INNOVATION IN TEACHING AS A PROFESSION
AND IT’S CHALLENGES IN NIGERIA.

By

GIFT UCHENNA NWIYI, (Ph.D.)
Department of Educational Foundations & Management,
Rivers State University of Education,
Rumuolumeni, Port Harcourt.

DAGOGO A. F. DAMINABO
Department of Educational Foundations & Management,
Rivers State University of Education,
Rumuolumeni, Port Harcourt.

and

Dr. CATHRINE OSUJI
Department of Educational Foundations & Management,
Rivers State University of Education,
Rumuolumeni, Port Harcourt.

Abstract

Education as an instrument for development has been the great force used to bring about positive changes in the society. This is why government, individuals, cooperate organizations have been playing significant roles for the effective development of the nation. Teachers are one of the major stakeholders in the teaching-learning situation that brings the change hence teaching should be left in the hands of those trained in teacher education programmes because of the demands of the job as teaching has been professionalized. Therefore ICTs equipment is very essential for a better performance of the professional teachers and students alike in a bid for better performance. The teachers should adopt students’ centred method of teaching as to allow the students explore the learning environment for the achievement of the overall goals of education. The authors in their recommendation suggested among others that the government should implement practically the policy which stated that NCE should be the least qualification for teaching in Nigeria.
Teachers especially in developing countries have long demanded to be given professional status. Before now it was like a dumping ground, where anyone who cannot get a desired job take teaching as a least resort or means of income (Nemine, 2008). Personal experience shows that even secondary school graduates at a time entered into the teaching field just to while away time while waiting for admission into tertiary institutions. These classes of people have not had any form of teacher training education and do not have prior knowledge of learning theories and principles or acquisition of teaching skills and methods. This made the teaching filed a place for all, which does not reflect or portray teaching as a profession. According to Okeke (2004), trend analysis of the educational development in Nigeria points to the fact that there had been dearth of teachers with requisite aptitude, sufficient education, and specialized skills for the effective performance of the crucial role of teaching in the classroom.

However, in recent time teaching has gone beyond what ordinary person along the street can enter into, because it has to do with professionalism and specialization.

This is inline with the guideline of National Policy on Education (FRN, 2004) section 8, sub-section 70B outlined that the minimum teaching qualification into the teacher profession shall be Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE). This is a proof that teaching is professionalized in Nigeria. The National Policy on Education (FRN, 2004) section 8, sub-section 74 and 75 outlined that:

> Teacher education shall continue to take cognizance of changes in methodology and in the curriculum. Teachers shall be regularly exposed to innovations in their profession. In service training shall be development as an integral part of continuing teacher education.

Laudable as there provisions may see experience shows that there are basic implications and challenges inherent in an attempt to really reposition or refocus and teaching profession for sustainability and national development. Against this background therefore this paper address pertinent issues such as the innovations in its challenges for the overall national development.

**Features/Characteristics of Teaching as a Profession**

Teachers are the major actors in implementing the educational objectives and policies and as such be respected and recognized in the counting, because when something goes wrong within the educational system, the teachers is first to be blamed (Koko & Nwiyi, 2007). Teaching as a profession has the following characteristics according to Nimnie 2008:

- Period of specialized training: Teachers go through formal school e.g. colleges of education and other institutions running educational courses.
- Code of conduct: Teaching has its recognized code of professional ethics and conduct.
A definite body of knowledge: Teaching is founded on a body of intellectual theory and research that is constantly being expanded by research and thinking within the profession.

Professional organization: Teaching has a body of professional colleagues who share the same ethical codes for instance ASUU in University and COEASU in Colleges of Education and the Nigerian Union of Teachers (NUT).

Control of Entry: Teaching like every other profession has control of entry. The Nigeria Certificate in Education is the least qualification of entry into the teaching profession.

Teaching is highly recognized in the society as a profession both within and outside the country.

Teaching has autonomy and independence as a profession. It has the ability to exercise its own leadership and pursue goals for the welfare and general welfare of its members and the development of the body.

Continuing education: As in any other profession, teachers are required to improve on the job and update their knowledge in service grading such as seminars, workshops, degree courses, post graduate studies and so on are also integral part of the teaching profession that ensures professional improvement.

Innovations and Challenges in Teaching Profession

There are lots of challenges in educational policies and practices in Nigeria as it affects teacher education and teaching. At times such changes may affect the course content, mode of production and even the supply and demand of professional teachers (Koko & Nwiyi, 2007).

There is a change in pedagogy which recognizes a shift from the traditional method of teaching and learning to the modern approaches which emphasize students centered teaching and learning than teacher centered. This change in teaching and learning method do not recognize the teacher alone to be the custodian and distributor of knowledge rather it lays emphasis on participatory or democratic teaching and learning approach. This approach emphasized that students should be accepted by the teachers as partners in the teaching learning situations. This will involve moving away from a rigid and prescriptive approach in teaching learning exercise. According to Koko and Nwiyi, the challenge in this modern approach of teaching is that the professional teacher must recognize that “it takes two to tangle” and the earlier the students are made part of the teaching and learning process, the better learners exude enthusiasm in learning and achievements.

Another area of concern to the authors of this paper is the use of modern technologies in teaching and learning such as the use of information and communication technologies. Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) have become keytods which has a revolutionary impact of how we the world and how we live in it (Ololube, 2009). However, this revolution is not widespread and need to be strengthened to reach a large percentage of the population especially in our educational sectors which
is very essential for the overall national development. ICTs provides opportunities for students, teachers, academic and non academic staff to communicate with one another more effectively during formal and informal teaching and learning (Ololube, 2009).

Consequently, ICTs have introduced a new era in traditional methods of teaching and offering new teaching and learning experiences to both teachers and students, hence Nigeria education and teacher education in particular should take advantage of this capability to provide easy access of information, since technologies enable the visualization of educational materials in an innovative and realistic manner. The ICTs materials that enable the professional teacher teach effectively are: the computer, internet software.

The challenges inherent in this innovation in teaching include among others: Teachers need to learn how to integrate ICTs into the classroom activities and school structure. Therefore, teacher training is crucial using ICTs, because ICTs are tools that on the one hand can facilitate teacher training and on the other hand help them to take full advantage of the potential of technology to enhance students learning (UNESCO, 2003). Another challenge in the use of ICTs in teaching and learning is the expensive nature of the materials. Again, the major financer of the educational sector in Nigeria is the government has not done much in the purchase of these equipments. And some teachers have not seen some of these materials, but they have only heard of them hence cannot be used to enhance high productivity among the professional teachers.

**Professional Qualification and Teaching Competencies**

According to Ololube, mediocrity in education is unacceptable and it is not in the best interest of both students and the larger world. Teachers have to be academically qualified as well as professionally competent to be able to perform their prescribed roles. Banjo in Ololube (2009) reveals that teachers as much as possible should be qualified, suitable and interested in the teaching profession. They should cultivate the right attitude, be dedicated to duty, and professionally qualified. This will help them successfully teach the children of today who will become leaders of tomorrow. No wonder teaching is professionalized in Nigeria, in recent times; hence National Policy on Education (2004) stipulates that the least qualification of teaching staff in our schools should be National Certificate in Education (NCE).

Again, the establishment of Teachers Registration Council is a contributing factor that professionalized teaching for effective teaching and learning.

The challenge is enormous inspite of these efforts in professionalizing teaching quacks are still in the field of teaching. The question remains “who will bell the cat” which government and private individuals can stand their feet to sack or suspend non educationist in the teaching-learning business? Until this question is answered, the
involvement of unprofessional teachers in teaching will continue to draw back in terms of improvement, competencies and high productivity in our educational sectors.

Conclusion
There is the endemic problem of recruitment, training and retraining of teachers with requisite aptitudes, skills, and specialized knowledge to cope with the demands of the teaching profession. Some of the recruiting teaching personnel are not adequately trained for the job they are expected to do. The use of ICTs in teaching will help for the effective performance of the teachers and students alike, but they are also in short supply in schools which hampers the effectiveness of the professional teachers.

Teaching is professionalized in Nigeria therefore any unprofessional teacher till in the field should be disengaged for the growth of the educational sector and the development of the nation.

Recommendations
The authors wish to advance the following recommendations for the purpose of sustaining the teacher education and teaching profession in particular:
1. Government to provide ICT facilities in teacher educational institutions.
2. Teachers should embrace and appreciate the knowledge and the contributions of learners in teacher learning exercise.
3. The government should implement the policy that says that NCE should be the least qualification for teaching.
4. Government should close private primary and secondary school who are owned and managed by non professionals in the field of teaching.

References


From http://www.unesco-bkk.org/education/ict/resources.