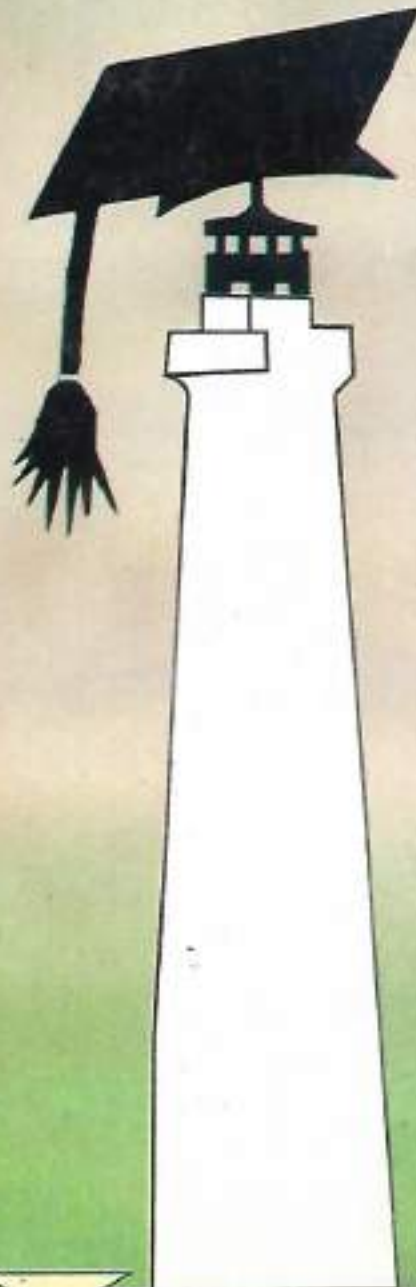




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Ladies of the Ivory Tower

LIT ORGANIZATION

QUALITATIVE TEACHER EDUCATION FOR SERVICE DELIVERY IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

This paper is the view that teacher education can be greatly improved upon to enhance service delivery in Nigeria in all facets of life. The paper conceived the concept of teacher education as educational policies, and procedures designed to equip prospective and serving teachers with the knowledge, aptitude, skills, abilities, behaviourism and competencies required of them to effectively perform their prescribed duties in the classroom school and the wider society. The concepts and roles of an effective teacher were also discussed. The paper concluded by asserting that improved teacher education programme is a pivot to enhanced service delivery in Nigeria. Suggestions on how the whole process of improving teacher education programme can be achieved were put forward.

Introduction

The level of advancement of man and the world around him is largely dependent on the quality of the teachers and the organizational structure of the school system in mans immediate social and physical environment. At birth, man is an empty slate, a state which the historians call "Tabula Rasa". At this stage, no word is stored in the brain, no memories, no information, no data, the brain is completely blank and empty as nature has made it, but the brain is ready to be developed and be filled up with basic knowledge, skills, abilities and competencies needed for mans existence and survival in life (Idiaghe, 2012). The entire process through which this is done is known as education which can be either formal, informal or semi-formal and the indispensable agent that makes the entire process possible is called the teacher. Therefore, the 'teacher in the 21st century' is a pivot for development, modern civilization and globalization.

The 'teacher' is a concept that has attracted several definitions from different authors in diverse disciplines Hornby (2001) defined a teacher as a person whose job is teaching, especially in a school. Wikipedia (2010), defined a teacher as a person who teaches or instructs, especially as a profession, instructor etc. The teacher is a person who provides education for pupils (children) and students (adults). Idiaghe (2012) asserted that the major role of the teacher in the formal education system is often formal and ongoing, carried out at a school or other places of formal education. A teachers' role may vary among cultures. But generally, teachers may provide instruction in literacy and numeracy, craftsmanship or vocational training, the arts, religion, civics, community roles, or life skills. A teacher who facilitates education for an individual may also be described as a personal tutor (Wikipedia 2010). The general quality of teachers in the society today is the direct revelation of the standard of the existing teacher education in the society. Teacher education as a concept according to Healy (2008) refers to the educational policies and procedures designed to equip prospective and serving teachers with the knowledge, attitudes, behaviours and skills they require to perform their work effectively in the classroom, school and wider community, a teacher who has adequately acquired these skills, knowledge, abilities and competencies for effective and efficient teaching is regarded as an effective teacher.

Qualities of an Effective Teacher

An effective teacher is considered as a teacher who makes the realization of instructional objectives his guiding principle. This is because teaching can only be said to have taken place only when learning has occurred and learning can only be said to have occurred when instructional objectives have been achieved. The qualities of a good teacher according to Ughamadu (2012) can be classified into professional and personal qualities. The professional qualities to which a teacher must conform in the practice of his profession include:-

1. **Knowledge of Subject Matter:** A good teacher is expected to have an indept knowledge and understanding of concepts, principles, generalization etc of the subject he is assigned to teach in school.
2. **Likeness of his Subject:** A good teacher must essentially like his subject. Likeness or interest in ones subject will give the teacher a steadily increasing knowledge. If a teacher enjoys his subject, it will be easy for him to teach even when he is tired.
3. **Command of Language of Instruction:** The teacher is expected to have a good command of the language being used for teaching the learners. He should have the ability to present ideas in oral and written form with the lowest level of simplicity and clarity possible.
4. **Effective and Efficient Implementation of Learning Experience:** A good teacher will essentially understand psychology of human learning in particular and apply it to his teaching.
5. **Love or Commitment to the Teaching Profession:** A good teacher believes that teaching is worthwhile and indentifies with the teaching profession. Such a teacher sees teaching as his special calling.
6. **Planning for Instruction:** A good teacher makes systematic and adequate plans for teaching.
7. A good teacher must have a quality staff relations with others in his working environment.
8. A good teacher must maintain a clear professional distance between him and his student.
9. A good teacher must know how to maintain discipline and manage all forms of learning environment.
10. A good teacher must know how to manage social routine in order for it not to conflict with his professional practice. These amongst others are the professional requirements of a good teacher in the practice of his profession but other personal characteristics according to the Malone College Handbook as cited by Idighe (2008) which include:
 1. **Appearance:** A good teacher must be well groomed, exhibit good taste and neatness in dressing.

2. **Personality:** A good teacher must be friendly, understanding, helpful, exhibit ability to get along with others, exhibit individuality, must be mentally alert, cheerful, confident, is courteous and tactful.
3. **Poise:** A good teacher is one who exercises self-control, he is not easily disturbed by minor distractions; maintains professional distance; thinks before acting.
4. **Emotional Stability:** A good teacher must exhibit appropriate emotions and not over-react to normal stimuli.
5. **Health and Vitality:** A good teacher must have good physical condition and mental health; able to carry out normal load with energy as may be required by his profession.
6. **Effective Speech:** A good teacher should be fluent, clear, and distinct in speaking.
7. **Initiative:** A good teacher should begin a task readily on his own, contribute to the solutions of professional problems.
8. **Judgement:** He must exhibit stability to exercise prudence in practical matters; also exercise control in evaluation.
9. **Sense of humour:** A good teacher must exhibit appropriate use of human interpersonal relations. He must be found to be interesting, funny and amusing.
10. **Tact:** A good teacher must be ready to exhibit ethical principles and displays behaviour guided by consideration.

Functions and Roles of a Teacher

Broadly speaking, according to Encyclopaedia Britannica (1945) in Wikipedia (2010) the role of the teacher is to help students learn by imparting knowledge to them and by setting up a situation in which students can and will learn effectively, but teachers fill a complex set of roles, which vary from one society to another and from one educational level to another. Some of these roles are performed in the school, some in the community.

Teachers Role in the School Environment

- i. Mediator of learning process
- ii. Disciplinarian or controller of students behaviour
- iii. Parent substitute
- iv. Confidant to students
- v. Judge of achievements
- vi. Organizer of the school curriculum
- vii. Bureaucrat and scholar

The Teacher as an Instrument of Nation Building

The concept of nation building is defined by Francis (2006) defined as the process of constructing or structuring a national identity using the power of the state. This process aims at the unification of the people within the state so that it remains politically stable and viable in the long run. Generally speaking, nation building can be summed up as the development of behaviours, values, languages, institutions, and physical structures that elucidate history and culture, concretize and protect the present, and insure the future identity and independence of the nation.

The most potent instrument for nation building is the teacher. Teachers through their perseverance, love and sacrifices has shown us the right path in which great men have contributed to the building and rebuilding of the Nigerian nation. It is our dear teachers who mould our character, our personality and showed us the right direction which leads us to personal and national development. Flourishing national development and the society truly prosper with knowledge, all begins from the teachers. The teacher can unequivocally do this through an effective and efficient classroom instructional process. The teacher being the closest role model to his pupils and students must lead a life worthy of emulation, he leads by examples on the various issues that affect or contribute in one way or the other to nation building (Idiaghe, 2012).

Improving the Quality of Teacher Education in Nigeria

The general aim of the improvement strategies for teacher education in Nigeria is for the teaching profession to adequately meet the current challenges of man and his immediate environment. The quality of the teacher and teaching in the school system is a key factor in the achievement of the general philosophy and objectives of education in Nigeria. The teaching workforce must be capable, of providing high quality teaching in order to enable Nigerian citizens to acquire the knowledge and skills which they will need in their personal and national lives. This can only be achieved if an effective and efficient teaching education programme that will communicate electronic teaching skills in its programme and curriculum is adequately put in place.

The existing programmes being organized by the National Teachers Institute (NTI) Kaduna, Universal Primary Education Board (UPEB), Abuja and State Universal Primary Education Boards (SUPEB), cannot in anyway be said to be sufficient enough to exert the desired change in the system, because of its poor planning and implementation strategies. There is no workshop organized by these bodies which the maximum duration exceeds two days per year. The poor attendance of teachers in such training workshop is too low to achieve a continuous level of development among teachers. The teacher training system currently in place in the Nigeria society do not promote the acquisition of the desired teaching skills which have been made expedient by the changes in educational sector and in the society in general.

Although teachers are required to impart basic knowledge, skills, attitude, abilities and competencies to the pupils/students and the society at large, it has always been a known fact that no one can give what he/she does not have. It therefore becomes imperative for teachers to gain the needed knowledge and skills required to make a change in their chosen profession for them to be able to facilitate necessary positive change in man and the society at large. Regular training and re-training of teachers in workshops over a considerable longer duration with modern teaching and learning facilities like computers and projectors is the only sure way of improving teacher education in Nigeria.

Recommendations

Improved teacher education is a pivot to effective and efficient service delivery in any nation. This can be achieved by making the training/workshops more regular than it is currently being done, at least quarterly with enhanced remuneration for the resource persons and participants. Other measures may include:

- i. Making the training/workshop a yardstick for primary and secondary school teachers promotion.
- ii. Enhanced workshop/training facilities including a conducive venue
- iii. Enlarging the curriculum of Nigerian educational system to include regular in-service training for teachers and school administrators.

Conclusion

Improved teacher education with the use of modern teaching and learning resources in workshops, seminars, symposium and regular conferences is the most potent way of achieving a developed and advanced society.

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