

RE-TRAINING OF TEACHERS FOR EFFECTIVE KNOWLEDGE AND SKILL ACQUISITION IN NIGERIAN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Dr. Scholastica N. Banka

Benue State University, Makurdi

Professor Adejo Okwori

Benue State University

Abstract

There is a dire need to urgently revisit the nature of Nigerian secondary school teachers, if the twin objectives of the National Policy on Education for the education sector are to be achieved. Secondary school education is a very important segment of the educational system because of the role it plays in determining the skill of students, that is, those inclined towards vocational studies and those for non-vocational studies. This paper evaluated the essence of retraining teachers as a means of human resource development for effective knowledge and skill acquisition in the Nigerian secondary schools. The concepts of retraining as well human resource development were discussed. The essence of re-training teachers formed part of the paper as the challenges were also considered. The paper recommended that through provision of adequate funds, government should make efforts in training and retraining teachers if the goals of secondary education were to be achieved.

Key words: Teachers, Students, National Policy and government

Introduction

The teacher is the key factor in the delivery of education process. It is widely recognised that the teacher plays a crucial role in shaping the minds of the children and that the availability of well qualified and trained teachers in adequate numbers is important to attaining quality education. According to ANHRD (2009), the roles played by teachers and head-teachers or principals are central to all efforts to improve the quality of education; the quality of an education system is limited by the quality of its teachers; since the only way to improve learning outcome is to improve classroom transactions.

It is one thing to have teachers and entirely another thing to have the right quality of teachers. For a country to attain quality education, there is need have effective recruitment, effective training of teachers and ensuring teachers' motivation through appreciation and resource support; providing sound leadership through proper selection of school heads and giving them adequate opportunities for potential development. This is where human resource development comes through proper knowledge and skill acquisition come to play. Human resource development include training an individual or employee after he/she is first hired, providing opportunities to learn new skills, distributing different resources for different employee tasks, and any other developmental activities. In essence therefore, the objective of resource development is to contribute knowledge base and provide successful approaches in order to attract develop and retain effective teachers for the sole purpose of effective knowledge and skill acquisition in Nigeria secondary schools.

One of the goals of secondary education is to cater for the differences in talents, opportunities and future roles; provide trained manpower in applied sciences, technology and commerce at sub-professional grades. To achieve the objectives of Nigerian secondary schools there must be available quality teachers in large quantity. Quality can only be attained through training and re-training which must be done at every point to adequately prepare teachers with the challenges of modern day teaching requirements.

Concept of Re-training

Human beings are the most important elements of work in the production venture. This explains why organisation and nations take or make conscious steps to ensure the effectiveness of individuals. People provide ideas, innovations, inventions and consequently wealth for the benefit of both employers and employees. Organisational goals and objectives cannot be achieved if workers are not properly trained. Thus, according to Oyitso and Olomukoro (2012), training has always been recognised as an important factor that contributes to improved performance of an employee right from the days of Fredric Taylor of Scientific Management Fame.

If the Nigerian secondary education must survive and more importantly increase its productivity, the teachers must have the competence to provide the necessary workforce, thus the need for training and retraining of teachers to develop their abilities and skills in order for them to function effectively and efficiently. Training is about developing employees as an individual to make them capable and comfortable in their jobs and consequently in their life. In order words it is an organised process for increasing the knowledge and skills of the employee. It is a process aimed at changing the behaviour in such a way that the impact would be useful for the uplift of the organisation, (Priyanka, 2010).

Retraining and vocational rehabilitation, according to Wikipedia (2013) is the process of learning a new skill or trade, often in response to change in the economic environment. Generally, it reflects changes in the profession rather than “upward” movement in the same field. Supporting this view, NSW (2013) states that retraining is a wonderful professional experience. It will provide employees with the opportunity to acquire new knowledge and teaching skills, learn with and form innovative lecturers and motivated colleagues, develop employees’ confidence as teachers, and broaden career advancement opportunities.

The above means that training and re-training are investment and not a cost. Even long term intangible gains such as attitudinal changes, can be considered as valuable returns. Retraining is considered as a vehicle for effective communication and coordination. This means that teachers already on the job through retraining are set to learn new methods of teaching skills. Today, with the coming of ICT and IT it has become absolutely important for teachers’ to learn these skills so as to keep up with modern trends.

Retraining is considered as a tool for human resource development. It has immense potential in transfer and utilization of latest technical know-how, leadership development, organisation of people, formation of self-help-groups, mobilization of people as well as resources, empowerment of resource- poor rural man, entrepreneurship development among others which are considered essential components of Human resource development, Priyanka (Abdullahi, 2010).Port (2000) states that re-training is a process of learning a sequence of programmed behaviour. It is an application of knowledge that attempts to improve the performance of employees on the current job and prepares them for the intended job. Training and re-training are designed for specific job related purposes. Concoran (1996) noted that, nearly every state in the nation is involved in an attempt to raise academic standards. This movement also calls for a shift from a behaviourist approach to teaching, in which students are often passive recipients to Teachers-Pupil generated knowledge and drill and practice is primary pedagogy. This approach actively engages students in the construction of knowledge. To make this shift, teachers must enhance their knowledge of the subject matters and learn to use new teaching strategies.

Training may be used directly to increase the job skills of an individual or a group of individuals by teaching them to perform their task more efficiently and effectively. For training to operate efficiently and effectively as an input/output mediator, it must be focused on the individual and the situation as the need arises. Teachers are trained for more skills acquisition for better service delivery, (Ogunu, 2000).Through training, teachers update their knowledge and make abreast innovations in education. It also equipped teachers to face challenges of teaching-learning process and enhances their professional growth. ogunu adds that in order to facilitate upward movement and adequate professional competence, teachers’ training is necessary.

Odor (2000), highlights the following as some of the skills derived from teachers’ training and re-training: Teachers obtain higher academic and professional qualification in order to improve their position in the school organization hierarchy; teachers acquire academic and professional knowledge which help to meet up with the present and future challenges of their primary function; through training and re-training, teachers were kept in touch with their counterpart and new development within and outside the country in their professional growth. The acquisition of these skills also improves, the social and academic status of teachers in the society. Teachers have to go for training and re-training to make available quality teachers for implementation of educational programs in Nigeria.

Concept of Human Resource Development

Human Resource Development (HRD) as a concept is a framework for the expansion of human capital within an organisation through the development of both the organization and the individual to achieve performance improvement. According to Adam Smith in Wikipedia (2013), the capacity of individuals depends on their access to education. The same statement applies to organizations, themselves, but it requires a much broader field to cover both areas.

Development is an attempt to improve managerial effectiveness through a planned and deliberate learning process. According to Khan, Khan, and Mohamood (2012), human resource development is an important and very attentive receiving discipline of our present time. It is a relatively young academic discipline but an old and well established field practice.

It must be noted, however that, defining HRD has not been straight forward and the writers and researchers are continuously debating on the issue as there seems to be no consensus, despite the fact that efforts have been made to define it. Even then, Wikipedia (2013) defines Human Resource Development as the integrated use of training, organisation and career training efforts to improve individual, group and organisational effectiveness. HRD develops the key competencies that enable individuals in organisations to perform current and future jobs through planned learning activities. Groups within organisations use HRD to initiate and manage change; and ensure a match between individual and organisational needs. Rao year in Priyanka (2010) states that the scope of HRD is extended, at one side, to developing competencies of human resources by enhancing knowledge, building skills, changing attitude and teaching values, on the other side, creation of conditions through public policy, programmes and other interventions to help people to apply these competencies on their own and other benefits for making things happen.

According to Sofo and Rylatt (1999), never before in human history has there been such a widespread need to remain up to date and employable, while also helping people to improve their quality of life. The fact remains that for those who miss out on HRD assistance or training there is an ever-widening gap between those who have the skills and “know how” and those who do not. As a consequence, HRD is key player in helping to reduce this inequality. At the organizational level, in addition to controlling the gap between those who have and those who do not have, other issues come to play which needs attention; these include competitiveness, sustainability, social relationship and community responsiveness. Agreeing to this, Heathfield (2013), says that HRD includes such opportunities as employee training, employee career development, performance management and development, coaching, mentoring, succession planning, key employee identification, tuition assistance and organization development. On the whole, the main focus of all aspects of HRD is on developing the most superior workforce so that the organization and individual employee can accomplish their work goals for the service of customers. Organizations have many needs and opportunities for human resources or employee development, both within and outside of the workplace.

In summary, HRD can be formal such as in classroom training, a college course, or an organizational planned effort, Human Resource Development can be informal as an employee coaching by a manager. In other words, HRD does not occur within the organization or outside an organization, so the practice of HRD within an organization is inhibited or promoted upon the platform of the organization, mission, vision and values.

That is why HRD is not only a field of study but also a profession. Thus, HRD practitioners and academia focus on HRD as a process, (Wikipedia, 2013).

Retraining of Teachers as Human Resource Development for Effective Knowledge and Skill Acquisition in Nigeria Secondary Schools

Training is a means of teaching and learning given to trainees so as to acquire a particular skill and become academically fit. Development is the ability to refine trainee's competencies and learn new skills, adapt to new circumstances and to attain excellence in their organization.

Teacher's development is necessary in any institution, since the quality of education is determined mainly by the quality of teachers, the training and continuous development of teachers is therefore essential. The knowledge of teachers must be constantly up-dated in their subject areas as well as in classroom management. Igu (2007) emphasizes that staff in the school system are motivated and developed using various staff development schemes, such as study with pay and scholarship awards. These help them to improve their knowledge, skills and acquaint them with the new innovations in the field of education.

Ogba (2007) is of the view that any staff who failed to develop through training is most likely to become obsolete. Okafor (2006) states that staff in public and private schools should be provided with in-service training through work and study programmes to enable them acquire more professional qualifications, skills, knowledge and competencies for increased efficiency in performance of their primary functions. This provides an opportunity for staff to make-up for their inadequacies and thereby improves performance. Awopegbe (2003) and Adikpa (2007) point out that training, seminars, conferences, workshops afford opportunity for staff to enrich themselves and get abreast of new ideas. Igu (2007) advises that administrators of public secondary schools should sponsor their staff to conferences and even organize workshops.

Human Resource Development is a field which is concerned with organisational activities aimed at bettering the performance of individuals and groups in organisational settings. Training and development encompass three main activities: training education and development. These ideas are actual fact seem to be synonymous. However, to practitioners, they encompass separate but interrelated activities. While training is an activity focused upon and evaluated against the job an individual or group currently hold; education is an activity focussed upon the jobs that an individual may potentially hold in future, and is evaluated against these jobs; development, on the other hand, focuses upon the activities that the organisation employing the individual, or that the individual is part of, may partake in the future, as it is almost impossible to evaluate, (Wikipedia, 2013)

Education still remains the greatest and the most potent tool man has ever invented and developed to better his life. According to Tijani and BN Salihu (2010), despite the noble roles of teachers in the society, the teaching profession is not given the priority it deserves in the career choice of many educated job seekers in Nigeria. This, they say, is attributed to poor remuneration and dehumanizing working conditions. Many who found themselves in teaching for lack of "something better" end up leaving at the slightest opportunity. Some of the consequences of this on teacher education or training are brain drain and falling academic standard.

The National Policy on Education FRN (2004) clearly outlines the national philosophies as well as specific values that are intended to be inculcated into the pupils and students. By implications, all the goals and values are expected to be provided for within the school curriculum and to be taught by the teachers. Thus, Tijani et al (2010) conclude that teachers are therefore at the centre of the implementation of these noble values; for without them the policy will fail. This statement brings to mind the essence

for which the Universal Basic Education (UBE) was designed and implemented. Effective knowledge and skill acquisition, especially at the secondary school level are the main focus of UBE.

According to Unanka in Esere (2010), human resources as capital consist of the inherited and acquired abilities of labour with education being the primary source of acquiring the abilities. It is the energies, skills, talents and knowledge of people which are or which potentially can or should be applied to the production of goods or the rendering of useful services. This therefore presupposes that training and re-training of teachers in secondary schools will involve change in skills; knowledge, attitude and or social behaviour to enable them meet up with the challenges of instilling the necessary knowledge and skill to be acquired by the students in Nigerian Secondary Schools. It is against this background that Tijani et al (2010) observe that the Nigerian Philosophy on Education must be dedicated to the production of teachers that are capable of contributing to the achievement of the five National objectives of education, that is a free and democratic society; a just and egalitarian society; a united and self-reliant nation; a great and dynamic economy and a land filled with bright opportunities for all citizens.

In recognition of the roles that the teachers will play in the attainment of these objectives, the National Policy on Education has the following provisions with respect to teacher training:

- ❖ Production of highly motivated, conscientious and effective classroom teachers at all levels of education.
- ❖ Encouraging further the spirit of enquiry and creativity of teachers
- ❖ Providing teachers with the intellectual and potential background situation
- ❖ Enhance teacher's commitment to the teaching profession.

As clearly stated in the NPE, secondary education has been described as the form of education children receive after primary education and before the tertiary stage and it has two objectives; that is preparing recipients for higher education and useful living in the society. It was in order to achieve these that, the secondary education was divided into two; junior and senior secondary schools. The secondary education programme is designed to offer subjects with emphasis on pre-vocational and vocational so that the students are exposed to necessary basic skills that will enable them earn a living, that is, if they choose not to further their education. Expectedly, those who show promise will then proceed to the senior secondary school level and may be to tertiary the level too.

Kolawole (2012), observes that the emphasis on the one year break between the two tiers of secondary education was designed to be part of the major instructions that have been carried out in the sector. It was made part of the structure because it was thought that students, after their exposure to pre-vocational and technical subjects, would branch into technical colleges to develop their knowledge further. Kolawole laments that the one year has failed to serve any useful purpose, basically because no one has paid any attention to it largely because of ignorance of its benefit or have forgotten the reason for its inclusion in the system. Unfortunately, secondary schools have suffered acute shortage of qualified manpower in arts, social science and core science subjects.

The issues raised would very well have been taken care of through training and re-training of teachers for effective knowledge and skill acquisition in secondary schools in Nigeria. The provision made for the teachers training programme by the government in the NPE has only been that of lip service. What a teacher knows can make a great difference, what he does not know and cannot do can cause irreparable loss to the children under his care. This is why it is important to consider training and constant re-training of teachers as a paramount matter in the Nigerian education system.

Challenges to Re-training of Teachers in Secondary Schools

The numbers of qualified teachers on ground in secondary schools are inadequate to match with the enrolment of students. In support of this fact, Ogba (2008) reports that Parents Teachers Association (PTA) resorted to the employment of part-time teachers on the request of school administrators. Ogba also notes that many secondary schools today are filled with PTA teachers and National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) members whose devotion to duty cannot be guaranteed.

Asanibare (1996), states that the most creative modern curriculum and the most advanced technology will be in little use if weak misguided, incompetent, ignorant and unimaginative, teachers are allowed to teach because delinquent behaviour will be on the increase. Supporting this view, Mbakwem (2006) believes that outside students' diligent behaviour, other common identified problems of employing unqualified teachers leads to low academic achievement on the part of students and teachers. The National Policy on Education (FRN 2004: 38) also states the importance attached to teachers in National development and emphatically affirms that "no education system can arise above the quality of its teachers", thus the need to develop them through training such as in-service, conferences, workshops among others.

Concoran (1996) in a brief on education policy states that virtually every state in the country reform efforts are dramatically raising expectations for students and consequently for teachers. In response to these, reforms, initiatives, educators are being asked to master new skills and responsibilities to change their practice. To meet these new expectations, teachers need to deepen their content, knowledge and learn new methods of teaching. They need opportunities to develop, master and reflect on new approaches to working with children, all of these activities fall under the general heading of professional development.

However, if today's teachers are to be adequately prepared to meet the new challenges they are facing, this laissez-faire approach to professional development must come to an end. Human Resource Development does not occur without the organisation, so the practice of HRD within an organisation is inhibited or promoted upon the platform of the organisation's mission, vision and values. HRD as a process occurs within organisation and encapsulates: training and development, i.e. the development of human expertise to the purpose of improving performance. The focus of improved performance is for organisational development, i.e. empowering the organisation to take advantage of its human resource capital.

According to Onipe (2013), when one talks of quality and functionality of education in Nigeria today, he is talking of illiterate primary school leavers, unemployable University graduates, inefficient and disoriented teachers at all the three levels of education and poor educational infrastructure. One can go on and on enumerating various types of decay in the education sector. Onipe adds that, unfortunately when one can talk of teachers in Nigeria, particularly at the primary and secondary school levels of education, we are talking of the dregs of the society. Tijani et al (2010) in supporting this, state that despite the fact that teachers are the livewire of the society and are indispensable to the achievement of any meaningful development in it, the current status of teachers' education and teachers in Nigeria is pathetic, Factors attributable to this include poor pay, abject poor working conditions and apparent confusion in the implementation of innovation in teacher education programme in the country.

Some of the challenges to retraining of teachers are as follows:

Highly Lack of motivation: Teachers are looked down upon by government, the community, and even students. Thus, teachers are the ones whose salaries are always delayed; communities never recognise teachers; even the students look down on teachers as well as the teaching profession. In fact, teachers feel insulted when many suggest that they consider teaching for a profession. With this kind of experience, the teacher is left with a low morale and a low sense of motivation, thus the matter of self-improvement in the area of skill acquisition is far from their thoughts. Not when they are condemned by society to living at subsistence level.

Highly Existing Quality of Teachers: According to Ikeotuoye in Onipe (2013) the only males and females who go to colleges of education, do so reluctantly as they end up with poor performance in the school certificate examination. As soon as they obtain the Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE), most of them make frantic efforts to get into the university to read courses other than education. Partially, only those who fail in this effort still read education. The above has been the story of those who find themselves in the teaching profession. The fact remains that if and when people find themselves in the teaching profession, unhappy and the existing situation not encouraging, how do we expect them to concern themselves with courses that will enhance their skills in the classrooms. Thus, the society is left with people with inferiority complex, low self-esteem, dissatisfaction, bitterness, hunger and other demeaning factors.

Highly Irregular Re-training of Teachers: From the onset of the educational system in Nigeria, no serious efforts have been put in place for teacher retraining programmes. Lack of re-training inhibits effective teaching since knowledge is dynamic and a teacher with narrow experience will not be able to adequately teach the subject matter and will also be limited in his teaching method and strategies. It is for this reason that in advanced countries, periodically teachers are expected, as a matter of policy to undergo a teacher training and re-training programmes, as passing this course or training programmes determine ones fate to be retained or remain a teacher.

In addition, the question that arises is, are the crop of secondary school teachers set for retraining for the Nigerian educational system to succeed? Most of them have already lost interest in what they are doing, thus those in the rural areas have turned the students to their labourers in their farms, while in the urban areas wives of permanent secretaries and other government officials spend time travelling to purchase goods for sale.

Duration of Post graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE): The argument by many education scholars and managers has been that one year is not enough or sufficient to prepare one adequate for teaching service. Therefore, when talking about professionalization of teaching, Ozoji in Tijani et al (2010) observe that the criterion for standard of admission for teachers in tertiary training raises the problem or challenge of poor quality.

The Problem of Guidance and Counselling: Counselling form a very crucial aspect of human relations activities especially in the area of good conduct. Since the cardinal objective of the 6.9.3 system of education is to enable students to be independent, marketable, self-employed and self-sustaining then the education system especially at the secondary level needs functioning counselling education. The idea is that, according to, Esere (2010), trained counsellors posted to the nation's schools will assist students to

develop their maximum potentials and meet the challenges of life. To best appreciate the role of counselling in human resource development, the job description of the school counsellor as itemised by CASSON in Esere (2010) are highlighted as orientation of new students; educational counselling; Vocational counselling; Personal/social counselling; referral services; Follow-up services; Liason and Follow-up services and keeping of students' records etc. These aspects, which if implemented would have added greater values to Nigerian secondary education are left out. Rather trained counsellors are made to teach core subjects in the classroom leaving our delinquent students to fate.

Conduct of Teaching Practice: Teaching practice is believed to be an indispensable aspect of teacher education, yet according to Abdullahi (2010), research evidences abound that tend to confirm the ineffectiveness and inefficiency of teaching practice exercise in Nigerian education system. Given the concept of best practice, teaching practice if properly implemented is designed to bring about encouragement and good communication between teachers and learners, encourage interaction among learners; provide opportunities for active participation, timely and appropriate responses and feedback; encourage time and task; motivate learning by communicating expectations; respecting diverse talents and ways of learning, Arthur and Zelde in Abdullahi (2010). It therefore means teaching practice as a part of re-training process for teachers will be an effective means of sharpening the knowledge and skill of teachers in secondary schools. Evidently, the process as designed to aid young teachers into the profession is ineffective so it leaves the question of how re-training exercises will or may succeed.

Conclusion

This paper has discussed the importance of training and retraining of teachers for effective implementation of skills and knowledge acquired during training. Teachers are encouraged to go for further training to acquire new ideas, methods, research skills and new changes that will help them increase their academic status and professional development.

Recommendations

Based on the foregoing discussion the following recommendations are offered thus:

- I. The government, other stake-holders in education, corporate bodies, parents, individuals and all educationists should help in training and retraining of teachers for effective acquisition of skills and knowledge in secondary schools in Nigeria. This can be done through organizing conferences, workshops, refreshers' courses etc.
- II. School inspections has been criticised for its inadequacy to assist classroom teachers to improve their performance. But well trained inspectors will be able to identify teachers who need revisiting in the area of classroom management and pedagogical matters.
- III. The trained and qualified teachers should be placed properly in the field of their specialization so that they can put in their best.
- IV. The government and school administrators should provide incentives in form of promotion, allowances and fringe benefits to train or boost their morale and this will also encourage other teachers who are not trained to go for further training.
- V. Teachers should put in their bests by making use of the new ideas, new methods, research skills and changes they acquired during training, for these will help to improve the curriculum contents, professional development in schools and students' academic.

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