

THE ROLE OF TEACHERS IN PROMOTING CREATIVE AND FUNCTIONAL EDUCATION AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Education is one important institution that every society big or small tries to give to its citizens because it is believed to be a tool for development. Similarly, it is worthy of note that no nation rises above its education system and no education system rises above its teachers. In the light of this, the paper looked at the contribution of teachers towards promoting creative and functional education. The paper thus discussed the concept of teacher education, creativity, functional education, factors affecting teachers productivity such as over population in the classes, poor facilities, poor teaching methods etc., and the role of teachers in promoting creativity in school graduates by promoting the use of hands on activity strategies of teaching, techniques of handling over crowded classes, The use of child centered methods of teaching etc. the paper conclude that creativity is key to any meaningful development therefore, it is important for the nation to strive and produce competent and creative teachers who will transfer same qualities to the upcoming generations.

Education is an important sector within the social system, because it is charged with the responsibility of saving and transmitting the social culture to the next generation, in addition to the promotion and development of the social system. That is why the NPE (2013) opined that "Education is an instrument for national development and social change"(P.I) in view of the importance of education in the social system every society struggles to provide to its citizens the best education it could offer. The NPE (2013) confirmed this when it states

"Education is to be qualitative, Comprehensive, Functional and relevant to the needs of the society" (P1), education system cannot function and achieve its objectives without teachers. Teachers are thus the instrument for the attainment of societal objectives. In view of this the paper discusses the concept of teacher and teacher education, creativity functional education, factors affecting teachers productivity and the role of the teachers in promoting creativity in and among secondary school students in Nigeria.

Concept of Teacher and Teacher Education

A teacher is a person that the society bestowed with the responsibility of transmitting societal culture to the younger generation. In other words a teacher is a person that received a professional training to be able to impart knowledge to the younger generation. The need for professional training brings about teacher education. Teacher education is viewed by Wikipedia (R6/7/17) as "the policies, procedures, and provision designed to equip prospective teachers with the knowledge, attitudes, behaviors and skills they require to perform their tasks effectively in the classroom, school and wider community"

It is important to note that teacher education involves the development of teacher's proficiency and competence to be able to meet the requirements of the profession and face its challenges. In view of this, the National Policy on Education (2013) states the following as the objectives of teacher education:-

- To produce highly motivated, conscientious and efficient classroom teachers for all levels of the educational system.
- To encourage the spirit of enquiry and creativity in teachers.
- To help teachers fit into the social life of the community and the society at large and enhance their commitment to national goals.
- To provide teachers with the intellectual and professional

background adequate for their assignment and to make them adaptable to changing situations.

- To enhance teachers commitment to the teaching profession

Concept of Creativity

Creativity is a concept very difficult to define because it involve so many things such as thinking, imagination, inventing etc. but it is generally believed to be a way of bringing something new and valuable in the society with originality in it. Reddy and Rao considered creativity as the original thinking and production of an idea that produces something new and valuable to the society. Wikipedia (R 9/7/17) viewed creativity as a phenomenon whereby something new and somehow valuable is formed...."

Encarta dictionary defines Creativity as "the ability to use imagination to develop new and original ideas or things" from the definitions above it is observable that creativity is a trait that needs to be developed in our children, the absence of which will deprive the society of needed development. In the light of this it becomes necessary for teachers to develop these skills in children.

It is worthy of note that the whole art of teaching is aimed at awakening the natural curiosity of the young minds for the purpose of satisfying it afterwards and it is important to note that the greatest and

most powerful stimuli that support creativity is curiosity.

Teachers can develop creativity among secondary school children by:-

1. Making students understand that creativity starts with doubt. It is when you cast doubt on an issue that you start to think of alternative solutions.
2. Using open questions that do not have definite answers. This will make students generate as many ideas as possible.
3. Presenting creative works of students to the whole class even if what they have discovered have long been known to mankind.
4. Being sensitive to the eagerness, curiosity and interest exhibited by students so that he will be able to encourage them,
5. Developing good interpersonal relationship and interaction with the students which will promote children's creativity.
6. Themselves developing imaginative thinking as it is the bases of developing creativity.
7. Discouraging criticism because it will kill the imaginative thinking of the students.

In addition to these qualities needed from teachers, they should also employ methods of teaching that will promote creativity among their students such as:

Hands on activity: It is generally believed that children learn better when they are involved in doing what they are learning. Teachers should try as much as possible to

promote practicality in their lesson delivery. It is important for teachers to always remember a Chinese adage which says: *I hear I forget, I see I remember, I do I understand.*

Teachers should always make use of child centered methods of teaching. They should try and break away from traditional spoon feeding methods of teaching which portray teachers as the custodian of knowledge while children do not know anything. Teachers should allow students to generate ideas. The role of the teacher here should be a guide.

Teachers should use brainstorming technique. This method helps students to bring out as many ideas as possible in relation to the topic under discussion. They should record generated ideas and later synthesizes the generated ideas to conclude or take decision.

Develop imagination among students: Imagination is the act of forming new ideas, similarly it is the ability to form a picture in your mind of something that you have not seen or experienced. Students should be encouraged to write their thinking and try to see to their actualization because this will be creating a springboard for creative thought.

Another technique that promotes creativity is observation, when we pay close attention on a problem we will be thinking of the solution to the problem before we are told. It is thus important to

create situations in the class that will allow students to observe, record their observation, analyse their observations and take decisions on them.

Another good method that promotes creativity is “attribute analysis”. This is done by taking an object or instrument and you list all its attributes. You can then start thinking of how that item can be improved through its attributes.

Teachers can use pictures to promote creativity: This is done by presenting a half covered picture to the students and allow them to guess the full picture how it will look like. After they finish their presentations, the full picture can then be shown to them. (Okorie 1979).

Allow students to work in groups on a set of ideas or idea that impress them and let them record their thinking for analysis.

Factors Affecting Teachers Productivity Over crowded classes: Classes in Secondary Schools are highly over crowded with students. Some classes accommodate up to one hundred (100) students against the recommended student teacher ratio of 1:40 (NPE, 2013:15), this condition prevailing in our classes prevent teachers from putting their best. There will be no space in the classroom for a teacher to move around the class to see the pupils and at the same time a teacher cannot mark student’s assignment conveniently.

Poor and insufficient facilities: in most public secondary schools there are no needed facilities, and where they exist they will not be enough to go round to each student. The implication of this is that students will not be chanced to use these needed facilities to practicalize their learning environment which consequently kills their creative thinking.

Poor teaching method: Overcrowded classes and poor facilities being used in training teachers lead to the production of half - baked teachers that cannot use correct techniques that appeal to imaginative thinking

Poor teacher’s salary: Teachers are not properly remunerated in terms of take home package. This leads to lack of commitment on the part of the teachers because they will be thinking of how to compliment the shortfall to survive the month.

Insufficient qualified teachers: Government used to introduce educational programs e.g. UBE abruptly without making adequate preparation on how to get qualified teachers to implement the program. Consequent upon this everybody can be employed to fill in the gap. This affect productivity of the teachers.

Political interference: Political interference is noticed in the area of purchase of materials such as textbooks, teaching Aids etc. these are bought without consulting the stake holders. Similarly they interfere with the

appointment of educational administrators, and employment of unqualified persons to man the educational sector.

Lack of enough space in the classrooms:

As a result of poor planning in policy implementation e.g., UPE many students were admitted that made the classes to be choked up with little or no space for teachers to go round the class to supervise students at work. This will consequently affect the quality of the graduates.

Over Admission of Students due to new government policy makes the financing of the education sector expensive. The effect will be insufficient supply of teaching and learning materials which consequently will affect the quality of teaching.

Conclusion

Creativity is key to the development and any nation that fails to develop the creativity of its citizens is bound to remain static and a follower of the developed Nations. It is therefore important that the nation should strive and produce competent, dedicated, committed and creative teachers who will transfer the same qualities to the upcoming generation for development of creative and functional education in the Nigerian education system.

Solutions to the Factors Affecting Teachers Promotion of Creativity among Secondary School Students

Following the discussion on the problems affecting teacher's productivity which hinders developing student's

creativity level, the following are recommended for effective performance of teachers at the secondary school level.

Classes in the secondary schools should be decongested to the level approved by the National Policy on Education i.e. teacher students ratio of 1:40 (NPE, 2013: 5) this can be achieved by building more classes, establishing more schools (Secondary), Rehabilitating the damaged ones.

The government should purchase and supply enough facilities to the secondary schools for proper and effective lesson delivery.

Teacher training program should be effectively managed and well financed so that quality teachers will be produced to be able to teach effectively in the secondary schools. In addition in-service training program should be organized for teachers to keep them abreast with latest techniques of teaching.

It is important for the government to implement teacher's salary structure (TSS) for the qualified teachers so as to encourage people to enroll for teacher education program. This will help produce committed and dedicated teachers.

Government, before introducing any educational program should first plan for the production of teachers that will implement the program. Similarly since teachers are important in the development

process of society, the profession should not be open for all comers rather it should be for competent and qualified people.

Qualified and experienced teachers should be appointed to manage the educational sector. This type of administrators will use their wealth of experience to do what they are expected to do for the development of the system.

In trying to implement any new education policy the government should put into consideration the carrying capacity of the sector so that students that cannot be accommodated will not be admitted.

There should be enough financial allocation to the sector so that the sector will be managed for effective delivery.

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