ENHANCING STUDENT PERFORMANCE AND ACHIEVEMENT THROUGH EFFECTIVE TEACHER PLANNING: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR TEACHERS AND EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

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ABSTRACT

For Nigeria to achieve her developmental goals, teacher education must be given a special attention such that teacher preparation and professional development becomes the top most priority. This paper aims to examine the importance of teacher quality and effectiveness in classroom teaching. Due to the nature of the research, the study adopted qualitative literature review approach and used thematic method of qualitative analysis to analyze the data. The research findings revealed that the quality and effectiveness of teachers at all levels of educational system has been a source of great concern to all stakeholders in recent times. The study also found out that if teachers are not committed, not inspired, not motivated, are lazy, immoral, antisocial, unpatriotic, the whole nation is doomed and also revealed that teacher quality is an important factor in the improvement of student's achievement in school. The research recommends that educational institutions should review their educational system this is to enable teachers to be qualitative and efficient teachers. The study also recommends that teacher trainees should be encouraged to attend associations, seminars and conferences and should be taught the use of ICT facilities for the integration of ICTs in teacher education will adjust the education system to face the current global educational standard.

Keywords: Planning, achievement and education

Introduction

The cardinal goal of education is the development of the individual as well as the society. It serves as the key that unlocks the development of personal as well as national potentials and all its rights and powers (Akindutire & Ekundayo, 2012). Lassa (1996) observed that education is the key to national development and this explains that the teacher holds the key to sound education. Okafor (1988) perceived education as a potent instrument for national development. According to him, no developing nation will develop fast enough without placing its priority on education." He further adds that even the developed nations will begin to retrogress as soon as its educational priority is swept under the carpet.

Education is a public good that should be directed at uplifting the social, economic, political, scientific, technological, and cultural life of a nation, it is required for all-round human development and for inculcating in citizens those shared values necessary for the common life of the people. These personal and national aspirations may not be achieved without good, effective, and quality teacher. The quality of human resource informs of teachers often dictate the extent of the effectiveness of the school programmmes. It is against this background that the need for quality teachers equipped with the desired skills, knowledge, competence and commitments empowered to perform their professional responsibilities cannot be over-emphasized.

Trait of Quality and Effective Teachers

Teachers are important factors in determining the quality of education given to a nation because they are the last post that translate government policies and intentions into concrete terms. Ipaya (2002) described the teacher as the spinal cord of educational system at all levels. Ngada (2003) believed that teachers are the pivot on which all educational developments hangs.

Teachers are at the center of instruction, and studies are available that support the assertion that "no educational system can rise above the quality of its teachers and no nation can rise above its teaching staff." It is important that teachers should possess qualities that are desirable for their calling or job.

Quality teachers possess a lot of attributes that makes him/her stands-out among his/her contemporaries. While describing the ideal teacher, Agana (2002) observed that such teachers are highly motivated, conscious, and efficient. He/she is a teacher with the spirit of enquiry and creativity. Akindutire & Ekundayo (2012) observed that quality teachers are characterized with humility, innovation, integrity, magnanimity, neatness, responsible, punctual, and radiance. Above all he must be academically qualified. Other attributes includes respectful, sympathetic,

flexible, firm, honest, intellectual curiosity and keenness. These qualities make him a model to learners and an embodiment of an exemplary citizenship, integrity and industry in the society.

In discussing the ideal teacher in relation to classroom instruction, and student teacher relationship, Underhill et al (1994) in Agana (2002) described him as an enabler, a teacher who knows about the subject matter and methodology, as well as understands how individuals and groups think and feels within the classroom. The teachers' personal attitudes are an active encouragement for learning. This teacher may become a guide or a counselor or a resource person when needed.

Allington & Johnson (see website) reported in their findings on effectiveness of fourth grade teachers, in U.S.A that effective teachers are characterized by;

i. Providing explicit instructions

ii. Using classroom routine

iii. Challenging and involving students

iv. Creating, supporting, encouraging a friendly classroom climate

v. Encouraging in lots of constructive teacher students exchange offering a variety of materials.

vi. Scheduling frequent library visits

vii. Creating stimulating curricular activities

viii. Displaying students work prominently.

The result of this finding is of great help to our teachers to understand the demands placed on them and to work towards meeting these demands.

Generally, there is a broad agreement that effective teachers needs to know their subject very well (strong content knowledge). They should also know how to teach their subjects to student in a way that help them learn the material (i.e. strong pedagogical knowledge). The most consistent and powerful predictator of higher students achievement are the full certification of the teacher and a college graduate in the field being taught conversely, the strongest predictors of law student's achievement are teachers who are uncertified or who holds less than college certificate in their teaching field.

There is a consensus across all nations among education stakeholders that educational quality is indeed a critical component to securing a future in the twenty first century (21st Century) for societies and in improving the physical and human environment. To attain this goal, research have pointed out that teacher quality is one of the most important school related factors

in students' achievement, and that a teacher's mastery of subject content and classroom practice strongly influence what students learn.

If any nation, want to improve dramatically her student's achievements, then as a nation she need to dramatically improve the quality of her teachers and make sure that there are high quality teachers for every classroom of students.

The Objectives of Teacher Education in Nigeria

Preparing highly qualified teachers is a matter of concern and public policy in every society that sponsor public education and hence the central goal of teacher education in every country in every institution entrusted with this mission. The objectives of teacher educational (training) should emphasize training of highly motivated, conscientious and successful classroom teachers for all levels of education. It should encourage in potential teachers the spirit of improving creativity, nationalism and belongingness (Nakpodia & James, 2011).

Teacher education should help the prospective teacher, to live into the social of home and community providing him with intellectual and professional background adequate for his assignments, provide the teacher who by his training and discipline will be adaptable to the changing roles of education in society. Teacher training should produce knowledgeable programs, and effective teachers who can inspire children to learn. For instance, the national policy on education implementation blue point has prescribed the type and qualification of teachers required at all levels of our educational systems. It comprised of the followings;

i. Pre-primary education; grade two teachers with NCE teachers as head.

ii. Primary education: NCE teachers with graduate of university as heads.

iii. Junior secondary school: NCE and university graduate

iv. Senior secondary school NCE and with professional qualification

v. Technical colleges: polytechnics and colleges of education: University graduate with post-graduate qualification in their discipline with professional qualifications practical industrial exposure and experience.

vi. University: University graduate with post graduate qualification.

Quality and Effective Teacher Preparation

"Students cannot learn what they are not taught, and teachers cannot teach what they do not know." This explains the imperatives for teacher preparations and professional development for effective teaching. Deshi & Duya (2007) maintain that stakeholders in education acknowledge the importance of continuous growth and development for teacher's maximum

output. According to Nakpodia & James (2011), teacher preparation can be categorized into three stages namely:

1. Initial teacher preparation

2. The induction process involving the training and supports of the trainee during the first few years of teaching or the first year in a particular school.

3. Teacher development or continuing performing development and intensive process for teaching practice teachers.

Teacher preparation programme must start with a rigorous content preparation. This should however be viewed as the first part of complex career long learning process that involves continual intellectual growth, both outside and inside the classroom environment. This will enable them to stay current in both content and pedagogy. However, although content knowledge preparation is necessary, it is not sufficient for teacher effectiveness.

Lusi, Susan & Circe (2005) posit that teacher preparation programme should provide aspiring teachers with strategies and processes to teach in ways that will engage their students with the content and help them to learn high levels. This implies that teacher's needs professional development to stay relevant. To be effective, teachers needs to know a variety of techniques and ways to structure lesson as well as how to find the appropriate balance between learning skills, understanding concepts and solve problems. They need to understand how to use assessment data to improve an individualized instruction and how to teach students who have different learning styles and strengths. Lack of continuity and articulation within the preparation programs and between preparation and professional development becomes a challenge that makes preparing high quality teachers very difficult.

Many people have relied too heavily on initial preparations in colleges and universities to provide teachers with all the skills and knowledge they require, to the extent that fresh or newly employed teachers are treated as experts on day one as Lusi et al (2005) states that, "Brand new teachers are given their own classroom full of students and the same level of responsibilities for teaching them as are twenty (20) years veterans:, this is mistake, for no preparation programme no matter how good, can transform a novice teacher into a high quality veteran. Teachers need systematic and supported induction into the profession as well as ongoing professional development throughout their career. High quality induction programs can continue to ramp up teachers skills and knowledge as they are engaging with students and students work. Teachers then had to continue learning throughout their career.

Teachers are expected to be reflective practitioners in their environment as observed by Okeke-Oti and Adaka (2012). This means that teachers should be aware of their environment.

They should obtain information on the resources available for professional development and learning. They should have information

on professional associations, developmental activities, current researches, ideas and debates regarding best practices on teaching.

Obstacles against Quality Teacher Preparation

The process of developing and retraining of teachers for our school systems to support students learning is a global challenge and the process have some hindrances among which includes;

1. The teacher preparation programs lack vigor to equip teacher trainees with the skills and competences they need for effective teaching. Okeke-Oti and Adaka (2012) observed that; every year teachers are churned out of training institution either as full-time or part-time throughout with programs that are deficient in content and methodology. Furthermore, there exist a wide gap between content and structure and the specific needs of the school teacher.

2. In our colleges and university faculties of educations, only a few number, of highly performing and qualified college students are attracted into the teaching career, partly due to the availability of other career options with attractive pay and better service conditions than the teaching profession. Akindutire and Ekundayo (2012) states 'teachers' condition of service is not enticing enough'. Today there are holders of professional qualifications in education serving in Banks, custom departments, immigration departments, hotels, Airways e.t.c.

3. Another obstacle to quality teacher preparation is inadequate funding of tertiary institutions running teacher education programs in Nigeria. This goes long a way to affect teacher preparation programs. This lack of funding affects the instruments for effective training for teachers. Boladale, Isaac and Festus (2012) identified lack of lecture halls classrooms, laboratories hostels, and staff quarters generating plants, office equipment as being inadequate in most of our teacher producing institutions. Funds allocated to the institutions fall short of their requirements.

4. Lack of commitments by teachers (teachers) in teacher producing institutions charged with the responsibility of training our potential teachers. Alphonso (2011) observed that by the mid-1980s, things fall apart in tertiary institutions in Nigeria as a result of bad political, economic and poor national development policies as a result decline in the tertiary institutions. Brain drain happened such that the good teachers/lecturers left and misfit moved into universities ethics and tradition were thrown to the dogs. With this development how can we expect good teacher training from this caliber of people.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The quality and effectiveness of teachers at all levels of our educational system has been a source of great concern to all stakeholders in recent times. If teachers are not committed, not inspired, not motivated, are lazy, immoral, antisocial, unpatriotic, the whole nation is doomed. If as a nation we expect our children to achieve much in school for the future development of the nation, teachers must be adequately prepared and developed academically and professionally. Governments' federal, state and local have a great part to play in teacher preparation and development because they establish entry standards for teaching profession and course requirements. Government also approve teacher preparation and development programs. They support teacher professional development through the provision of funds, programs, and certification.

Recommendations:

Universities and other tertiary institutions charged with the responsibilities of teacher preparation and development should go back to the drawing board to remove all irrelevant contents, add current and relevant contents and modify relevant components to ensure the production of quality and efficient teachers. They should equality revisit the recruitment policies to ensure that only persons with high academic and professional capabilities and potentials are recruited.

Teacher trainees should be encouraged to attend associations, seminars and conferences. This will enable them to gain access to journals, articles and books on current research views ideas and debates on best practices.

Teachers trainees should be taught the use of ICT facilities for the integration of ICTs in teacher education will be greatly enhanced if students in this program are given the opportunity to express innovative technology supported learning environment in teacher education programme. This suggestion however, does not rule out the use of traditional instructional materials.

Adjustment in curricula is again required and steps should be taken to ensure that youths with average intelligence are attracted to the teaching profession.

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