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Curriculum Implementation and Re-Training of Teachers in English Language: Pre-Conditions for Functional Nigerian Educational System

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Adebile, Ruth Foluke - Department of Special Education and Curriculum Studies, Adeyemi College of Education, Ondo.

Abstract

The educational system in Nigeria today has been largely imported. This is because no one country is self-reliant without utilizing other countries' technologies and good educational ideals. A consideration of a stable and functional educational system should involve consistent re-training of teachers for efficient implementation of the curriculum for Nigerian schools. Consistent development and re-training of teachers in English language will improve capability of teachers for efficient use of the curriculum, being the implementers of the educational programmes. As such, there is the need for teachers' re-training programmes and adequate supply of human and material resources for educational productivity and consolidation of the Nigerian educational system. It is the concern of this paper to consider the concept of training and re-training of teachers in English language, efficient curriculum implementation by professionally trained teachers and curriculum innovation for qualitative teaching outcome.

Introduction

In any developing country, there is an ever increasing need for re-training of teachers in order to facilitate efficient and effective implementation of curriculum for teaching productivity and functional Nigerian educational system. The rate of academic development and the increasing demand with regards to knowledge require a constantly and regularly updated teaching

workforce that is, teachers that are professionally trained and have acquired skills with regard to the changing job content and environment. To meet these requirements, teacher training must become a life-long process. Also, effective and functional curriculum implementation involves professionally trained teachers because they constitute the vital force as part of the implementers of the curriculum at every stage of the educational programme. Therefore, teachers are important factor in educational development. The quality of teachers determines the quality of their output. As such, no educational system can be consolidated without the development of the teachers that will implement the programme.

The National Policy on Education (2004); section 8, stated that "in-service training shall be developed as an integral part of continuing teacher education and shall also take care of inadequacies..." The policy stressed the importance of in-service training and further stated that "efforts towards the improvement of quality education at the primary and secondary levels shall include regular in-service training programmes for teachers and head teachers".

These two policy statements underscore the necessity of regular training and re-training of teachers for consolidating the Nigerian educational system. This will enhance continuing teacher development and improvement of the quality of education offered to learners at primary and secondary levels. It is also a pointer to the fact that education, even for teachers, is a continuous and life-long process.

Therefore, it is hoped that effective management of teachers through provision of funds, redistribution of teachers among schools, and re-training will not only improve the quality of education and consolidate the educational system; but that the curriculum for the Nigerian schools will be effectively and efficiently implemented towards the fulfillment of educational goals and objectives.

The Concept of Training in the Teaching Profession

The term "training" implies exercising some repetitive actions. It aims at developing limited ability or skill rather than the development of the entire personality (Tella, 2004:9). Training of teachers is the process of imparting to someone the skill to perform some operations which may be mental or physical, the acquisition of which may or may not be accompanied by

understanding of the principles on which the operation depends (Schofield, 1974). It is also the process or a set of activities aimed at making a person efficient at the performance of a given task. In other words, it could be understood that doctors, lawyers and teachers are trained rather than being educated. Teachers are included here because, their preparation is directed towards acquisition of certain special skills, and the evidence of learning in the classroom, is the successful performance skills of the teacher termed pedagogue.

In the teaching profession, the teacher constitutes a critical factor in the success of any educational system. Many laudable educational initiatives have failed mainly because they did not take due account of the "teacher factor". The quality of the teacher, to a large extent, determines the quality of the educational system (Rogers 1973). It should be recognized that, production of quality teachers will enhance the consolidation of educational system in Nigeria. Therefore, training and re-training of teachers in English language will enhance quality teaching and better teachers' productivity and consolidation of the Nigerian educational system.

Efficient Curriculum Implementation for Qualitative Teaching Outcome

The comprehensive nature of the secondary school curriculum necessitates the training and re-training of specialist teachers, especially in English Language. It should be noted that, there had been a rush for the expansion of facilities for training English language teachers in Nigeria since the late 1970s and between 1977 and 1985, efforts have been geared towards the raising of the quality and quantity of manpower needs for the efficient implementation of the curriculum and qualitative teaching outcome (Osokoya 1997, pp. 104).

Nigeria has a laudable educational system like many other countries of the world. Each country has its peculiar characteristics and thereby adopts its policies to meet its own social, economic, political and cultural needs (Fatile, 2005). As a result, each country needs different strategies to realize the basic policies which is crucial to the development of education in the general education policies because of the pressing need for more sophisticated type of education.

The National Policy on Education states the five objectives of education viz-a-viz the building of:

- A free and democratic society.
- A just and egalitarian society.
- A united strong and self-reliant nation.
- A great and dynamic economy, and
- A land of bright and full opportunities for all citizens (NPE, 2004).

Two of the above objectives called for pragmatism of re-education. That is, practical or vocational aspects of education coupled with craft knowledge. This kind of educational ideas and objectives need be consolidated through effective re-training of professional teachers in English language. This will also help in determining the quality of teachers' productivity, and teaching outcome.

Teachers' productivity is an important factor in educational development and also a vital factor in consolidating the Nigerian educational system. Re-training of teachers determines the quality of the out-put and no nation can progress without the effective development and management of teachers (Sofoyeke 2001). Therefore, training and re-training of English language teachers as a pre-condition for functional educational system in Nigeria is very necessary because English being a functional language has so many aspects which every qualified English language teacher should be able to master for effective teaching productivity.

The enhancement of qualitative teaching outcome will involve the improvement of the quality of English language teachers to meet the needs of the learners, fulfill educational goals and satisfy the need of the society at large.

The major problem militating against the smooth running and consolidation of Nigerian system of education is the implementation. This may be due to lack of certain resources either human or material. There are some problems aligned with the 6-3-3-4 system of education; these include the curriculum problem. Although there is a well defined curriculum on paper for the programme, but one cannot at present talk of good outcome of this system; especially in the lower secondary school education since the inception of the programme.

There is also the problem of accommodating students who have finished the first section of the secondary school system. Lack of classrooms, technical workshops, laboratories, and other needed materials make it impossible to

implement to the letter what was written in the curriculum. Also, are the problems of getting well-trained teachers to install some educative machines for effective teaching and learning and the idea of using the foreign technicians' results to heavy spending on the part of the government. More importantly, is the mixing of the old 6-5-4 system of education with the new system. This has complicated the whole system even the curriculum. It is difficult to explain the idea of junior and senior secondary schools to the populace. These and other problems hindered the smooth running of the Nigerian educational system.

The Role of English Language Teachers in Productive Curriculum Implementation

A teacher is a person who consciously and deliberately organizes systematic instructions for learners/students. That is, a teacher imparts knowledge to others. A teacher therefore supposes to be the one that should exclusively be regarded as honorable members of the society. This is because teachers are the molders of life and character of the young citizens through various training programmes in our schools; they occupy strategic positions in curriculum planning, development, and implementation (Dada, 1999:5). Therefore, for functional educational system in Nigeria; teachers in English language should be recognized as a vital consolidating factor sustaining the position of Nigerian educational system. The curriculum is being interpreted, moderated and disseminated by the teacher through the English language.

This shows that the English language held a very important position in Nigeria. It is the national language occupying the place of daily interaction and as a medium of instruction. It is to be found that English plays a vital role in Nigeria to such extent that, the language had almost been natives. It was also observed by Akindele and Adegbite (2000), that, "English is an elitist language in Nigeria" since it is the means of acquiring the formal education. English is synonymous with formal education in Nigeria; the ability to speak English, places the speaker high on the social ladder than one who is unable to speak it; and the productive implementation of the curriculum is effective done by professional English language teachers.

On the whole, English language is the means by which teachers can implement the educational system effectively and productively. Teachers who have this vital responsibility of implementing the curriculum need be adequately prepared for the great task.

Views on Teacher's Preparation and Productivity in English Language

As it has been examined earlier, the English language plays a vital role in Nigeria education and her political economy. As such, the interest and attitudes of teachers in English language towards effective, functional and vibrant outcome or productivity is worthy of serious examination.

By the launching of the Universal Primary Education (U.P.E.) scheme in 1976, Nigerians had six years to prepare for the next stage which was the launching of the junior secondary school scheme. The curriculum at this stage is more diversified and emphases are placed on the teaching of pre-vocational subjects in addition to two Nigerian languages. Therefore, the comprehensive nature of the secondary school programme necessitates adequate preparation of teachers for effective productivity in English language (Osokoya 1997, pp. 103).

Teachers' productivity is an important factor in educational development and also a vital factor in consolidating the Nigerian educational system. Training and re-training of teachers determines the quality of the out-put and no nation can progress without the effective development and management of teachers. A teacher of English language is a person who consciously and deliberately organizes systematic instructions for learners. Therefore, her competence, effectiveness and efficiency in the teaching of the subject constitutes a critical factor in the success of the Nigeria educational system.

Training and re-training of English language teachers as a pre-condition for functional educational system in Nigeria is very necessary because English being a functional language in Nigeria has so many aspects which every qualified English language teacher should be able to master for effective teaching productivity.

Re-Training of Teachers in English Language and Functional Educational System in Nigeria

Re-training of teachers on the job in English language in order to enhance functional educational system in Nigeria and to improve the process of teaching and learning is very important in quality education.. This is the process of training and development aims at increasing the ability of individuals and groups to contribute to organizational effectiveness. While re-training is designed to improve the English language teacher's skills also development programmes are designed to educate employees beyond the

requirements of their present position so that they will be prepared for promotion and be able to take a broader view of their role in the organization. The need to train and to re-train teachers in English language who are being promoted is self-evident, every job usually require training in new skills. For effective productivity of teachers and consolidation of Nigeria educational system, teachers in English language must be effectively trained and re-trained (Akinbote, 1999).

Training and re-training of English language teacher is in the ethnics of the profession. This will improve methods, skills, and procedures to enhance their out-puts, efficiency and productivity. Over the years when teachers were employed in large number, induction trainings were organized for them by the Teaching Service Commission but of recent, employment is scarcely and secretly done and hence the few newly employed teachers do not undergo any form of induction.

Curriculum Review and Innovation by the English Language Professional Teachers

Gidado (2000) observed and identified "inappropriate and irrelevant curriculum" as a major factor hindering the achievement of educational goals (pp. 8). Dada (1999) advocated for curriculum innovation, he said "when curriculum is not achieving what is expected to achieve and when the conditions for which a curriculum was established have changed considerably, then achieving qualitative teaching outcome will be hindered" (pp. 105).

It should be realized that basic education must be tailored towards meeting the needs of the learner and the community in which he/she lives. Teaching and learning of English language will not count for much, if it cannot equip the beneficiaries with skills for life long learning and the survival of the educational system in Nigeria. Therefore, the English language curriculum should be reviewed and enriched in order to integrate the learner into the community rather than to alienate the learner from the community. Hence, the urgent need to review and enrich English language curriculum to ensure that they meet individual, community and nation needs as well as consolidating the educational system. Enriching curriculum for functional and qualitative teaching outcome will bring new challenges and improvement to technological advancement that is related to language teaching and appropriate language skills.

Reviewing the English language curriculum should include research development; research has not been given its well-deserved attention in the area of curriculum development and implementation. Efforts must be made to accord priority to research as a catalyst for change and teachers' effectiveness and productivity in teaching English language as well as in other subjects. These and other factors will help in consolidating the educational system of the nation.

Conclusion

This paper has highlighted the various means by which English teachers can improve themselves on the job to influence their productivity and to be able to implement the educational programmes effectively. It should be borne in mind that teachers constitute a critical factor in the success of any educational system. Many laudable educational initiatives have failed mainly because they did not take due account of the "teacher factor" especially when it has to do with the language of instruction and effective means of implementing the curriculum. The quality of the teacher, to a large extent, determines his/her productivity and the achievement of educational goals. It is therefore recommended that training and re-training of teacher should be given a vital consideration for efficient curriculum implementation and re-training will improve quality of teachers' production in education.

Problems hindering production of quality teachers such as funding, poor quality of training, low motivation, lack of quality control and lack of in-service training should be seriously considered and urgent solutions should be provided with the hope of improving the quality of education through effective management of teachers on the job. The major problems militating against professionalism in teaching especially the effective management of teachers should be taken care of for the effective productivity in teaching. The problem of inadequate provision of human, material and financial resources for curriculum development and implementation should be eroded. To revitalize education and consolidate educational system, government should provide enough fund, pay teachers' salaries, allowances, pensions and gratuities promptly. Curriculum review and innovation should be a consistent programme. Teachers' development programmes should be established, encouraged and should be given priority for functionality in the teaching profession.

It is hoped that when the curriculum is being enriched and standardized according to the goals of education, and teachers are effectively developed, reinforced and re-distributed according to their disciplines, there will be improvement in the quality of education, stability and consolidation of educational system in Nigeria.

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