

BUILDING THE NIGERIAN NATION THROUGH TEACHER EDUCATION

By

Prof. J. O. Ogbuagu

ABSTRACT

The paper examined the place of teacher education in the building of a national etiquette. Based on research and experience, the author ex-rayed the common areas, where institutions and nations encounter difficulties. These includes: Goals of teacher education, national and international bodies, teacher preparation, population education, teachers and national etiquette, research and teaching. Etiquette involves formal standards of rules of correct and polite behavior in nations and social settings. The paper recommended that teachers should be given decent treatment and humane conditions of service. The paper concluded that any nation that is worth its salt must hold her teachers, the builders of national etiquette, in high reverence.

Key words: Teacher, Education, Etiquette, Population, Research, Teaching, Discipline, Accountability

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of teacher education curriculum in schools is to promote effective teaching. It is the teacher's view of society, the teacher's understanding of learners and learning, the teacher's knowledge, ethical norms, skills and beliefs about the relative merits of various learning activities that govern curriculum at the point of delivery. This means, of course, that no step is more important in a country than the proper education and training of teachers for effective classroom delivery.

Teacher education can be seen as a process of socialization in a teacher education institution in which a trained teacher as a member of the teaching profession or social group passes its values, norms, and beliefs to its younger members that should enable them to survive as useful members of society and the teaching profession. The teacher can be described as a person who has undergone an approved professional training in teacher education institution capable of imparting knowledge, and skills, to learners. Such a teacher must possess basic skills acceptable for the practice of teaching as a profession in Nigeria. These skills involve a systematic process of training prospective teachers to enter the teaching profession so that they can be prepared to guide learning

activities at appropriate levels of education. Based on this backdrop, the following considerations for building the nations teacher education were discussed.

I. Goals of Teacher Education

II. National and International Bodies

III. Teacher Preparation

IV. Population Education

V. Research and Teaching Goals of Teacher Education.

The goals of teacher education are to produce highly motivated classroom teachers for all levels of education; to encourage the spirit of enquiry and creativity in teachers; to help teachers fit into the social life of the community; to provide teachers with the intellectual and professional background adequate for their assignment and to enhance teachers' commitment to the teaching profession.

The Nigerian Union of Teachers (NUT) was established in 1931 for the main function of fighting for the improvement of the conditions of service of teachers. Unfortunately, the union has not been able to control the entry behaviour of teachers into the teaching profession. Clearly, then, the entry into the teaching profession, and expulsion from it has over the years been the major function of the ministry of education or the state statutory commission acting as an agent of the state ministry of education.

The great cry, of course is for efficiency, improvement and professionalization of teaching in Nigeria. The teaching profession has charged that the progress of the profession has been grossly delayed by the exploitation of imperial governments and avaricious private industry. The possibility that the soil for educational development has not been receptive and that the seeds which have been planted have failed to germinate was summarily dismissed as European rationalization and political propaganda. Happily; the birth of the Teachers' Registration Council of Nigeria has brought a new hope into the teaching profession. The registration of the teacher is vigorously pursued by the Teachers' Registration Council of Nigeria. Clearly, this can be regarded as a landmark achievement in the quest for the professionalization of teaching in Nigeria.

From the point of view of teacher education and the teaching profession, the situation is urgent. The Teachers registration council of Nigeria, in conjunction with other agencies, must find ways and means of improving the material position of teachers in Nigeria. This can be achieved by improving: The material well being of teachers and their conditions of work, the educational standard of teachers. seeking more professional freedom for teachers, and finally seeking unity amongst teachers. There is an -increasing determination among educators worldwide that the power of the teaching profession should be used to help deal constructively with national and international problems to change lives, change nations and change the world (Toh, & Cawagas, 2007).

NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL BODIES

The development of both national and international agencies working alongside with teachers' organizations is a 'welcomed initiative. It is clear that since teachers of all categories make special contribution to the making of human beings, their general conditions of employment should secure for them a standard of living commensurate with their social and cultural importance. This should enable them to maintain and strengthen their cultural, scientific and pedagogic standards. The professional standards of the teaching profession should be defined and sustained using teachers' associations and the teaching profession to that end.

It is obvious that the progress of education requires that teachers everywhere should enjoy a moral and material status worthy of their lofty mission. In some states of the federation and beyond, there is a problem in recruitment and retention in service of qualified teachers and this could be achieved only if the status of its profession is adequately recognized by all concerned; teachers, governments, education authorities, and the public. It is gratifying to observe that both ILO and UNESCO are directly concerned with the problems affecting teachers. They also agree that the correlation between the social and economic conditions of teachers and teacher training and qualifications are so close that it will not be practical to deal with any one set of problems separately. It is realized: Never in the history of mankind has education been of such concern not only to individuals and families, but also to organized national groups and governments responsible for their nation's future (Tucker, 2007).

One reason for the formation of professional bodies is to set up some guidelines to enforce high standards of professional conduct as enshrined in her code of ethics, outlines a number of professional behaviours to protect teachers, The Nigerian Union of

Teachers can terminate a teachers' membership of the union, but not necessarily his right to teach. These ethical codes are incorporated into the new Teachers' Registration Council code to protect teachers, the association, children, pupils and students.

TEACHER PREPARATION

A modern teacher must have thorough knowledge of his chosen subject matter, if he is to command the respect of his learners or students. A student of the 21st century seems more intelligent than his counterpart of the 20th century. This is because the art of reading is particularly important at the present time. The printed word is the main route of the past, the present, and of what makes the man made world tick. It is also the passport to teaching, education, adventure, delight, terror, fun and experience as well as relationships.

Sometimes, students protest against ineffective teaching shown by their respective classroom teachers. When this happens, a number of questions readily come to the mind: Do the teachers have a thorough knowledge of the subject matter? Do the teachers prepare their lessons before entering the classroom? Do the teachers have a perfect command of the medium of instruction? Are they professionally trained for a meaningful classroom interaction with their students? Do they know and accept the objectives of the subjects or courses they are called upon to teach? Are they sufficiently motivated to do justice to the curriculum entrusted to them? These questions are important in the assessment of the teacher's classroom performance.

The core responsibility in the education sector is how to build a body of professional think-tanks who are ethical, knowledgeable, and beneficial to the sector. The practicing teacher should keep on learning so as to become an authority in the school environment. The more teachable we are, the more knowledgeable we become. However, we must understand that the teaching profession is not a one-cap-fits-all. We must specialized and professionalize. People in education sector should be encouraged to become more professional and be ready to share their ideas with others. The more professional we are, the more there will be sufficient interaction between and among professional's development, teaching, mentoring, carrying out research, learning gestures or the hidden curriculum.

One of the most important aspects of any human activity is evaluation of achievement. Evaluation is defined as a process of determining the extent to which the objectives are achieved and standards met. Whether we are administering tests or semester examinations in different subjects in school, observing and judging students or workers in the workplace, or simply supervising men and women at work, we are merely striving to improve standards, efficiency, and performance in such organization. These obligations must be performed by teachers and workers at all levels of education. Teachers should have an enduring absolute commitment to the profession, aspiring to make a successful career within the system and taking pride in the profession {Eyibe, 2009}. Overcrowding in classrooms should warn us to teach population education in Nigeria schools at all levels.

POPULATION EDUCATION

Population education is defined as an educational process which provides for the study of the population situation in the family, community, nation and the world. Its purpose is to develop in the citizens a more rational attitude and responsible behaviour towards improving the quality of their life in the present and in the future. Clearly, the main goal of population education is to enable individuals and nations to have positive attitudes toward issues such as food, housing, health education, migration, population explosion, unemployment, facility, census, civilization, family and the quality of life. The standard of living in Nigeria will certainly worsen, if the present rapid population growth is not reversed. It is possible for Nigeria as a nation to control her fertility and reduce her excessive rate of population growth, and thereby minimize or remove their adverse effects on our lives and progress.

Authority is acquired through the power of spoken and written expression. The following components are particularly important in the evaluation of the teaching effectiveness of an enterprising teacher: Subject matter, language of instruction, research activity, and professional skill. It will be unfair to attribute success or failure of a teaching task to any one of these components; for teaching to be effective, evaluators must consider the four components together with the language of instruction as a priority area (Hayakawa, 2002). Research and Teaching

Research is defined as a continuous searching process to examine ideas and test the accuracy of hypotheses, determine their merit and generalizations in order to verify their application to novel situation, and their reliability for repeated use. Research in

schools requires space in the form of buildings, classrooms, equipment, libraries and research-oriented teachers or lecturers. This can be referred to as curriculum research. Curriculum research is defined as the process of taking seriously the injunction to think about the practice of teaching in the school environment. It is indeed a process of thinking systematically about what to do in the classroom to improve the teaching and learning processes. Curriculum research is, therefore, part of the extended professionalization of teachers and teaching. This means that curriculum research in schools is justified because it helps individual teachers to teach authoritatively and effectively (Eyibe, 2009). The enterprising teacher must always remain focused on teaching and research activity in and outside the school.

Teaching, then, is defined as an active classroom encounter in which the learner must be involved activity in a participatory process. It is a learner-centered, not teacher-centered activity, and the task of the teacher will be to maximize driving and minimize passengers. The aim of this procedure is to create an activity-oriented classroom where pupils and students can learn, write, speak, draw, demonstrate, count, read, question, construct, or measure, for meaningful and result-oriented learning (Eyibe & Ogbuagu 2013).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. It is high time we converted the colleges of education and polytechnics to universities, like Britain did, or turn them to satellites of contiguous universities in order to accommodate majority of our youths seeking varsity education every year.
2. The need experienced practicing teachers and lecturers who can teach, develop themselves, and affect and develop the students far better than classroom lecturers.
3. Schools should not allow cash and sex to determine the grades of students.
4. We must ensure that high quality lecturers produce high quality students to ensure national etiquette

5. We must avoid all forms of intellectual tyranny where a teacher plays God or determines who should or should not graduate thereby driving students to negative values or behaviours
6. What we need in campuses at the present time are more of trainers who can expose students to varieties of knowledge, experiences, ideas and positive values than classroom teachers.
7. There is need to make education functional in order to acquire, manage, and use knowledge to do many things for national development (Eyibe, 2009)
8. Academic "dead-woods" who remain in the system for decades without self-improvement must be forced to work hard (Ogunsanwo, 2015).
9. The President, State Governors and other stakeholders in education must insist on cast-iron discipline and accountability on our campuses to ensure efficiency, competitiveness and excellence.
10. Teachers, as builders of national etiquette, must be encouraged and rewarded to enable them do their work of implementing the curriculum.
11. A system should be put in place to distinguish and reward academics and support staff that labour day and night to nurture and build the national etiquette of a great future for Nigeria.
12. Let us see Nigeria as a poor and an uncivilized country and work hard to ensure her greatness and her promises.
13. We must acquire hard and soft skills to ensure the survival of the Nigeria nation in the 21st century.

CONCLUSION

Teaching is a worthwhile and demanding career which carries a high level of academic and professional responsibility in a period of globalization. Good teaching is the hallmark of teacher education. Again, good teaching calls for men, and women, who can manipulate academic and professional skills to inform, motivate, teach and challenge pupils, students, and colleagues in particular schools It is becoming increasingly clear from research findings that-teaching is still mainly done through the lecture method only, instead of the suggestions given in different curricula (Irowi, 1990 Eyibe, 2010).

Any teaching strategy which encourages pupils and students to be passive listeners all the time is injurious to the entire educational enterprise.

Teaching is an art and a science. It is an art because it involves guiding, directing, and stimulating learning. It is also a science because it involves the processing of a body specialized of knowledge. This explains why teaching is an intricate, exerting and challenging vocation. It is Obvious that the teacher is the hope of the educational system because it is the primary responsibility of the teacher to see that the child develops the skills, assimilates the correct facts, the right habits, ideals and ethical norms.

Teaching and learning should engage learners with big ideals, key processes or modes of discourse and narratives of subjects so that they understand what constitutes quality and standards in particular domains, and experimentation throughout education. Schools must change today. A well coordinated programme of research can lay a more rational basis for change than can random innovation. However¹ innovation distinguishes between a research-leader and a follower we would like to conclude by saying that any civilized nation that is worth its salt must hold her teachers, the builders of national etiquette, in high reverence. Otherwise why must we in Nigeria allow such an honourable professional to be neglected, demean, degraded, disrespected, humiliated, and sometimes, ridiculed?

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