CURRICULUM AND THE NEW CHRISTIAN RELIGIOUS KNOWLEDGE TEACHER IN NIGERIAN SCHOOLS

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Abstract

The paper focuses on curriculum and the new Christian Religious Knowledge (CRK) Teacher. Curriculum is the key factor in education and determined what should be done and how it should be done in institution of learning. The teacher is the actual implementer of the curriculum. He defines and reinterprets the curriculum. A teacher has the potential for enhancing the quality of education by bringing life to curriculum and inspiring students to curiosity and self-directed learning. He is an important agent to achieve the set educational goals. Christian Religious Knowledge is the understanding of Christians about their belief and religious practices. The new Christian Religious Knowledge teacher must be professionally trained, innovative, democratic, resourceful, business oriented, a modeler, knowledgeable of the subject matter to achieve meaningful learning, high moral and academic standards. The paper recommended that Christian Religious Knowledge teachers should embark on in-service training to update their knowledge about innovations in educational sector; government should ensure that institutions at all levels are provided with computers which should be connected to internet to enable both teachers and students to acquire ICT skills and current information for effective implementation of curriculum in this era of technology.

Formal education system depends on a well defined curriculum to function properly. Curriculum outlines what should be done and how it should be done in education sector to achieve the desired educational objectives. Curriculum is the sum total of what teachers and their pupils do at school, all the related and relevant activities in and outside school (Alaezi, 1989). This definition ex-rays the importance of teachers and pupils in actualizing the curricular and educational issues. Dike and Eze (2009) define curriculum as an embodiment of all the knowledge, skills and attitudes which a nation through her schools imparts to her citizens. Their emphasis is on learning experiences needed by the citizens to function properly in the society. One can simply say that curriculum is all the things teachers and students do at school for the benefit of the society. According to Tanner and Tanner (1975:45) curriculum is “planned and guided learning experiences and intended learning out comes, formulated through the systematic reconstruction of knowledge and experience under the auspices of the school for the learner’s continuous and willful growth in personal social competence”. Their
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definition is comprehensive enough to take care of the lapses in the definition by other scholars.

Etete (1995) states that curriculum contains all the functions in the school like knowledge, principles, aims and objectives, teachers, facilities, interest, values, society needs, processes, culture, growth, among others. In this regard, there is no doubt that school curriculum affect the values, and practices of the society in totality through the help of the teacher. In a nutshell, no teacher, no curriculum.

Christian religious knowledge is a subject concerned with the up bringing, instructing and informing students on christian beliefs and practices as found in the Holy Bible and christian tradition (Omali, 2001). The Christian Religious Knowledge curriculum aims at producing students that will be God’s fearing, morally sound, highly disciplined, useful to themselves and the society.

It was in response to agitation for more functional and qualitative educational system in Nigeria now that Nigeria education is in doldrums that made the curriculum organization of Nigeria (CON) to come up with the theme: curriculum and the new teacher on her 23rd annual conference. This proofs that the organization realizes the central role of teachers in actualizing the curriculum objectives because for learning to take place, teaching must be effectively carried out. It is obvious then that without teachers, no profession of any kind, no curriculum and no qualitative education. They are the builder of mankind, nation and healthy society.

Curriculum and the new teacher simply means how a teacher interacts with the curriculum to achieve maximum instructional result. Curriculum and the new teacher according to Imogie (2010) are veritable tools for adding values to education in Nigeria.

The new teacher in this context stands for a highly trained skilled, committed, knowledgeable, moral, academic and competent individual who can interpret and deliver the philosophy, concepts, principles, and objectives of Christian Religious Knowledge (CRK) curriculum to the target audience. The New Christian Religious Knowledge Teacher must be well trained and re-trained, committed resourceful, computer literate, have full knowledge of the subject matter, learner, various teaching methods, christian religious knowledge curriculum, classroom organization and control.

Summarily, curriculum is meaningless in the absent of the teacher. The teacher plays a central role in curriculum implementation. He interprets the curriculum, translates the curriculum into practice, states the attainable objectives, plans the activities that will help students to achieve the stated objectives, delivers the curriculum and then assesses the extent to which the sated objectives have been achieved at the end of the programme. To achieve functional and qualitative educational system therefore, the new Christian religious knowledge teacher must be trained and re-trained to acquire required techniques, competence, skills, knowledge that would make them renewed and effective teachers that are capable of producing self-reliance students.

**The New Christian Religious Knowledge Teacher’s Qualities**

In view of the continuous innovation and development of general and pedagogical knowledge and constant changes taking place in education system, it does
not seem possible to equip the student teacher with knowledge and skills which would be sufficient for his whole professional life. The new christian religious knowledge teacher must be physically, mentally and psychologically fit to analyze the media in the classroom setting. On this note, the teacher should embrace in-service training and innovations in order to be in line with changes in the society. This will help him to be competent in and well acquainted with the procedure for the utilization and operation of all educational technological devices like televisions, video tapes, over head projectors, film strips, computer and computer devices, information and communication technology etc. This is in line with Ajeyosemis (2005) suggestion that for any teacher at any level to be able to contribute to national development in this global world, he or she must be empowered to provide ICT based training for the students. In classroom teaching-learning situations, there are many tasks which may be time consuming and tedious which computer can solve.

Computer processes, interprets and presents information. Television and video store and expose the learning content.

The new christian religious knowledge teacher qualities can be highlighted as follows: innovative, democratic, resourcefulness, modeling, business oriented, professional training and re-training, sound knowledge of the subject matter, students, teaching methods and classroom management.

**Innovative:** The new Christian religious knowledge teacher should be innovative and creative. In light of this, he manipulates abstract concepts to concrete and makes learning real for students to understand and achieve meaningful learning. He does this by using local resources (improvisation) like resource persons, models, mock-ups, field trips, real objects, dramatization, group discussion, pictures, ICT, and the like to enrich his teaching. He should not base most of his teaching on telling stories, memorization, lecture method etc. which make the lesson boring. These methods and strategies improve the competence of teachers, make learning experiences more meaningful for children, and expose learners to real life situation. The new CRK teacher with the knowledge and application ICT has the ability to stimulate learners through visual and auditory measures.

**Democratic:** The teacher by nature of his profession is a leader. He is the commander-in-chief of his class. Based on this fact, the teacher no matter the level and subject should be democratic in delivering his classroom activities. He should give the students the opportunity to express their opinions and ask questions. He should create cordial relationship between student-student and between student and himself. He should treat them with respect and be diplomatic in exercise of power. That is, there should be good teacher-student relationship. This will make them feel at home and have sense of belonging. On the side of both the teacher and student it will increase productivity and efficiency.

**Resourcefulness:** To achieve qualitative education, we must have resourceful teachers. Resourcefulness means that the Christian religious knowledge teacher must ensure that
all the media to be used are properly set up and ready for use at the appropriate time. The instructional environment where the teaching-learning take place is very important. The Christian religious knowledge teacher goes a long way to create enabling learning environment that motivates learners to participate actively while the teaching-learning is going on. This he does by controlling and managing the classroom situation properly.

He should arrange both human and material resources to avoid set backs while the lesson is going on. This is in line with Ughamadu (1999) that students should be well arranged, seated and free from all hindrances to learning. In the same line of thought, Imogie (2010) states that learning environment must be taken control of, manipulated and adjusted by the teacher in order that learning can take place. He concludes that environment can facilitate or hinder learning.

Modelling: Teachers are models. Models in this context stand for things of emulation. Their students look at them as exemplary. The new Christian religious knowledge teacher stands as practical example of what he teaches by the way he talks, behaves, dresses. He should teach and not cheat by delivering the right concepts, covering his scheme, not partaking in examination malpractices. He models, shapes, and changes attitude, aspirations, values, orientations through his day to day activities and interactions with the learners. This is in line with Mkpa (1987) that a descent looking teacher is therefore more likely to be more successful teacher than a shabby looking one. He added, a teacher should be a role model and live by example. The new Christian religious knowledge teacher is a formator and moralist by the nature of his profession, as a result, he should be very careful in what he does, says and how he dresses or appears.

Business Oriented: There is time for everything. The new Christian religious knowledge teacher should be duty conscious, doing the right thing at the right time, coming to school early and often. He should be sure of what he teaches, how he teaches, with what he teaches, when he teaches, whom he teaches, and why he teaches, he must know the logistics, structure and content of his subject very well. He knows in and out of his subject. In a nutshell, he must be all round master of the subject and what it entails. These ensure efficiency, effectiveness and confidence on the part of the teacher.

Training and Re-Training: To achieve functional and qualitative educational system world wide, teachers must be trained and re-trained. To be a teacher therefore, no matter the level of education, you must be trained and certificated by any teacher education programme to teach, how to teach, where to teach, with what to teach, when to teach and whom to teach. On this note, it is obvious that for one to educate others, he must first of all be educated, to train, he must be trained for one cannot give what he does not have.

Education is not static, new knowledge, ideas and insight of application of this knowledge come out daily. A teacher who does not update his/her knowledge regularly soon becomes stale and outdated. The new christian religious knowledge teacher updates his knowledge and skills through seminars, conferences, and workshops. He is a
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practical scholar and a student of the academic discipline. This agrees with the observation of Mohammed (2006) that new goals are being continuously set, for instance, gender parity, universal-basic education by 2015, life long learning, life skills, education, HIV/AIDS education, competency in the use of ICT etc. As a result, teachers, christian religious knowledge teachers inclusive must be re-trained through seminars, workshops, conferences, and acquiring higher professional qualification to be in line with the new skills, concepts, principles, values and trends of life.

Half educated teacher cannot give quality education. This is the more reason why Okebukola (2010) concludes that the poor quality of teachers in Nigerian schools is the major force steering education in the wrong direction. On the same note, individual teacher should be assisted and willing to grow and develop as a person, having the necessary skills and professional abilities that will help him become an effective, competent and efficient teacher.

Conclusion

Teachers are facilitators of students’ learning, producers of professional, formators, creators of productive and conducive learning environment which helps students to acquire and develop the skills, knowledge, norms and moral values they will need after school. The new christian religious knowledge teacher should prepare students to become productive members of the society. To achieve the above objectives in the era of globalization, which is characterized with technological and information explosion, the new christian religious knowledge teacher must keep abreast with the current trends of the discipline, seek for professional development that helps them to improve both students’ learning and their own performance. Thus, the new christian religious knowledge teacher is innovative, resourceful, democratic, business-oriented, modeler, trained and re-trained.

Recommendations

It is recommend among other things that:
1. In-service training should be embarked on by christian religious knowledge teachers to update their knowledge to ensure quality and competence in themselves.
2. Government should ensure that institution at all levels are provided with computers which should be connected to the internet to enable teacher and students acquire ICT skills and current information for effective implementation of the curriculum in this era of technology.
3. The curricular of the teacher education should emphasized ICT skills because of its worldwide importance in the development of the nation.

References


