

8

Creativity and Functional Teacher Education in Nigeria Challenges and Prospects in Comatose Economy

By

SALMAMZA DIBAL

*Department of Early Childhood Care Education,
Federal College of Education (Technical), Potiskum,
Yobe State.*

And

MARY OBAJE

*Department of Early Childhood Care Education,
Federal College of Education (Technical), Potiskum,
Yobe State.*

Abstract

It is an undisputable fact that no education style can rise above the quality of its teachers. Teacher education advancement will determine the position of the country in the committee of nation. Hence, the nation's development can only be enhanced by the quality of education given to her citizens. Functional teacher education helps in promoting rapid national developments. This paper therefore discussed the meaning of teacher education, creativity and issues in functional teacher education, recruitment of qualified teachers creativity and functional teacher education etc. conclusion and recommendations are made.

Education the world over is regarded as a important tool for achieving national objectives. In Nigeria, the Federal Government has adopted education as an instrument for promoting national development (National Policy on Education, 2014). Tahir (2006) asserts that the validity of any educational system depends on the quality of the teaching and of the teachers. No matter the quality of the infrastructure and facilities, curriculum and instructional materials, these in themselves cannot achieve the primary function of the school without the teacher playing a vital and a central role. Teachers are very

important in the development and progress of a nation, because no nation can rise above the quality of its teachers and can develop without any good educational system and planned programme of actions and policies. Most of the problems affecting teaching in Nigeria are poor funding and inadequate infrastructural facilities as well as poor qualities of teaching. Teaching is a noble profession. A good teacher should be intellectually sound and be able to effectively disseminate knowledge to students. In another word, the teacher must be master of the subject matter. The teacher should also be interested in the job and can improvise instructional materials. Functional teacher education need many trained teachers.

Many of the existing teachers have themselves had a limited background education and specialist teacher training. The existing colleges and the universities are not training enough teachers to fill the gap. The existing universities and colleges which are supposed to trained these teachers do not have enough facilities and equipments to train these teachers properly. Creativity and functional teacher education will not be possible without enough facilities, equipments and well trained teachers. Enough funds, equipments and materials will make one to think creatively and imagine out facts to make functional teacher education possible. Functional teacher education is a means of promoting rapid national development. It is an implement through which societies rebuild ideology, social political and cultural values. No wonder Fafunwa (2008) acknowledged that education is the engine that drives the development of any nation. Education is an instrument of change and development. Observing this, Onyeachu (2006) notes that it is true that the cultural heritages are transferred from generation to generation.

Teachers are therefore expected to be pillars of educational development in all countries all over the world in fact no nation can boost of a strong and effective system without continues development of its teachers. Teacher education refers to professional education of teachers towards attainment of attitudes, skills and knowledge considered desirable so as to make them efficient and effective in their work in accordance with the need of a society at any point in time.

The Federal Republic of Nigeria (2014) in the National Policy on Education asserted that no nation can achieve economic, social and technological progress and self sufficiency without a good system of education to sustain its achievements. It further stressed that government will continue to give major emphasis in all educational and development. Teachers therefore have important part to play in making the government to achieve these objectives. It is the teacher who is mainly responsible for the implementation of the policy at any stage. Thus, it is imperative to invest in the preparation of teacher so that the future of a nation is secured.

Teaching demands a continues development of knowledge and ability. This is because primarily education is rapidly changing and this requires constant efforts on the teacher to keep the pace. A dedicated teacher has little or no time to rest on his oars, if he does, he will go down stream. A good teacher, consider how he will broaden his knowledge and widen his experience after graduation. This paper therefore discussed

among others the meaning of teacher education, creativity and issues in functional teacher education, recruitment of qualified teachers, creativity and functional teacher education, and conclusions and recommendations are made.

Meaning of Teacher Education

Uche (1998) defined teacher education as the training given or provided in an institution to teachers to enable them acquire inculcate and impart knowledge to their pupils or students. Teachers are regarded as the moulders of behaviour and the trainers of the unrefined mind to become a refined mind after acquiring adequate training in the teacher training institution. Hence, many of these teachers are found in the formal education setting otherwise known as western education and which has a generally accepted and regular set of rules and organizations. Here education is formalized, systematized, organized and hierarchically structured that is, education that takes place within the four walls of the classrooms, lecture halls, science laboratories, libraries, school farms, workshop etc. examples of formal education are the western school system from pre-primary through primary, secondary and tertiary institutions and even Koranic schools and institutions as they exist in Nigeria. Tertiary learning contents are graded to suit the age, ability, level of readiness and regulated at all levels.

In schools, colleges, polytechnics and universities qualified men and women are needed to be trained to man these schools and colleges.

The following schools or institution train teachers professional to constantly meet required minimum standard:

1. Faculties of education in our various universities.
2. Institute of education
3. College of education
4. National Teachers Institute
5. National Institute for Nigerian Languages (NNLAN)
6. School of Education in Polytechnic
7. National mathematical centre etc.

All the above mentioned schools play a major role in the training of professional teachers in Nigeria. To maintain minimum standard, some of the above teacher training institutions are being regulated by the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCE) being run by various colleges of education in Nigeria at both Federal and state levels and even private ones while the National universities Commission (NUC) maintain minimum standard in the faculties of education and institute of education in Nigerian universities at both the Federal, State and even private owned universities.

After training in these teacher training institution qualified teachers are required to serve a period of internship for one year for degree holders and two years for NCE holders in various educational institutions in Nigeria. It is observed that government has not been implementing this internship training for qualified teachers.

Every citizen of the country should be able to read and write and solve problems involving counting and calculating for good government, hence teachers are those

professional who are meant to train the citizens of this country to achieve this, there is need for government to plan for the future to give teacher education a good solid bedrock in Nigeria.

Creativity and Issues in Functional Teacher Education

Functional teacher education is the ability to read and write and learn conceptual skills that are relevant to everyday life. This includes the capacity to innovate, create, reproduce, recognize and manipulate the conversion of text shared by a given community. The issues in functional teacher education are the quality of teachers. The need for teacher quality in functional teacher education cannot be over emphasized; Lassa (1988) as cited by Abdul (2008), stated that the teacher is regarded as the main factor that determines quality in education, it is generally agreed that the quality of any educational system depends largely on the quality of its teachers. Teachers are the main determinants of quality in education, that is why if they are apathetic, uninspired, unmotivated and anti-social, the whole nation is doomed, because they are not useful but dangers in a similar development the national policy on education, (2004), has stated that no education system rise above the quality of its teaching.

Some factors necessary for teacher quality include:-

Teaching experience: Teachers do not enter their “class” as finished goods but with practical experience they continue to improve and grow over time and become better teachers, because new teachers do not possess all knowledge and skills requirement of teaching profession but with practice, experience training and assistance they become highly qualified teachers it is generally believed that experience teachers make greater contribution to teaching and learning qualitative teacher require 4 types of knowledge:

- i. Basic academic skills
- ii. In depth knowledge on each subject to be taught
- iii. Knowledge of both generic and content specific pedagogy
- iv. Hand on teaching skills.

Generally academic ability and intelligence:- this helps teacher to facilitate development and manipulate skills certification and qualification can be part of knowledge and other training received. An in-depth knowledge of the subject matter: Teachers knowledge has string effect and can influence classroom performance, teachers knowledge of the subject make better teachers.

Challenges Facing Functional Teacher Education

The main challenges in Nigeria’s functional education are as follows:

1. Educational attainment of Nigeria’s population is still very low.
2. There is still a wide discrepancy in terms of educational attainment among groups in the community, such as between poor and the rich, between men and women, between urban population and rural population throughout the country.

3. Due to the nature and the comatose economy, educational facilities are not yet available evenly throughout the country.
4. Educational management is not performed efficiently and effectively due to the fact that the decentralization of the responsibilities and duties of local government, state government and federal government are not well defined. This is indicated by their contribution in allocation to educational budget.

Future Prospect of Functional Teacher Education

The following strategies for enhancing functional teacher education must be met.

1. Adequate funding: the funding of teacher education should not be left in the hands of the governments alone, because education is very expensive: the private institutions organization and multi-national organizations should play a contributing role in the funding and properly equipping the students with the needed skills and technology in our societies.
2. Teacher education as a discipline should be professionalized and made attractive. Adequate motivational incentives in terms of condition of service should be provided by the government and should be comparable to what professional colleagues are enjoying in industries.
3. Competent and qualified graduate teachers in education should always be given the opportunity to be administrators and supervisors this will enable them to articulate policies, administer, implement, and supervise various aspects of teacher education programme.
4. Proper training of our teachers at all levels is very important, if the nation is to advance educationally and otherwise. The teachers who are the central focus of knowledge should be well qualified to meet the societal needs.
5. Functional Teacher Education curriculum development and implementation should be well spell-out to serve as a base for the effective and efficient functional teacher education and at same time colleges should have enough facilities and equipment to train teachers so as to have functional teacher education.

Training and Retraining of Teacher

For functional teacher education there must be a qualitative and trained teacher who possesses excellent qualities of an educated individual. The teacher must have passed through a teacher training college for relevant pedagogical knowledge and practical skills. In an increasingly complex and competitive world, any educational system without a deliberate retraining programme would be competitively disadvantaged. Every day, there is a new information new method and new skills. In a globalised world driven by knowledge, we need a crop of well trained and retrained teachers through seminars, workshops, conferences, and refresher course.

Recruitment of Qualified Teachers

The Federal, State and Local governments must ensure that qualified teachers are employed to make functional teacher education effective. This is because teaching is a purposive activity that must be handled by well trained individual who knows what it is and how to impart knowledge to learners.

Conducive Working Environment

According to Baker and Le Tunder (2005) in Omoogun (2007) in this contemporary era, teachers need to respond to and manage change in a more creative and responsible way. Teachers need a very conducive environment to do this. Basic facilities such as electricity, water, computers, internet service, staffroom with well furnished chairs, tables and well ventilated officers should be provided for teachers.

Motivation: the government must ensure that teachers are well motivated. Oloyede (2007) opined that motivation will encourage teachers to put in their best to the successful functional teacher education. If we are desirous in making our schools functional, productive and qualitative we must take motivation seriously. Such motivational strategies according to Oloyede (2007) include:-increase in wages and salaries, regular promotions, cash benefits paid to teachers either to subsidize or increase their pay e.g. allowances for transportation, housing, medical, meal subsidy etc deferred benefits e.g. long service, award, gratuity, pension benefit etc.

Creativity:- is derived from the word to create which means to bring into being, i.e. to do something new novel or to transform something into existence into another entity. Creativity a process of becoming sensitive to problems, deficiencies, gaps in knowledge, missing elements, disharmonies, areas for solutions, making informed guesses or formulating hypotheses about deficiency, testing and retesting these hypotheses and possibly modifying and finally communicating the result.

Creativity can also be defined as the process of developing ideas that are originals and of value. It is for creative intelligence dynamic, diverse and distinct. Creativity is the imagination or inventive mind made for others and it is about originality. It can also mean different things to different people. Creativity is thinking and producing that which has never existed. Most people believe that the term creativity only applied to those who possess artistic talents thereby associated with the achievements of extraordinary people termed as geniuses. Creativity is rooted into imagination.

All human beings possessed creative capacities that can be harnessed so as to realize creativity. Creativity and invention are closely related. Invention is making something new which will do something new or better creativity is the thought process. An open and curious mind allows an inventor to see beyond what is known. Seeing a new possibility, connection, or relationship can spark an invention. Invention involves

putting together concepts or ideas from different angles that would not normally be put together.

Creativity Functional Teachers Education

If creativity is to be successful, teachers or educators must find ways of encouraging their students towards developing a creative mind. Teachers must be able to reinterpret ideas, apply their learning in new context. New innovation must be geared towards teachers at all levels of education system and then to the teacher education system and then to the teacher education programme for the benefit of teacher to be, and the teacher and the nation at large. It is often said that good education system demands an equally flexible teacher who is able to teach well, adapt himself and understand innovations. He should be able to participate in the change process, to supply a reliable and sound feedback and carry out experiments on his own. To prepare teachers for functional education, teacher education should be more practical and production oriented. Adequate teaching materials should be made available for teachers.

Teacher education is an integral component of the educational systems. The country is lacking properly trained teachers and schools are over populated. Infrastructural facilities are not on ground. Many of our boys and girls are still sitting on the ground under the shade to receive lesson. Many teachers are untrained and have a limited basic education. The existing colleges and the universities are not training enough teachers to fill the gap. The existing universities and colleges which are suppose to trained these teachers do not have enough facilities and equipments to train them properly. Furthermore, conventional teacher training tends to be relatively expensive. Even where its content is similar to that of secondary education its cost are often several times the cost of secondary education. The sounding of all these messages is awareness to alert us to the reality of functional teacher education in Nigeria.

Conclusion

Functional teacher education helps teachers and those in training to cope with the problems of education as they manifest and in order to keep pace with rapidly changes society, for one to excel in the teaching profession, the profession demands that he/she must continue to update his/her knowledge.

Recommendations

In order to enhance functional teacher education in Nigeria the following measures need adequate attention:

Provide good teacher's salary scale will be a reality to boost the social standard of teachers in the society so as to encourage them more.

The federal government should upgrade the standard of products of college of education by providing adequate facilities and human resources.

Adequate fund should be provided by the government for all teacher training institution to enable them perform the major training of qualified teachers.

The government should provide regular workshops, seminars, conferences and in-service training to up-date teachers knowledge.

The National Commission on Colleges of Education should make sure that the policy of making Nigeria certificate teachers are carefully followed in our various schools.

References

- Durosaro, D.D. (2006). Teacher education in Nigeria past, present and future challenges. *The pace setter journal of Oyo State College of Education* 1144-54.
- Fafunwa, B. A. (1974). *History of Education at Nigeria*, London George. Allen & Urwin.
- Federal republic of Nigeria (2014) “*National Policy on Education*” Abuja: NERDC.
- Lassa, P. N. (2001). A forward in Teacher Education: An imperative for development (ED) Kaduna, National Commission for Colleges of Education.
- Oloyede, D. O. (2007). Management of teacher for effective implementation of UBE programme in Nigeria 9th National Conference proceedings National Association of Evaluators and Researchers, Abraka, Delta State.
- Omoogun, A. (2007). Quality and quantity Assurance: The imperative for improved teachers quality. A paper presented at the 20th Annual Conference of Curriculum organization of Nigeria (CON) Abia State University, Uturu.
- Tahir, G. (2005). The compulsory, free, Universal Basic Education Act 2004 and other related matters Abuja. GAM international investments Ltd.
- Torrance, P. (2005). Verbal Test forms A and B figural tests, form A & B. The Torrance Tests of creativity. Thinking norms Technical Manual Research Edition Princeton, New Jersey personnel press.
- Uche, V. W. and Onyemenekeya, C. O. (1998). *Teacher Education for Nigeria Tertiary institution*” Awka Nwel centri publisher.