TEACHER PREPARATION AND TEACHER COMPETENCY IN THE 21\textsuperscript{st} CENTURY AT TERTIARY LEVEL IN NIGERIA: THE DESIRED CURRICULUM CHANGES

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Abstract
The paper examined teacher preparation and teacher competency at tertiary level in Nigeria. For clarity, it specifically looked at the following: the concept of teacher education, teacher preparation in Nigeria, the concept of competency, professional teachers' competencies skills, and the desired curriculum changes to be included into the teacher education programme. Conclusion was also drawn based on the fact that, teaching being the largest profession in the world, its training and practice should not be toyed with. Considering the importance of teacher education to the national development in terms of socio – economic, political and technological development, all stakeholders of education in Nigeria should make sure that the teachers in tertiary institutions are producing are not half baked but rather teachers that are well groomed and grounded, efficient and effective. Finally, some recommendations were made among which were: Government should make the teaching practice duration or internship comparable to that of either the medicine, engineering or pharmacy. Also curriculum should be able to practice education for living or long life education which is meant to develop the total man as was the case with Japan. This is to give the would - be teachers the opportunity to harmonize theory with practice as profession is all about skills acquisition and experience gaining.
Introduction

Teacher preparation and teacher competency are considered very vital in teacher preparation programme of any country in the world. It is the teacher preparation programme that provides the competency he or she acquires during the programme of training that makes him/her a capable and competent teacher. Equally, it is the quality of the teacher that determines the quality of education in every nation. It is based on this recognition that the Federal Republic of Nigeria FRN (2009:42) states that “teachers education will continue to be given major emphases in all our educational planning because no education system can rise above the quality of its teachers.” This according to Msheliza (2012) implies that if the teacher produced by the training institutions are not of good quality, their product will be worse than them.

This further implies that, the teacher as an initiator of learning, coordinator of learning experiences, and the pivot element in the programme, must be equipped well during his/her programme of training. He/she should possess all the necessary skills which will make him/her a competent teacher in the classroom or outside the classroom.

The FRN (2009:42) spells out the purpose of teacher education as follows:

a. To produce highly motivated conscientious and efficient classroom teachers for all level for our educational system.

b. To encourage further the spirit of enquiry and creativity in teachers.

c. To help teachers fit into the social life of the community and the society at large and to enhance their commitment to national objectives.

d. To provide teachers with the intellectual and professional background adequate to any changing situation not only in the life of their country but in the wider world.

e. To enhance teachers' commitment to the teaching profession.

Going by these goals of teacher education, one can see glaringly that, teachers are left with the up-hill task of nurturing and bringing of the young generation. Thus, for the teacher(s) to meet up with this demanding task there is a need for proper preparation of the teachers' right from their training and afterward so as to enable them perform well as expected. Failure of the training institutions to train the teachers along the line of professional skills acquisition and utilization which will lead to skills competencies when it comes to doing the real job (teaching) may spell doom on the learners/students
The Concept of Teacher Education

Knowing what teacher education means is very important in determining the type or quality of education in any educational system or practice. The concept over the years has been defined by different authorities depending on their perception of what teacher education is. Okafor (1988:35) defined teacher education "as that form of education which is properly planned and systematically organized and applied for cultivation of those who teach or will teach particularly, but not exclusively, in primary and post-primary level of education." While Omu (2000:61) viewed it as:

Form of education which is properly planned and systematically tailored and applied for the cultivation of those who teach or will teach, particularly but exclusively in the primary and post primary levels of schooling. In its extended dimension of encompasses also the profession preparation of administrators, supervisors and guidance and counselors.

In addition, Encyclopedia Britanical (2013:110) saw teacher education as "any of the formal programmes that have been established for the preparation of teachers at the elementary and secondary levels". From the foregoing definitions, it could be concluded that, teacher education is a planned programme of activities meant to groom both the pre-service and in-service teachers with training in professional skills and competencies for the overall development of the society. It is in conformity with this that Adeniyi (1993:110) posited that teacher education programme should consist of the following: (a) academic (teaching) preparation (b) professional courses in education and (c) teaching practice. The implication of this is that, for the teachers to be able to translate education policies into practice and all other programmes into action, their pedagogical and academic preparation must be sound.

Teacher Preparation in Nigeria

Teacher preparation in Nigeria is done in the following ways: - Teachers are being prepared both academically and pedagogically. Academically, teachers on training are involved in acquiring a broad knowledge. Such teachers under training despite their areas of specialization are expected to have some general knowledge of other subject areas such as general studies. This opinion has been supported by Combs (1965:83) where he posited that:
What is needed is both general education designed for development of intelligent, effective citizens and programme of specialization aimed at preparing the teacher for the particular task he will later be expected to handle.

The deduction from the opinion is that, teacher education is aimed at broadening the education prospective of the teachers since they are regarded by their pupils/students as fountain of knowledge. This is why Copper and Ryan (1972: 184 - 195) emphasized that “there is need for perspective teachers to have good command of knowledge of the subject since such knowledge enables the teacher to teach effectively and consequently develop self-confidence”. Similarly, Enoh (1997:65) listed the following among others as some of the advantages that could be enjoyed by the teachers when he masters his subject matter very well:

Enhancement of Teaching
i. It makes the use of multiple approaches of learning possible
ii. Post of lesson are easily related to the whose for greater students perception/understanding
iii. Gives teachers required confidence.

b. (i) Varied interpretation of subject matter awakens curiosity and interest in learner.

In view of this, the curriculum of teacher education meant for preparing the teacher adequately, academically and otherwise either at the teachers' Training College or Institute of Education/Faculty of Education should consist of the following three areas:
1) The academic preparation:
2) The general studies programme; and
3) The teaching/professional practice.

These prepare the teacher for an excellent performance and services. Nigerian teachers are equally prepared professional in terms of methods/techniques of teaching. Danga (2001: 61) described method as the “process of establishing and maintaining contact between the pupils and subject matter in order to create in the pupils the right attitude to the subject'.

Teachers under training in Nigeria are exposed to those principles underlying the choice of teaching methods/techniques. This is because the teachers' role as regards the choice of teaching methods is a tasking one. Besides, they should be exposed intensively to the production and use of instructional materials, which
help to clarify teaching and learning during lesson. Nwosu (1984: 11) has emphasized this that:

It is necessary to strongly appeal to West Africa teacher educators to emphasize the importance of teaching aids to their students because the teaching aids situation in our schools is simply hopeless. The student under preparation should also be made to know how to prepare lesson notes or lesson plans.

Teachers under training are also exposed to the used and how to keep educational documents. These documents are: curriculum, scheme of work, and other school records such as attendance register, test and examination records supervision reports, class book etc. The professional preparation of teachers involves the exposure of the student teachers to educational foundations, psychology, and curriculum studies. These courses help teachers under training to understand human behavior and methods of imparting knowledge.

Teachers under training are also exposed to teaching practice. This teaching practice contributes immensely to preparing them for service at various school levels. In the first place teachers under training are expected to assume a role or position quite differently from that of the learners. Here they need to make personal effort to overcome the transitional problems of being a teacher. Their modes of behavior are expected to differ from those they are used to in their institutions. During such teaching practice, they are equally being assessed and graded according to their performance by the supervisors. This could be internal or external assessment.

The main objective of the supervision is to help the prospective teachers to acquire and develop sound skills, attitude and insight which will later characterize them not only as teacher but also effective teachers. The teaching practice provides them (teachers under training) with the opportunity to get involved with so many activities of learning such as classroom management, planning, preparation of materials, presentation of informal discussion and evaluation. It is a period of gaining practical classroom experience.

The Concept of Competency

Aderiene (2008) defined competence as “ability to carry out a specified tasks or activities to predetermined standards of attainment”. In the view of Bibi (2005) in Clifford (2013:25), competence is a “degree of quality of behaviours which will produce the required performance needed for a particular job” while
Meziobi (2012: 27 - 29) added by conceptualizing competence as “demonstrable professionally acquired specified requisite teaching skills, abilities and attitudes essential for effective teaching”.

From these opinions, one can deduce that, competence is the central nerve of every professional job that every practitioner cannot do without. For instance this is meant to say that a teacher of a given subject area requires specific skills and competencies that are peculiar to it (Offorma & Ogah, 2003). This means that every subject has different type of training which is required to be carried out by the teachers under training in order to make them a professionals in their area of specialization (subject). The essence of this is to make them to be trained professionally to acquaint them with the concept, language, content of the subject matter and methodology of the subject or discipline (Clifford, 2013).

**Professional Teachers' Competencies Skills**

Professional teachers' competencies skills are those skills that every professional teacher in any of learning institutions should have especially those teachers that are concerned with teacher production for service. These required professional skills to be displayed by the trained teachers are numerous. However, few will be listed here. Bibi (2005) in Msheliza (2015) enumerated teaching skills required of the professional teacher(s) as follows:

(a) Writing Instructional Objectives: clarity, relevance to the content, adequacy with reference to the domain and level of objectives, attainability in terms of pupil outcomes.

(b) Organizing the Content: logical organization according to content and psychological organization as per need of the pupil.

(c) Creating set for Introducing the Lesson: Creating, accepting greetings, securing attention and giving instructions, establishing in report, ensuring facilities like chalk, duster, aids apparatus etc.

(d) Introducing Lesson: Linking with the past experiences link between introductions with main parts, use of appropriate devices/techniques like questioning, example exhibits arousal.

(e) Structuring Classroom Questions: structuring questions at different levels, which are grammatically correct, precise and relevant to content.

(f) Question Delivery and Distribution: question delivered with appropriate speed, with proper intonation and allowing pause for thinking and questions well distributed covering even non-volunteers.

(g) Using Teaching Aids: Relevant to contents, appropriate the pupils level, proper display and appropriate use.
(h) Reinforcement: use of praise word and statement accepting and using pupils' ideas, repeating and rephrasing pupils' ideas use of pleasant and approving gestures and expressions, writing pupils answers on blackboard.

(i) Promoting Pupils Participation: providing opportunity to pupils to increase participation through asking questions, creating climate of participation and calling upon pupils' physical participation.

(j) Evaluating the Pupils Progress: relevant to the instructional objectives, use appropriate questions and observations.

(k) Diagnosing Pupil Learning Difficulties and Taking Remedial Measures: identifying learning difficulties along with causes, remedial measures suited to the type of the learning difficulties and the level of pupils.

(l) Management of the Class: attention behaviour reinforcement and directions given to eliminate non-attending behaviour, clarity of directions, appropriate handling of pupils destructive behaviour.

Perrenoud (1995) in Aigbomian (2012) highlighted the following as professional teacher's competencies among others:

1. Organizing students' opportunities.
2. Managing students learning progression.
3. Dealing with student's ergogeneity.
4. Developing students' commitment and learning.
5. Working in teams.
6. Participation in school curriculum organization development.
7. Promoting parent and community commitment to school.
8. Using new technologies in his daily practice.
9. Tackling professional duties and ethical dilemmas.
10. Managing his own professional developments.

In the same vein, Mezieobi and Meziobi (2012: 27 - 29) have also listed the following as part of the necessary competency skills required for professional teachers.

1. The teacher should have ability to define objectives of particular social studies lesson and units in terms of students' behaviours.
2. He should have ability to relate learning to students experiences.
3. He should have the ability to ask different kind of questions each of which requires types of thought processes from students.
4. He must have the ability to effectively reinforce desirable students' behaviour.
5. The teacher must have the ability to identify students' needs and learning difficulties.
6. He should have the ability to continually vary the learning situation in order to stimulate the interest and actively involve the students in the lesson.

7. He should have command mastery of content and subject matter.

8. He should have ability to construct or design various type of evaluation instruments appropriate to social studies instructional evaluation.

9. He should have the ability to involve student in appropriate decisions affecting class room effectiveness, instruction in taming students' behaviours.

10. He should have the ability to elicit student active participation in the instructional interactive process.

Also, Akinlaye (2003) is of the opinion that a competent teacher needs to have a mastery of the materials and content of his subject area. Essentially, he/she must have a good knowledge of method of the subject curriculum syllabus. While Dania (2006b: 53 - 62) is of the view that competent professional teacher must possess the “ability to orally and clearly communicate ideas, principle and subject matter to students”. Going by this view, if the teacher could not communicate ideas, principle as well as the subject matter to students as it suppose, something is wrong somewhere.

Thus, Adeosun (2012: 13 - 21) view on professional teacher of the 21st century is worth mentioning here. He postulated that, the professional teacher requires the following skills in order to function as an effective teacher.

a) Reflective skills and thinking dispositions.

b) Pedagogical skills.

c) People management skills.

d) Administrative and management skills.

e) Communication skills.

f) Innovation and entrepreneurship skills.

g) Social and emotional intelligence skills.

This means that, by implications any teacher that fails to showcase or display the above skills is not worth being a teacher. He is totally a failure.

The Desired Curriculum Changes

The desired curriculum changes that Nigeria and indeed Nigerians should yearn for as far as teacher preparation and teacher competency is concern at our tertiary level is that teaching practice durations is too short. These means that the period given for student teacher to harmonize theory and practice is too short.

Nigeria as a country allows her student-teachers to participate in a
twelve (12) weeks teaching practice (now six months). Some colleges break the
twelve (12) weeks period into phases-six weeks in NCE II and the remaining six
weeks come up in NCE III. And so also Universities that train teachers. They
share the duration of the practicum into two: six weeks at 200 level and six weeks
at 300 level. In this case the Universities are even the worst in terms of period of
practicum than the colleges. No matter the practice by any college or university
the fact still remains that, the teaching practice period is too short a professional
practicum or internship for preparing the teacher for service in the area of
practical skills acquisition among others (Msheliza, 2012).

Although there is little improvement over what is obtainable before
regarding teacher preparation in Nigeria. The National Commission for Colleges
of Education (NCCE) (2009) minimum standards stipulated that, student
teaching practice will last for six (6) months all over the country and it should be
done in first semester. While that of the University is not up to this, they still share
the period for the practice into two (2) to be done at different time and different
levels. However, is still not enough a duration for practicum or internship if the
would-be teachers should be groomed and grounded properly in the teaching
profession. There is still a need for further improvement in order to make it like
that of medicine, pharmacy and engineering.

Nigerian Colleges and Universities that have the responsibilities of
preparing teachers should be able to open up their curriculum scheme in order to
accommodate at least one year for practicum or internship for teachers under
training at various tertiary institutions in the country if truly Nigeria as a nation
has agreed that teaching is a profession like any other profession being practiced
in Nigeria. By doing this, the teachers will be well groomed and grounded properly in the profession since profession is all about practice and skills
acquisition.

For instance Kenya as a nation in her quest for qualitative teacher
production divided her education into three (3) stages or master in education and
other courses. All students after theoretical and practical training are asked to
embark on practical training (professional training) for the period of four (4)
years practicing all the knowledge and ideas, specializing as professional
teachers (Msheliza, 2012). This has been supported by Smith (1974), Cropwell
of teaching enhances teachers' effectiveness and improves standard of education.

Germany unlike Nigeria where teaching practice lasts for twelve (12)
weeks and six (6) months, their student-teachers spend 2 years doing practical
teaching under the supervision of an expert (professional teacher(s)). They
participate in seminar on issues related to teaching.

Looking at these teaching practice duration given to student-teachers in Kenya and Germany one can deduced that, Nigeria, as a nation, is still lagging behind in the area of preparation for service delivery. If Nigeria is to achieve her teacher education set goals and objectives as it is enshrined in the national policy on education, Nigeria government should borrow a leave from these countries (Kenya and Germany) without hesitation for better teacher preparation and teacher competency.

The teacher preparation programme at tertiary institutions should be able to accommodate in the curriculum skills acquisition period vis-à-vis the training period. Also training programme for the trainers in terms of in-service and retraining the trainers should be there in the curricular. The desired curriculum changes also should be able to suggest a number of good literature and reference texts for the programme. It should not be more than the actual number the tertiary institution could accommodate comfortably for training.

In similar vein, Nigeria like Japan should make it compulsory to all teachers especially at the secondary school level and higher institutions to be vocational oriented beside their actual course of study they have choose to specialized in. This is because the dream of Nigeria was to produce teachers that can use their skills to develop not only themselves but Nigeria also as a country. For these teachers under training should be able to spend one (1) year intensive training in the various vocational courses or entrepreneurship available on the school time table. Thus, making them to be self reliant, even when they are still schooling, developing the nation socio economically. To this end, the curriculum should be able to accommodate this into its curriculum planning.

Conclusion
Teaching profession is the largest profession in the world and as a matter of fact, its training and practice should not be toyed with if Nigeria as a nation wants to achieve practically those set goals and objectives of her education. Considering the importance of teacher education to national development in terms of socio-economic, political and technological development of education, state ministries of education and indeed all other Stake holders of education in Nigeria should make sure that, the teachers Nigerian tertiary institutions produce are not half-baked ones but rather teachers that have good qualities, integrity and substance, well groomed, efficient and effective. Nigeria as a country should stop beating about the bush and take the bull by the horn by addressing the teacher education problems through the reforms going on in the country. Once this is
done in no distance time, the education system will showcase Nigeria on the way to the promise land.

**Recommendations**

For teacher education in Nigeria to produce the desired results that will deliver positively, there is a need to embark on the following as a matter of urgency now that Nigeria education system is undergoing general reforms.

1. Government should endeavour to re-visit the duration allotted to teaching practice with a view to change it from the twelve (12) weeks (now is six (6) months) practice to one year internship like that of the housemanship for doctors.

2. Curriculum should be able to practice education for living or long life education which is meant to develop the total man as was the case with Japan.

3. Teaching practice being an integral part of teacher preparation for productive results, should borrow from the internship programme for medical doctors, engineers. Lawyers etc; for the teachers of the twenty first century must be one that are specially prepared for the tedious task ahead of them which can be achieved through teaching practice.

4. The one year internship will enable the student teachers to acquire experience on continuum to serve as a strong basis for takeoff from their career.

5. If teaching profession is to gain ground like the medical profession, law profession, engineering profession, its practical period or duration at all level of its practice should be given enough time

6. Since Teacher Registration Council (TRC) is the supervisory body of teaching as a profession in Nigeria, it should intensify its effort to see that teaching has come to be like any other profession in Nigeria or else the story will still be the same.

7. A forum through the Teachers Registration Council should be created to link teaching profession in Nigeria with what is obtainable elsewhere in the world. This is very necessary in the world of globalization.

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