conditions, that can lead to improved school effectiveness, will lead to the products of our schools getting employment at the end of their school career. The importance of schooling has been emphasized and the process of repositioning education outlined. We are however, now moving into a new era, when what is currently considered effective and the process for achieving and sustaining it may not serve learners well as they live in an increasingly complex and fast changing world. It is now time for education and everyone with a stake in education to shift focus to the learner and all the learning opportunities that are created and sustained to help the learners realise their potential and subsequently be gainfully employed. Educational managers must take ultimate responsibility for managing repositioning as they are accountable for its institutional impact. Repositioning education should be co-operatively planned. When there is consultation and participation by those affected by the change, it will be enthusiastically received and gradually introduced.

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