

The Place of Quality Assurance in Teacher Education in the 21st Century

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Abstract

The place of quality assurance in teacher education in the 21st century cannot be underestimated. However, quality assurance is the bedrock of all educational process and system in Nigeria. This paper discuss the concept of quality, quality assurance, challenges of teacher education, prospect of quality assurance as it's affect teacher's education and way forward in promoting and enhancing effective and quality teacher education in the 21st century.

Keyword: Quality, quality assurance, teacher education

Introduction

We cannot discuss quality assurance in teacher education without briefly touching what quality is hence every system served the best and in achieving the best every system needs to put all the necessary indicators on ground that will make it possible to achieve the best in the educational system. Therefore Hornby (2011) cited in Emmanuel, O. (2014) described quality as the standard of something when compared to other things like it. He stressed further to say that quality involves comparison where we can talk about quality things or inferior. Hence, Quality assurance will give birth to quality teacher and quality student that will make the society a great place in the long run.

Quality Assurance

Quality assurance has been a fundamental challenge in all the facets of educational system. Quality assurance is the readiness of all the stakeholders in the educational system to prepare a conventional policies that will cut across the board in achieving the best of the system Ajayi and Oluchukwu (2001) cited in Ikuenomore, M.G. and Olaniyan N. (2012) view quality assurance from the point of meeting the needs of the society without derailing from the standard. They urged further that societal expectation varies from one level of education to another and from one setting to another. Again, that quality assurance assumes that the education consistently deliver relevant and appropriate benefit to the needs of those who invest in the education sector and the consumers. While Shaeffer (1992) cited in Ikuenomore M.G. and Olaniyan N. (2012) equally defines quality assurance not only in relation to the extent to which the education system is well supplied in term of instructional resources, teachers literacy, job skills enrichment in fact of life, facilities and effective teaching -learning process but also state that good education must also, encourage a more integrated view of development by making students more aware of how their action individually and collectively hinder or help to meet the changes described above and at the same time mobilize and empower people with the knowledge and skills for more participatory and democratic processes. They conclude by saying that any system that wants to maintain quality must itself become more participatory in nature, in needs assessment, research, planning, management evaluation and other activities in which communities and other stakeholders can be involved more fully in teacher education.

How does Quality Assurance Influence Quality Teacher Education

Quality assurance gives birth to quality product. Quality teacher education has been a problem in educational system which in turn leading to fall in the educational standard. There are more to be involved and done for any educational system to have quality teacher education in place and fundamentally the most vibrant instrument to use in achieving this height is quality assurance which will involves proper monitoring, supervision and assessment. Therefore, quality in teacher education as described by Iwuagwu O.O. (2012), involves excellence in reputation, excellence in resources and excellence in outcome. Teachers and educational institutions have the tendency to measure their qualities in terms of student's academic performance and achievement. The assumption is that, if the results of an institution are improving, definitely its quality must be good. Once quality is assured at reasonable level, it needs to be controlled from deviations to ensure functionality. National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (2008) cited in Iwuagwu O.O. (2008) cited in Iwuagwu, O. O. (2012) stressed that very often the question on quality of teacher's education is raised. The government embarked on the accreditation of institution to ensure high quality assurance. In the accreditation of teacher education institutions and programme policy, the policy brief seeks to address some of the issues aligning institutions in providing teacher education with quality assurance requirements on essential practice in developing quality teaching and functional teacher education. He further stressed that despite the accreditation policy today, it seems teaching profession is the only profession that does not discriminate because all sorts of people without professional training are found in the profession. Although, Nigeria has succeeded in several ways to prepare teachers with varied teaching qualifications along with opportunities for further training, yet it has not been reflected in the academic performance of the students. Therefore, there is the need for the teacher to go for training and retraining to be able to compete with others in the industry and bring out the best in them. National Policy on Education (2013) states that in recognition of the pivotal role of quality teachers in the provision of quality education at all levels teacher education shall continue to be emphasized in educational planning and development. The minimum qualification for entry into the teaching profession shall be the Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE). In the same vain the goals of teacher education shall be to:

- (a). produce highly motivated conscientious and efficient classroom teachers for all levels of the educational system.
- (b). further encourage the spirit of enquiry and creativity in teachers.
- (c). help teachers fit into the social life of the community and the society at large and enhance their commitment to national goals.
- (d). provide teachers with the intellectual and professional background adequate for their assignment and to make them adaptable to changing situation and.
- (e). enhance teachers commitment to the teaching profession.

It's further stressed that all teacher in educational institution shall be professionally trained. Teacher educations programmes shall be structured to equip teachers for the effective performance of their duties. Information Technology (IT) training shall be incorporated into all teachers training. The policy goes further to say that teacher education shall continue to take cognizance of changes in methodology and in the curriculum. Teacher shall be regularly exposed to innovations in the profession. Teaching service shall be structured to facilitate interstate transfer of teachers without lose of statues. To achieve all the above mentioned goals according to the NPE (2013); government shall established efficient and effective quality assurance agencies at Federal, State/FCT and local government levels for monitoring and maintaining set standards at all levels of education below the Tertiary level.

Quality assurance agencies in both state ministries of education/FCT Education Secretariat and Local Government Education Authorities in collaborations with the Federal Quality Assurance Agency shall be responsible for the organization of supervision and inspection of all educational institution under their jurisdiction. We can say that from the above that the place quality assurance in teacher education in Nigeria is like two edge swords. One cannot do without another if we really want to have good product that will make our society a better place to be tomorrow. These will equally enhance the establishment of the best educational curriculum that will cater for inclusivity in our educational system and processes.

Challenges of Quality Assurance in Teacher Education

Quality assurance is very germane in achieving the quality teacher education in our system. Hence it is faced with some challenges among and not limited to the following.

- (1). National challenges: The system will talk and they wouldn't walk the talk meaning that the system will set out objectives for the quality assurance to follow yet they will be the first to break the rules in terms of favouritism.
- (2). Political instability: As a result of democratic changes of government particularly in Africa. The new government may not believe in the educational policies of the previous government. Hence, we do experience deliberate change of policies that affect the quality of our teachers and the system that produce them.
- (3). Funding: In spite of the fact the constitution of the country allows that 2% of our annual budget be directed to educational system no government has been able to do it. And to achieve quality assurance in teacher education there is need to pump more funds to quality assurance unit of the entire educational sector to stop hindrances.
- (4). inadequate technology: Technology is very important in the 21st century. With technology teacher can easily be supervise and monitor. Many supervisors cannot even operate as small computer let alone go on website.
- (5). Fraud: this is the biggest canker worm that has been threatening the success of quality assurance in our educational processes and system. Stakeholders charged with the responsibility as soon as they get to any institution for on sport assessment and evaluation of the teacher and infrastructure put in place, immediately the head of the institution can abide to give them bribe honestly they will write a favourable report which is really affecting the quality of our teachers education and the system itself.

Prospect of Quality Assurance

Quality assurance is charged with the responsibility of bringing out the best in every system to enhanced and facilitate the best from a particularly education process or system. Hence it has been able to put the teacher on their toes irrespective of the minor changes that may be faced along the line.

Quality assurance have been able to enhance check and balance between the learner and the learn. These mean both the teachers and students has limitations.

Quality assurance improves the image of the teacher and the institution at large because no one will be interested in breaking the established rules because if he/she does there are penalties.

Quality assurance has assisted in building our teacher to be better one such that they can raise their shoulders high where ever they find themselves i.e since the teachers would be always ready for training and retraining for them to cope with the realities on ground and compete with others in the industry in terms of research and innovations.

Challenges of Teacher Education

As important as the teacher education is no government or stakeholders have been able to put necessary machineries on ground to achieve quality teacher education some of the reasons for these are as follows:

Poor welfare: Teachers particularly in Nigeria are been poorly paid. These have made some of them not interested in training and retraining because after acquiring the required qualifications they will not be placed appropriately, if they refused to put in their best.

Funding: Teacher deserves good office accommodations and they are not been provided for. Hence, you will see some teachers sitting under the trees imagine how can such a person impact knowledge appropriately. Where is the quality assurance unit?

Political unwillingness: Teacher are the ones treated like an animal in Nigeria. The people in political class are so indolent such that teachers are not important before them. They sack teachers at will not minding the experience he/she gathered over the years.

Corruption: Factually all facets of our system is corruption. With money you can break rules at will in Nigeria. Hence, teachers in most cases acquired fake teaching qualification, because of corruption.

The Way Forward

Abdulkareem A.Y. (2010) stressed that an effective teacher of any subject must demonstrate mastery of the subject matter as well as the philosophy and goals of teaching that subject at that level; mastery of general and subject specific strategies;

knowledge of the learner, learning theories principles and methods and good personality as a leader and positive attitude in the students and the subject matter. Needed competencies of quality teacher must incorporate the following:

Productivity consciousness: that embrace tenet of continuous professional development training and learning quality, ICT friendly work ethics etc.

Continuous professional development: Given the skill biased nature of the current economic and technological transformation, worker training formal education, vocational training and training inform specific activities) assures an increasingly crucial role.

Subject specific teacher education programme: Quality in pedagogy largely depends on the professional competence of teachers. Competence here includes academic qualification, pedagogical skills and commitment.

ICT literacy: A major challenges facing Nigeria teachers are their phobia for computer for an enhanced teacher quality, however, the teacher must be empowered in ICT, able to use and apply ICT tools and materials. This should be an essential part of the pedagogical courses.

Induction of Beginner Teachers: Teaching involves a complex set of tasks, many teachers experience their first years in the profession as stressful. This perhaps explains the high turnover of teachers.

Provision of Adequate Resources: for the entire education sector and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the use of available funds for the implementation of the MDGs and UBE programmes, especially at the state level. The aimed level of public spending is insufficient to fill the financial gap to achieve UBE and improve the quality and relevance of post basic education in Nigeria.

Motivation: there is need for general improvement in the remuneration and conditions of service for teachers especially at all levels of education. This will provide enough incentives in order to get the best from them.

Conclusion

Quality assurance is a veritable engine that can be use to achieve quality system or process that can produce a quality product which can stand the test of time. This exposition an attempt has been made to succinctly provide conceptual understanding of the term, quality, quality assurance, teacher education, challenges of quality assurance, prospect, challenge of teacher education and the prospect in the modern day society.

Hence, it's important that for every process or system to home the best out of it. Its must put in place all variables that make the system achieve such height possibly. May be in, monitoring assessing evaluating and maintaining good interaction system.

Recommendations

1. The government should enhance and facilitate the proper working of the quality assurance unit i.e the supervision management and monitoring of the teachers must be paramount
2. Teachers should be paid promptly to improve working satisfaction in them which will in turn bring out the best in them.
3. Teacher should be sent on regular training and re-training to improve their skills acquisition on the field.
4. ICT literacy- all teachers should be managed to be ICT compliance government equally assists in organizing such programme by subsidizing the tuition fees to be paid by the teacher.
5. Teachers should be inform and aware of the new pedagogical and innovations to effectively perform on the field professionally.
6. All educational stakeholders can equally improve teacher education by voluntarily contributing to the growth and development of the system without contravening the financial regulations of the country.

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