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EDUCATING THE EDUCATOR IN NIGERIA: DEALING WITH ISSUES OF PEDAGOGY IN MODERN EDUCATION

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Abstract
Education is the bedrock of growth and development of any nation, Nigeria inclusive. The methods of education employed have a significant way of impeding or advancing this objective. The modern education landscape is characterized by rapid technological advancements, diverse student populations, and evolving societal needs. These global trends affecting education and educators across the world do not exempt Nigeria from their far-reaching impacts. Despite this glaring reality, the pedagogical practices often employed by educators in Nigeria is at best, very outdated, lagging behind and characterized by sterility. Absence of drastic and proactive measures to meet up with the sweeping changes in the modern era has left the education sector along with its educators very much behind in contrast to their counterparts in advanced countries. This article examines the issues of pedagogy in modern education, especially in Nigeria, highlighting the need for educator education and professional development. It also advocates for proactive measures on the part of the institutions in charge of educating the educators to ensure that educators remain abreast with the evolving pace of education. The writer argues that educators must be equipped with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to effectively teach and learn in the 21st century without which they would keep lagging behind.

Key words: Education, Pedagogy, Nigeria, Modernity, Issues, Challenges

Introduction

According to Merriam-Webster's Dictionary (2022), pedagogy is defined as "the art, science or profession of teaching especially education". Essentially therefore, pedagogy refers to the art, science, or profession of teaching and learning. It comprises of the principles, methods and practices those educators ought to use in facilitating effective student-learning. These methods and principles include strategies used in developing teaching aids, instructional materials, as well as the creation of enabling learning environment. The pedagogical practices employed by educators play a critical role in shaping the learning experiences of students (Hattie, 2009). However, the modern education landscape in Nigeria presents numerous challenges that can render traditional pedagogical approaches ineffective. For instance, the increasing diversity of student populations requires educators to adopt culturally responsive teaching practices while ensuring that they remain technologically savvy (Okorosaye-Orubite, 2019). Moreover, the rapid pace of technological change demands that educators develop the skills necessary to effectively integrate technology into their teaching practices (Koehler & Mishra, 2009). At the threshold of educational revolution, Nigeria should endeavor to embrace the ever dynamic and technologically-driven educational impulse of the modern era. The need to blend culturally sensitive approach with a digitalized worldview on education in Nigeria is of critical importance now than ever before.

Understanding what pedagogy entails

Several educationists of repute have attempted an explanation of the concept pedagogy. As captured above by Webster's Dictionary, pedagogy embodies several aspects relating to the inculcation of knowledge as well as ensuring the effective application of same to one's immediate environment. The root meaning of Pedagogy comes from the Greek words: - *pais* (παῖς), meaning "*child*", - *agogus* (ἀγωγός), meaning "*leader*" or *"guide*". So, the literal root meaning of pedagogy is: "*Leading the child*" or *"Guiding the child*". Philosophers such as Rousseau, Paulo Freire as well John Dewey, among others, have given their perspectives on the meaning of pedagogy. This view corroborates that of John Dewey (1916) which states that pedagogy is *"an experience that prepares individuals for active participation in a democratic society".* Rousseau (1762) *sees* pedagogy as *"an education that commences at birth, before (the learner) can speak, before he can understand, he is already instructed".* These postulations of Rousseau and Dewey reaffirm the value and purpose of pedagogy which is the acquisition of knowledge that would be put at the service of the society. Even Paulo Freire (1970) in his work, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, subscribes to this position when he explains pedagogy as "*a tool for liberation that empowers individuals to critically analyze the world around them and become conscious of their own social, political and economic circumstances".* In view of the Nigerian educator and his role to nation building, understanding what pedagogy is, and what it entails should constantly occupy a front burner position on the table of discussion within and among all stakeholders of education.

The Issues of Pedagogy in Modern Education:

Although issues affecting pedagogy in Nigeria in the modern era are not peculiar to it, one has to admit along with Darling-Hammond (2010), Guskey (2002) as well as Koehler and Mishra (2009)

that the problems of educating the educator are rooted in the lack or inadequate availability of the following:

1. Lack of Educator Preparation: what this issue entail is the lack of, or poor conducive environment to instigate commitment and dedication among educators. In Nigeria, many educators enter the profession without adequate preparation in pedagogy, particularly in areas such as technology integration and culturally responsive teaching. Part of the negative impact of inadequate education preparation is that among other things, it will result in ineffective teaching methods delivery. Lack of subject matter expertise is another as well as lack of or inadequate classroom management skill among the educators. Other negative result of the lack of educator preparation is the insufficient use of technology leading to poor assessment and evaluation of learners.

2. Inadequate Professional Development: Educators often receive inadequate professional development opportunities, which can hinder their ability to develop the knowledge and skills necessary to effectively teach and learn in the 21st century. Inadequate professional development will result in generating negative impact on National Development of the nation.

3. ***Resistance to Change:*** Some educators may resist changes to their pedagogical practices, particularly if they are unfamiliar with new technologies or teaching approaches. When educators are resistant to change in this technologically savvy society, they influence the would-be-teachers negatively resulting in low teacher morale and enrollment. Furthermore, educators' resistance to change can affect students negatively, leading to poor student academic performance.

4. ***Teaching in a Multicultural Society:*** Educators must be prepared to teach in a multicultural society, where students from diverse backgrounds and experiences come together to learn. Educators who are not culturally responsive often fail to relate well. Hence, it is important that educators are trained to be culturally responsive. They can do this by learning about diverse cultures in the societies where they teach; they are to educate themselves about the cultures, traditions, and values of their students' communities. Furthermore, the use of inclusive language and materials are very crucial here. What this means is that as an educator, one must ensure that the teaching materials, language, and examples being used are inclusive and respectful of the diverse cultures. Encourage diverse perspective by creating equal opportunities for students to share their perspectives and experiences by promoting cross-cultural understanding.

5. ***The Role of Technology in Education***: Technology plays an increasingly important role in education, and educators must be prepared to effectively integrate technology into their teaching practices. With regards to teaching and learning, the use of virtual classrooms through the aid of technology is on the increase. Nigerian educators can leverage on this to reach students in remote areas as well as expand access to education by the deployment of technology. With technology, communication across distant areas can become seamless with interaction among learners becoming easily enhanced despite physical distance. Mastery of technology by educators can make it easy for them to train their learners to engage in personalized learning through self-teaching mechanisms.

Educating the Educator:

In the face of the above-mentioned challenges associated with how to effectively educate the educator in the modern era, certain specific strategies and actions are required. Hence, to address the issues of pedagogy in modern education, it is essential that proactive measures are taken to enable the Nigerian educators receive ongoing education and professional development opportunities. This can include:

1. Pedagogical Training: Educators should receive training in evidence-based pedagogical practices, such as project-based learning and flipped classrooms (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005). This training can be enhanced at the professional level such as workshops and conferences. Educators are to be encouraged to participate in workshops, conferences, and seminars to stay updated on best practices, research, and innovations in education. Other avenues by which educators can acquire more pedagogical skills are through enrollment in online courses and training programmes and certification. Further step in this direction is through coaching and mentoring. By collaborating with experienced educators or coaches, one could improve one's skills in pedagogy.

2. ***Technology Integration:*** Educators should receive training in the effective integration of technology into their teaching practices, including the use of learning management systems and educational software (Koehler & Mishra, 2009). Educators should be opened to new technological designs such as Instructional Designs to improve their skills in Learning Management Systems (LMS) and Utilize LMS platforms (e.g., Canvas, Blackboard, Moodle) to organize course materials, assignments, and assessments. Educators can create and share digital lessons plans by incorporating multimedia resources online. They can also do reverse traditional lecture-homework format (Flipped classroom models) by delivering instruction online and reserving class time for interactive activities.

3. Culturally Responsive Teaching: Educators should receive training in culturally responsive teaching practices, including the use of diverse texts and materials (Gay, 2000). It is important that educators are trained to be culturally responsive. They can do this by learning about diverse cultures in the societies where they teach; they are to educate themselves about the cultures, traditions, and values of their students' communities. Furthermore, the use of inclusive language and materials are very crucial here. What this means is that as an educator, one must ensure that the teaching materials, language, and examples being used are inclusive and respectful of the diverse cultures.

4. Professional Learning Communities: Educators should participate in professional learning communities, where they can collaborate with colleagues and share best practices (DuFour, 2004). Professional learning communities allow for collaboration and networking among educators which would result in shared knowledge and expertise. It also can afford them networking platforms to connect with colleagues from diverse backgrounds and schools.

Conclusion

The issues of pedagogy in modern education are admittedly complex and multifaceted. However, by providing educators with ongoing education and professional development opportunities, we can equip them with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to effectively teach and learn in the 21st century. Though Nigeria is still grappling with short supply of technologically -

driven educational tool, it is imperative that the little equipment in this regard are adequately utilized at the service of the educator. Ultimately, educating the educator is critical to ensuring that students receive a high-quality education that prepares them for success in an increasingly complex and interconnected world.

Recommendations

1. Policy Maker*s*: Policy makers should prioritize educator education and professional development, providing funding and resources to support ongoing training and development.

2. ***Educational Institutions***: Educational institutions should provide educators with opportunities for ongoing education and professional development, including training in pedagogy, technology integration, and culturally responsive teaching.

3. ***Educators:*** Educators should take an active role in their own professional development, by seeking out opportunities for training and development in areas such as pedagogy, technology integration, as well as making efforts to become culturally responsive to teaching.

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