IMPROVING TEACHER PROFESSIONALISM AS A MEANS FOR QUALITATIVE SCIENCE TEACHING IN NIGERIAN SCHOOL

JACQUELINE UKAEGBU BROWN

Department Of Primary Education Studies, Federal College Of Education, Kontagora, Niger State

Abstract- The place and role of the teacher is a general importance in any society whose educational orientation is development, directed towards qualitative teacher education in order to achieve its educational goals is not a subject of controversy. That the teacher is society's trustees in the development socio-economic, political and moral development via the education system of any nation cannot be over statement. Thus, every society's educational goals and aspiration as well as the successes or otherwise of the system, depends to a great extent on the teacher, remain a fact which does not lend itself easily to disputes. It is on this back-drop that the paper examined quality in education, role of the teacher in educational goal attainment, means of improving the professional training of the teacher, implication on the science and non science teachers and suggestion on the way forward are offered.

Keywords- Professionalism, Qualitative Science Teaching, Goal Attainment, Educational Orientation.

I. INTRODUCTION

Technology has changed the way people live, work and learn. The use of technology in education is one of the main challenges for education policing makers. (Durosaro, 2006) Traditional methods of education are no longer able to meet the needs of today's learners. Improving teacher professionalism provide opportunities and ability to tailor learning to the individual. (Poor, 2007) In view of the above statement, there is need for continuing education of teachers to make them more professionals in order to make the teaching and learning more meaningful. However, professional development of teachers has attracted increasing attention in recent years (Craft, 2000). This is faced with rapid change, demand for high standards, which calls for improving quality of teachers and the need for update and to improve their skills through professional development.

Recently, there are pressures at national and school levels of professionalism in science and teaching. Education of teachers through professional learning is recognized as being the major catalyst for change (Russdl, 2006). Teacher on continuous training will build more confidence, competence and development in using the appropriate skills in handling curriculum. The research on teachers education, has consistently stressed the need to regularly provide opportunities for teachers to improve their knowledge of the subject matter they teach and the teaching skills they learned in pre-service courses they attended.

In Nigeria today, education is the biggest industry existing and it employs more workers than can be found in all other sectors put together. Durosaro (2006) stated that the education sector serves more clientele than other industry. Therefore, the problems of the education system are problems of every individual or household either directly or indirectly. He added that the factor of the teacher in education cannot be over-emphasized. In the vein, the National Policy on Education (2004) asserts that no education system can grow beyond the quality of its teachers. Hence, there is need to appraise the nations system of teacher education with a view to ensuring adequate supply of quality teachers in the right mix to our schools. if the teaching profession is viewed by vicissitudes, it then means that all is not well with the present education enterprise (Ojo, 1995). He added that an education system that is being propelled by professionally unqualified or dissatisfied teachers will surely collapse, especially science education, since the development of any nation is to a larger extent based on it scientific and technological development.
However, with the Nigerian Union of Teachers (NUT), the Teachers Registration Council (TRC), the Institute of Certified Teachers of Nigeria (ICTN) and the Science Teachers Association of Nigeria (STAN) in place with the logical procedure of raising quality of teachers and teaching profession; they are highly recommended. (Ogulu, 2002).
This paper therefore, attempts to address the professionalism of the teacher as a means of improving quality in Nigerian Schools.

II. RATIONAL FOR IMPROVING TEACHER PROFESSIONALISM

The speed at which new knowledge is pushing away the old one makes the need for active and continuous learning by the teacher, the tool for change one of the key elements of teacher quality, is the provision of adequate opportunities for personal growth and professional development.
Research on teachers' education has constantly stressed the need to regularly provide opportunities for teachers to improve their knowledge of the subject matter they teach and the teaching skills they learnt in the pre-service courses they attended. This is based on the recognition of the fact that we live in a rapidly changing world such that whatever knowledge and

skills teachers acquire in their pre-service training becomes stale very fast as new challenges and realities merge in the socio-economic and political environment.

III. IMPLICATION OF PROFESSIONAL TRAINING TO THE SCIENCE TEACHERS

There is need to ensure training and retraining of would be science teacher because it is these products that would be employed or are employed to teach in our schools.

The objectives of training and retraining of science teachers on a continuous basis as observed by Oroanya (2001) include:

- The provision of necessary content background needed to teach
- The provision of more content background at a higher level since the teacher is expected to be more knowledgeable in the subject he/she teachers
- The provision of sound training in methodology of teaching science

These objectives he added could be expanded and made elastic to accommodate such areas as test construction, test scoring and improvisation of materials. Advantage can always be taken of the long vacation to organize and attend seminars, workshops, and conferences as a continuous process of retraining.

IV. ADVANTAGES OF IMPROVING EACHING PROFESSIONALISM

According to Madu (2002), professionalism has the following advantages;

- It improves the job performance skills of the whole staff or group of staff;
- It improves the job performance skills of an individual teacher
- It extends the experience of an individual teacher for career development or promotion
- It develops the professional knowledge and understanding of an individual teacher
- It enables teachers to anticipate and prepare for change
- It enables practitioners to widen their understanding |of society, especially in sciences.
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V. EFFECTIVE PROCESS OF TEACHER ROFESSIONALISM

To ensure teacher professionalism, there has to be a matching of appropriate professional development to a particular professional need. This 'fit' between the development needs of the teacher and the selected activity is critically important in ensuring that there is a positive impact at the school and classroom level (Harris, 2001). Where teacher development is poorly conceptualized, insensitive to the concern of individual participants and make little effort to relate learning experiences to workplace conditions, they make little impact upon teachers or pupils (Day, 1999). For the past years in Nigeria, training of teacher has been a major concern. Fafunwa (1974) argued that teacher education continues to be the key to educational development in Nigeria and elsewhere.

VI. SUGGESTIONS AND ECOMMENDATIONS

Haven x-rayed improving teacher professionalism as means of improving qualitative teaching in our schools, it is pertinent at this juncture to proffer some suggestions for improvement on the current practice

- Teaching more than any other profession requires wisdom, commitment and zeal, it should not be left in the hands of unqualified hands. So something has to be done to improve on teacher education programmes
- The human resource factor of the development of the nation requires that teachers be given recognition and encouragement through reward system
- Concerted efforts should be made by all tiers of government to train and retrain their teachers as well as recruit adequate and qualified ones in schools
- For sound teacher education, there is the need to ensure that the teacher trainers in teacher education institutions are themselves professionals
- Educational planners should look into the possibility of re-introducing the teachers college for professional training to flow as it used to be
- For globalization and changing nature of the society, there is a need for periodic review of the teacher education curriculum. This review must be comprehensive and participatory of all stakeholders in education to ensure social relevance.

CONCLUSION

Generally, it is accepted that teachers are the major determinants of the quality of education. If the teachers in any nation are not committed, not inspired, not motivated, lazy, immoral and antisocial, the entire nation is doomed. If the teachers are not sound in their disciplines and impart wrong information, they are not only worthless but dangerous.

Teacher education is what makes the difference between a teacher and a cheater in the teaching job. The quality of the teacher education, must be able to equip the teachers with the relevant basic and specialized goals.

Finally, as long as there is continuous shortage of qualified teachers at all levels of education in the country, so will development continue to elude the nation.

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