Strategies for Training Competent Technical Teachers: Implication for National Development

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Abstract

Much had been written on how technical teachers are being produced in order to teach in the secondary schools and beyond. However, literature reviews have shown that there are no current information as to how competent technical teachers are being produced. Hence the essence of this paper amongst others is to give a highlight on how technical teachers are being produced in order to teach in the secondary schools and beyond. In conclusion, the paper suggested that there is a need to employ competent technical teachers to teach in the secondary schools. The technical teacher would also be required to update his or her knowledge from time to time as the need arose. The paper recommends that since the performance of students in the secondary school depends largely on the teachers' effectiveness, there was need for teachers to be adequately trained.

Several efforts have been made by the Nigerian government in the last thirty decades to train technical teachers. To this effect scholarships are being awarded to individuals who are willing to become professional. The essence of training technical teachers cannot be overemphasized. There is need for the technical teachers to posses the skills of teaching above those to the students whom they teach. The national policy on education (NPE, 1985 Revised) stated the major objective of teachers' education, as that of producing a highly motivated, conscientious and efficient classroom teachers for all levels of our educational system. The policy rightly pointed out that no educational policy can rise above the quality of its teachers. There is therefore the need for teachers to continue to learn to the job.
Literature review shows that not all technical teachers who engaged in the teaching of technical subjects and in introductory technology in Nigeria, are qualified to do so (Olaitan 1996). Some of the technical teachers are holder of OND and HND. These categories of teachers do not possess the pedagogues of teaching (Olaitan, 1996). Hence the need for them to be retrained in the art of teaching.

It is on record that several attempts have been made by the Nigerian government to improve the working conditions of technical teachers. The technical teachers are now be given the opportunity to refresh their art of teaching. This gesture will go a long way to improve the teachers' competences.

The Essence of Training and Retraining of the Technical Teachers

In every profession those who engaged in it are often being trained. The lawyers, the doctors, the engineers, the pharmacies and of course teachers are suppose to be trained in the art of their professions. The technical teachers are not also left out. Those who engaged in the teaching of technical subjects such as: metal work, electricity/electronics, automobile technology, drafting, building have to be trained in the art of imparting knowledge to its beneficiaries. Except the technical teacher is trained, he or she cannot effectively impact knowledge. The NCCE, (1988) states one of the objectives of training the technical teachers is to equipped them with the skill of teaching above those of the students whom they teach.

Evidence abound in educational psychology literature (Bature, 2002) that knowledge and competence acquired but not used for exercise for a period of time would definitely diminish and exterminate. The realization and sustenance of competence therefore depends largely on frequency of practice of exercise. It is unfortunate that some technical teachers often times do not realize the implications of knowledge obsolesce. Hence the need for such teachers to be encouraged to overcome their weaknesses, through appropriate competency based educational programme. Okwenu (1996) maintained that teaching is a tedious job. He reinstated that the teacher is expected to play the role of a technician, a model, a dispenser of knowledge, craftsman, a cultivator, a good manager. He Concluded that as a teacher, one supposed to possess as much as possible certain qualities which should be both professional and personal. Some of these qualities would include master of subject matters, methods and psychology of learning.

Some other areas in which the technical teacher would need additional training as pointed out by Bature (2002) may include the following:

Planning of lesson notes, presentation of the lesson, effective classroom control, effective communication skills, good human relationship, guidance and counseling of student, assessment , techniques, audio- visual aids, extra-curricular activities, child development, motivation, innovation methods, test administration and scoring of students mark as well as reporting student's achievement.
The Mode of Training the Technical Teachers

Most occupations required some manipulative skill and the application of some technical knowledge. However, the extent of skill and technical knowledge required varies with specific occupation. Those occupations that are concerned with design, manufacture, sale, installation and servicing of a wide range of products required more manipulative skills than those skills necessary to handle tools and instrument (Okorie and Ezeji, 1988). Thus the training of technical teachers differs from those of liberal art subjects. According to Olaitain (1996) he cautioned that the training of the technical teachers requires the use of machines, facilities, tools, equipment and practical materials. He further stated that technical education is often capital expensive. However, Olaitan concludes that the benefits of technical education are worthwhile. Hence, the need of these categories of teachers to be accorded priority.

Because of the special roles play by the technical teachers in the society, most of the literature reviewed indicated that technical teachers' education though was late arrival in the school curriculum is now playing a dominant role in technological transformation. This singular art has necessitated the need for the formal training of technical teacher in most countries of the world including Nigeria. Conventionally, technical teachers' education programmes are subdivided into one of the following categories.

1. **The NCE (T) Programme:** This is designed for the junior secondary schools (JSS) the technical courses at the JSS are prevocational and also intend to expose the learner to career awareness investigation and exploration. Emphasis in the education of the NCE (T) teacher is on semi skills development and includes related sciences and communication skills.

2. **The T.T.C Programme:** Is geared toward the production of teachers for the technical schools /colleges. Entrants into these programmes are required to have achieved the required level of skills knowledge plus experience (ITF) in their field of specialization.

3. **The B.ED (T):** Those who obtain these certificates are expected to teach at the senior secondary school because of the broad based nature or the B.ED (T) programmes.

4. **Post- Graduate programme:** Those who obtain or benefit from post graduate programme are expected to take up position on post secondary and tertiary institutions. Those technical teachers having acquired one or all of these qualifications at the pre-service training. He or she is expected from time to time to keep update of the knowledge and skills acquired because of knowledge obsolesce.

As to why the reason of the technical teacher, to be involved in in-service (Erickson and Rose, 1976) has this to say: the pace of change in education and social trends there is great need to lighten the syllabus and increasing the intensity of
initial training to keep your mind fresh because the teacher who ceases to learn will soon find that he has cease to teach as he should.

**Strategies for the Training of Technical Teachers for Effectiveness**

Technical teachers in the secondary school could be produced in the following ways:

1. Pre-service training phase
2. On-the job experience phase
3. In-service training phase

**The Pre-Service Training Phase**

Here the technical teachers is been trained in the art of teaching. It is the initial training given to the teachers who want to become a professional trained and qualified technical teacher. This phase of training emphasizes the basic skills teaching. The teacher at this stage is expected to have a broad knowledge of the teaching profession. It is here that the teacher is taught to have first hand experience of what is expected of him in the classroom, situation (Farrant, 1988). On completion of the initial training a certificate is often awarded to beneficiaries to enable them gain employment opportunity.

**On the Job Experience Phase**

The technical teacher having been employed has some experiences in the field of his specialty. As the teacher is employed to teach he would be continued to learn on the Job.

**In-Service Training Phase**

The technical teacher would need to keep update of his teaching competences when the need of doing so arose. It is at this particular moment that the teacher refresh his minds to the new ideas of imparting knowledge to his students whom he teaches. Often time the aims of in-service training as stated by Bature (2002) include the following: to have the update knowledge about new development, to have a continuous growing of intellectual, to give much needed help to teacher to eliminate deficiencies and so on. Furthermore, in-service training should be for all categories of teachers irrespective of teaching experience and qualifications. All of these will go along to boost the technical teachers’ competences. There is need therefore, to always organize in-service activities for technical teachers for effectiveness.

**Conclusion**

In conclusion therefore, there is need of the technical teacher to be trained and re-trained in the art of teaching. This will go along way to boost their morals. The technical teacher is required throughout his teaching career to always identify their areas of weaknesses and improve upon it.
**Recommendations**

1. Since the performance of students in the secondary school depends largely on the teacher effectiveness, there was need for teacher to be adequately trained.

2. Technical teachers should from time to time identify their areas of strength and weakness and improve when necessary.

3. There was need for technical teacher's employers to always identify ways of improving their staff performances on-the - Job.

4. The government of the day should always organize in service activities for all categories of technical teachers in areas such as:
   
   i. Manipulative and technical skills.
   ii. Teaching methods
   iii. Classroom/workshop management
   iv. Evaluation techniques.
   v. Guidance roles
   vi. Human relations
   vii. Professional roles.

5. There should be adequate provision of machines, facilities materials, equipment and tools

6. The training of technical teachers is often capital expensive. Hence, government should provide adequate funds for the training of technical teachers at all levels of our educational system.

7. Technical teachers should be encouraged to learn-on-the job experience.

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