

Implications Of Teacher Mentoring For Educational Restructuring In Nigeria

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Abstract: The implication of teacher mentoring for educational restructuring in Nigeria include teachers as valuable resources in education, and high quality performance in teaching is an essential ingredient of educational improvement and restructuring. The paper observed that the Nigerian Educational system do accommodate all classes of people in the society. Consider that for the mission of education to be fulfilled, restructuring and mentoring can play a critical role in continually improving the professional knowledge and skills that teachers need to instruct and prepare students for the this century and for the sake of posterity. The paper identified that a major problem exists in many developing countries, concerning attracting the most talented people into the occupation of teaching since those who have the educational background, qualifications and personal qualities to become a school teachers are precisely the ones who are mostly demanded by other industries. The paper recommends that for a qualitative improvement of schooling to occur, there is a demand for restructuring that will enhance greater numbers of high quality recruits into the teaching occupation and effective mentoring program must be developed to take into account the complexity process and Institutionalizing Vocational Qualification (IVQ) mainstreaming functional synergy to the Federal Ministry of Education, National Board of Technical Education, manufacturing sect in redesigning educational curricular in the country.

I. INTRODUCTION

With regard to identifying most effective ways of improving education and school, it is widely accepted that teachers are the cornerstone of educational development and that 'good schools require good teachers'. Teachers are at the forefront of the process of educational reform, since the equality and effectiveness of any education system ultimately depends on the quality and nature of the interaction that occurs between learners and their teachers. Brandt (1990) asserted that a major problem exist in many developing countries, concerning attracting the most talented people into the occupation of teaching since those who have the educational background, qualifications and personnel qualities to become a school teacher are precisely the ones who are most in demand by other industries. To enable the quantitative expansion and qualitative improvement of schooling to occur, there is a demand for greater numbers of high quality recruits into the occupation of teaching. Much more therefore needs to

be done to provide a reward structure and incentives package to attract (and keep) suitable individuals on school teaching for national development.

Teachers are valuable resources in education and high quality performance in teaching is an essential ingredient of educational improvement or reform. If the mission of education is to be fulfilled, mentoring can play a critical role in continually improving the professional knowledge and skills that teachers need to instruct and prepare students for the next century.

II. CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATIONS

Teacher education refers to the polices and procedures designed to equip prospective teachers with knowledge, attitude behaviors and skills they require to perform their tasks effectively in the classroom, school, and wider community. In education mentoring process are contained within the process

of teacher education. It is commonly agreed that the process includes the various developmental phases of the mentoring relationship, the dynamics of the mentoring relationship itself, and the application of cognitive development theory to the mentoring process (Bey & Holmes, 1992). Mentoring is the process of serving as a mentor, someone who facilitates and assisted another development. The process includes modeling because the mentor must be able to model the messages and suggestion being taught to the beginning teachers (Gay, 1995).

Reforms movements are not widely understood by people especially non-experts as mechanism by which educational reformers innovate and revitalize the system, Olokayode (1984) observed that: Reforms are necessary events in the process of education. Hence reforms in the teacher education may not be seen as measure toward the attainment of desirable ends of teaching in the constraints of assumed needs of the society, and the nationalized role of the teachers as a mentor. Educational reforms are positive changes in polices or programme towards educational achievements. It could be as a result of connecting the defects the existing polices or the introduction of new programme entirely.

According to Mkpa (1990) national development entails. "The marked and sustained improvement in the economic output of a nation, depends solely on its employment levels, its political enrichment and harmony". In rhe view of Aggarwal (2006). Teacher education is needed to kindle the imagination of the teacher, to accord a professional outlook to the teaching profession using teacher mentoring. Teacher education is a sound programme designed for the improvement of education. Teacher is the total experience gathered by the teacher trainee during the designed programme, which contribute to the prepaation of person, to enhance the full activities of the teaching profession. The programme is an avenue for the teacher-trainee to meet up with the essential requisites of the real world of the teacher

III. TEACHER EDUCATION POLICY FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The national policy on education and the teacher's registration council in a bid to promote the teaching profession. Instituted certain policies that will enhance the professional career of teachers for national development. The overriding aim of the policy is to properly equip teachers to undertake their essential and demanding task, to enable them to continually enhance their professional competence and performance, and to raise the esteem in which they are held by the nation.

The policy seeks to provide an overall strategy for successful recruitment, retention, and professional development of teachers to meet the social and economic needs of the country. The objective of the policy is to achieve a community of competent teachers dedicated to providing education of high quality, with high levels of performance as well as ethnical and professional standards of conduct.

The principles underling the policy are the following, as expressed in the Norms and standards for educators (2000), which require a teacher to be a specialist in a particular area, subject or phase,

- ✓ A specialist in teaching and learning
- ✓ A specialist in assessment.
- ✓ A leader, administrator and manager
- ✓ A scholar and lifelong learner; and
- ✓ A professional who plays a community leader, citizenship and a pastoral role

The policy is underpinned by the belief that teachers are the essential drivers of a good quality education system. International evidence shows that the professional education and development of teacher's works best when teachers themselves are integrally involved in it, reflecting on their own practice, when there is a strong school base component; and when activities are well co-ordinated. The national education departments are obliged to provide an enabling environment for such preparation and development of teachers to take place.

IV. EDUCATIONAL REFORMS IN NIGERIA

Educational reforms are positive changes in policies or programmes. Considering the importance of education to the nation's development government embarked on series of educational reforms. It started when the Portuguese (Europeans) settled in Lagos and Benin in 1472 and consequently established the forest catholic mission seminary at the Nigeria coast (present day Sao Tome), and the missionary Act of 1842 established the first western oriented school in Badagry in 1843. The criticisms trailing the missionary schools led to the 1882 and 1887 education codes. The highlights of 1882 education code according to Mkpa (1990) included.

- ✓ Creation of general board of education which was empowered to appoint and dissolve local boards' of education.
- ✓ It defined the powers and duties of local board
- ✓ Classified schools aided from public funds (grants-in-aids)
- ✓ Set criteria to be met by associated schools to receive grants.
- ✓ Grants were also provided for teacher training colleges and industrial school.
- ✓ Conduct of examination for teachers' certification
- ✓ Parents right to decide school for their children
- ✓ Set up inspectorate division and appointment of school inspectors.

V. TEACHER EDUCATION REFORMS

Teacher education reforms are an initiative by the Nigerian government in collaboration with the teacher's registration council to develop the standards of teachers to professional standards. The reason for this initiative is that the low salaries, poor working conditions and inadequate training that contributed to the steady decline in the status of teachers in the country.

Anderson and Armbruster (1990) to the pressing needs to strengthen national and regional policies to raise the professional standards and status of teachers and to involve:

measures to improve working conditions, status and professional standards (salaries, teacher-training, pupil-teacher ratio); the importance of increased national capacities for training teachers and for designing teacher-education materials. Dilworth and Imig (1995) asserted that professional development of teachers to the original six national educational goals underscored the importance of involving competent teachers in education reform efforts. The goal implies that “practicing teachers are key to the transformation of schools and that in order for teachers to lead the reform efforts; they need to be offered expanded and enriched professional development experiences.

Specifically the goal states “By the year 2015, the nations’ teaching force will have access to programmes for continued improvement of their professional skills and the opportunity to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to instruct and prepare all Nigeria students for the next century”.

VI. CHALLENGES OF TEACHER MENTORING IN EDUCATIONAL REFORM

The addition in 1994 of professional development of teachers to the original six national education goals underscored the importance of involving competent teachers in education reform efforts. The goal implies that “practicing teachers are key to the transformation of schools and that in order for teacher to lead the reform efforts, they need to be offered expanded and enriched professional development experience (Dilworth & Mig, 1995: 10). Specifically, the goals state:

“By the year 2015, the nation’s teaching force will have access to programs for continued improvement of their professional skills and the opportunity to acquire the knowledge and skill needed to instruct and prepare all students for the next century”.

In exploring how to achieve this goal, educators are turning their attention and resources towards the priority of professional development. Teachers mentoring programmes are now perceived as an effective staff development approach for beginning teachers. The mentoring process is not always clearly understood in education. Resources are becoming cognizant of its complexity. Head & Thies-Sprinthall (1992) write that the “heart and soul” of mentoring grows out belief “in the value and worth of people and an attitude toward education that focuses upon passing the torch to the next generation of teachers.

Qualities of mentor teachers have to do with an experienced teacher who facilitates the development and education of a new teacher, the mentor is regarded as a career professional. According to Gay (1995), guidelines for mentor teacher programs, the mentor must possess ideals and expertise of the teaching profession which are shared with the new teacher. The functions of the mentor teacher vary depending on the needs of the employee, the goals of mentoring program, and the local and broader educational context or situation. It should be kept in mind that the mentor teacher is a helper, not a supervisor or evaluator and “a very special person, a model of professional” (NPE, 2006)

Gay (1995:112) identified the following as challenges of mentor teachers;

- ✓ A range of interpersonal skills to fit a variety of professional encounter and situations.
- ✓ Good working knowledge of a repertoire of teaching methods, alternative modalities of learning, and styles of teaching and learning that affect student’s achievement.
- ✓ Ability to use coaching process that foster increased self-direction and self-responsibility of the beginning teacher.
- ✓ Effective communication skills that facilitate the growth of the new employee and accommodate the employee’s emotional, social and cognitive needs.
- ✓ Understanding the stage of teacher development within the context of how adult learn.

Mentoring for national development include staff development and plays a pivotal role in mentoring programs (Janas, 1996). Mentoring extends beyond induction and guidance, in order to unleash the power of mentoring as a means of professional development; educators must understand the complexity of mentoring and implement the process with due attention and competence. Head, Reiman and Thies-Sprinthall (1992:56) believed that mentoring “can make a difference for teacher, but it needs to be real mentoring complete with its components in process and function”.

VII. IMPLICATIONS OF TEACHER MENTORING

Teacher mentoring for educational reforms in Nigeria is an imperative tool for the all round development of teachers in school. As the word implies mentoring is someone who assist or facilitate others development, teachers remain these invariable tool for educational reforms.

The implications of teachers mentoring in the field of education are as follows:

- ✓ It provides opportunity for teachers to be groomed as qualified personnel in the field teaching.
- ✓ Teachers acquire psychological, sociological and methodological skills in teaching. Mentored teachers remain an excellent product to the society for the simple fact that teacher are not born but made.
- ✓ Mentoring brandishes the teacher from a tutor to role model, facilitator and a professional who remains as a reformer of the learner.
- ✓ Efficiency and effectiveness matters in teaching and the teacher cannot disseminate information that is not in his possession. Mentored teachers have acquired value skills that equip them to deliver when necessary.

VIII. CONCLUSION

Mentoring remains a viable policy option in education. However, for purposeful mentoring to occur, a prerequisite is the acceptance of acts complexity in carrying out the mentoring function. This implies careful planning. Teachers are valuable resources in education, and high quality performance in teaching is an essential ingredient to educational improvement or reform. To assist beginning teachers, it is necessary to support their performance in the

classroom from the very beginning of their teaching careers. Support in the form of well designed mentoring programs can be functional in including new teachers into the profession and keep them in education. The stakes are high quality teaching is essential if the mission of education is to be fulfilled. Mentoring can play a critical role in continually improving the professional knowledge and skills that teachers need to instruct and prepare students for the next century. The educational policy also seeks to provide an overall strategy for successful recruitment retention and professional development of teachers to meet the social and economic needs of the country.

IX. RECOMMENDATIONS

Providing an overall strategy for successful recruitment, retention, and professional development of teachers to meet the social and economic needs of the country has become an indispensable task to all stakeholders. The paper therefore present the following recommendations:

- ✓ In order to unleash the power of mentoring as a means of professional development, educators must understand the complexity of mentoring and implement the process with due attention of mentoring complexity.
- ✓ Reforms movements such as grants provided for teacher training colleges and industrial school. And conduct of examination for teachers' certification should be made known to all and sundry for people to understand the mechanism by which educational reformers innovate and revitalize the educational system. In order to achieve national development, the government should see the need to provide a reward structure and incentives package to attract (and keep) suitable individual on school teaching for national development.
- ✓ The paper recommends that there should be quantitative expansion and qualitative improvement of schooling with regards to high quality recruits into the occupation of teaching.

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