Personnel Re-Training for 21st Century Development Challenges

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Abstract

This work is a critical examination of how personnel re-training can aid in meeting the 21st century development challenges. Education as we know is evolving and to cope with the challenges associated with the changes, personnel such as teachers and lecturers need to be re-trained. The 21st century is an era of significant changes relating to new scientific discoveries, globalization, informatization, development of robotics and artificial intelligence. The study further explores the challenges of the 21st century which include ensuring that students acquire the technological skills that will enable them to access global information and telecommunication network, poor funding, poor technological facilities, poor electricity, lack of trained personnel in the area of technology. Personnel re-training programmes such as in-service training, seminar and conference, collaboration and team building programmes. The present study employed literature survey method to gather relevant information concerning the areas of the work. The study concludes that we are in the era of globalization and informatization, hence, personnel re-training is very key to bringing teachers on a par with their students. The paper states further that funding of the education sector and

personnel training need to adopt a holistic approach to meet the 21st century development challenges. The work recommends that government should embark on re-training of all personnel in the education sector.

Keywords: personnel, re-training, 21stCentury, development challenges.

Introduction

Change is said to be the only constant thing in nature. We are going through a period of rapid change in an increasingly globalized world to which teachers need to adapt to remain relevant in the school environment and the classroom. In many countries, the role and functioning of schools are changing and so is what is expected of teachers. Teachers are faced with the challenge of teaching in increasingly multicultural classrooms; making more effective use of technologies for teaching; engaging more in planning and reflectiveness and doing more in involving parents in their children's learning.

Teaching and learning cannot take place in a school environment without the teacher as he is fundamental and at the centre of all reforms and innovations in education. Afe (2002) sees the teacher as a person who instructs to provide the teaching learning process and who functions as an educator, tutor, instructor, facilitator, counselor, lecturer, professor. Aghenta (1991) refers to the teacher as an input manager in the education system who is saddled with the responsibility of converting raw materials (students) into finished products. Hence, to succeed as a teacher as well as raise successful students in a 21st century, knowledge -based economy, demands a different way of teaching. Students can no longer be taught the way their parents were taught centuries back. Regrettably, many educators lack the skills required to facilitate learning in the 21st century environment.

One of the many challenges confronting teachers in this era is lack of technology training. Often times, educators, especially those in the public

schools are not provided with necessary technology skills and enabling environment to create a modern learning condition. Teachers do not only need to learn how to use technology in delivering their subjects, they also need to know how to guide students to use technology to facilitate their own learning. All these can only be achieved through personnel re-training as the training the teachers received in school would have become obsolete at this point.

Re-training of personnel expands their knowledge and provides them with ideas and knowledge that help them to expand the content of their contribution to the organization. It also helps them to improve on their new roles, increase their thoughts as educators and invariably makes them feel more passionate about their job.

This paper discusses the types of personnel retraining programmes available to educators, the challenges educators face in the 21st century and the skills they require in order to surmount these challenges.

Conceptual Clarifications

Personnel Re-Training

Personnel are human resources in an organization. They are employees in the education sector. While personnel re-training are those in- service training teachers bank upon to be able to refresh and be up to date with the changes in curriculum, teaching methods and innovation in the education sector.

21st Century Development Challenges

Since education is evolving, there are lots of issues confronting the education sector. Therefore, 21st century challenges are those obstacles or hindrances confronting the manager of educational sectors in the 21st century. It is an instigation or antagonization intended to convince a person to perform an action they otherwise would not.

The making of 21st century

Changing 20th to 21st century brought about different results: 21st century education, 21st century skills and 21st century teacher. In the 21st century, all students are expected to achieve and teachers are the logical tools of achieving this goal. However, the pertinent question is: what are the standards for teachers themselves? What will it take to prepare teachers, principals and supervisors to respond to the complexities of the 21st century classroom? Our educational system has seen several reviews in order to make our education relevant to the changing times. In light of this, Bassey(2009) maintains that change is constant in every organization and every manager should be skilled in managing change and innovation as they occur. The most prominent change in the 21st century is the internetization of the society and the introduction of digital technology into the learning environment. Digital technologies have changed our way of life, communication, behavior and thinking. As Myamesheva (2015)states that the high-tech environment- computers, smart phones, video games, internet search engines, re-shape the human brain.

The 21st century education is skills based and that is why in recent times, we hear about ''21st century skills'' which refer to a set of skills and character traits that one requires to succeed in today's world especially in the contemporary careers and work places. These skills include: critical thinking, problem solving, creativity, curiosity, questioning, artistry, self-discipline, imagination, innovation, personal expression, planning, adaptability and a lot more. The learners in the 21st century environment are expected to acquire these skills through the teacher who acts as a facilitator. This only means that the teacher needs to understand and possess these skills in order to help a 21st century learner.

Modern society demands high quality teaching and learning from teachers. Teachers have to possess a great deal of knowledge and skills with regard to both teaching and assessment practices in order to meet those demands

and standards of quality education. Onwuka (1996) defined teaching as ''the various activities undertaken by a more experienced and more knowledgeable person in order to enable others learn.'' 21st century teaching means teaching with today's tools and technology. It means utilizing every important tool available so that the student will be able to survive in today's economy and having the ability to prepare students for the future. The emphasis is for students to be skillful in order to be able to engage with global issues, learn, form and work with people from different cultures, communities and ideologies. (Adenike, 2018). A teacher reflects on our changing world and strives to move with the trend of things. Apart from being up-to-date on the latest in technology, the 21st century teacher can have the characteristics of a facilitator, a contributor and an integrator. The teacher has so much to contend with, and for such a teacher to succeed, he must possess the characteristics discussed below.

Adaptability: A 21st century teacher must be able to adapt easily to the changes in the world technology, practices, procedures, ideas, methods and techniques. Sullivan and Harper (1996) describes change as a condition that can influence an organization but it takes place externally and we have little control over it. In today's classroom, smart boards are replacing chalkboards and tablets are replacing textbooks, therefore, the teacher needs to be up to speed in order not to be left behind in the trend of things.

Learner-centred classroom and adaptability: Information is easily accessible now with the use of the internet, therefore, it is needless to try to spoon-feed the students. Students have different personalities, learning needs, goals and wants, hence, it would be counter-productive to use the same instructions and methods to teach all of them. A 21st century teacher personalizes instructional materials, in order to meet the individual needs of the learners. The teacher allows the learners to take charge of their learning, thereby, inculcating life-long skills in them.

Techy savvy: Technology is changing at a mind-blowing pace, so a 21st century teacher must ride along. Effective teachers know that learning about the latest technology can transform and build their students' confidence so they not only learn how to use those new technologies but also master them. Information and Communication Technology (ICT) can mediate learning today. According to Postholm (2006), teachers act as advisers in ICT classroom through dialogue with students.

Collaboration: Technology affords teachers and students the opportunity to collaborate through creation of digital resources. Google classroom is one good example where teachers and students can interact in or outside the classroom. A 21st century teacher also collaborates with other teachers around the globe with the use of digital tools. Learning is more effective when you can share your ideas and knowledge with others. Sharing expertise and experience and communicating and learning from others is a vital part of the teaching and learning process. Doing so fosters a sense of community, not only in the classroom but school-wide as well. Effective teachers use Facebook, twitter and other social media and web resources for class discussions. Today's students appreciate novelty, especially when the teacher is innovative and finds new, more productive and more interesting ways of using the tools.

Advocates for professionalism: The success and failure of any school, her students and educational programmes rests on the shoulders of the teachers. For the teacher to successfully influence and guide the learners to produce the expected result, such a teacher needs to have professional training. The need to attain and develop certain standards and benchmarking criteria for all professions has increased in today's work conditions. Standards create a professional environment of 'best practice' procedures enabling organizations to confidently create systems, policies and procedures; they also assure high operational quality (Krisnaveniva Anitha, 2007). This has made it necessary to improve the standard of

teachers to comply with contemporary developments and meet the 21st century challenges. A 21st century teacher takes a stand for themselves and their profession as well as advocates for their students. Today's classrooms are filled with students whose parents are never there for. Such students may need help, encouragement, advice or a listening ear. It takes teachers who know their job to take up these challenges and act as role models to their students.

Thinks ahead: 21st century teachers take cognizance of the career opportunities that may arise for their students in future so they think ahead and plan their lessons in such a way that they attend to every child's learning need and help them to acquire the skills required to meet those future challenges.

Continuous Learning: Teaching is a life-long learning process. A 21st century teacher is always ready to imbibe new ideas and to go the extra mile to become an effective teacher.

Communication: This is the string that binds all the above mentioned educational qualities together. It is important to develop students' communication skills because it will aid them to effectively convey ideas when they go out to the outside world. Every person's communication skills affect both personal and organizational effectiveness (Agabi, Nnabuo&Igwe 2004). Without proper communication skills, students can likely lose out on opportunities if they do not understand the information around them or do not know how to effectively pass across a message they have in mind.

Challenges in Managing Education in the 21st Century

Due to growing need for people to be educated, globalization and informationalization, most of the facilities are inadequate and over

stretched. The evidence is that both lecture rooms and class rooms are overcrowded. The government fails to provide the necessary infrastructural facilities, funds and man power that will help to battle the 21st century development challenges. Today, Nigeria still lacks the necessary infrastructural facilities which are one of the greatest road blocks to managing education to meet 21st century development challenges. Also the quest for knowledge has resulted to continuous increase in student enrolment. The Nigerian education policy has also undergone extensive revision with the aim of making the education to be relevant, functional and to be able to meet global competitiveness. As such, a lot of new areas of study have been introduced in the system. The fact remains that the rates of expansion do not correspond with the infrastructures in place. One of the major goals on the National policy on Education (FRN 2014:36) states that; education should contribute to national development through high level relevant man power development. For this to happen, the managers of education sector must be retained and made relevant. The following are some of the challenges confronting the management of education in the 21st century.

1. **Personnel Barrier:**
   This is associated with teacher personality profile and comparatives. Teachers at all times need to consistently develop themselves in order to be on a par with the trends of events in education. According to Kwasnica (2003), it is a way of breaking free from barriers or restrictions, and go beyond traditional models of professional behaviour. But the truth remains that teachers have refused to re-train themselves in their field of study. Most times teachers wait for government to fund their training, thereby making them backward.

2. **Funding:**

The place of funds in the implementation of educational programs cannot be over- emphasized since the economic growth and development of any nation depends on the sector. For the education sector in Nigeria to be able to meet the 21st century development challenges, it must be properly funded since education falls under concurrent list of federal and state government in Nigeria. Therefore, it is the sole responsibility of the government to provide the necessary funds to ensure that every sector is relevant, to be able to compete globally. Nigeria has not been able to meet up to 11% of her total budget to education as against 26% recommended by UNESCO.

3. **Personnel's Resistance to Change**
   Another major problem that faces the management to meet 21st century development challenges is teachers showing opposition to the use of computer for instruction. They resist change for the fear that computer assisted instruction will increase their work load in the classroom.

4. **Corruption**:
   This is a very huge problem in the management of education to meet 21st century development challenges. Money meant for procurement of computer and modern technology mosttimes is deviated or wasted instead of using it to procure computer and e-learning facilities that will enhance teaching and learning.

5. **Lack Of Relevant Man Power In Area Of Technology**
   According to Federal Republic of Nigeria (2013), education shall contribute to national development through the development of high level man power and making professional courses to reflect the national development agenda. In spiteof this beautiful policy, Nigeria still lacks relevant manpower to drive the technology sector.

6. **Poor Technological Facilities**

For the education sector to meet the 21st century development challenges, it is stipulated in the National Policy on Education to provide and promote information and communication technology. It implies that this policy as stated must be followed holistically by the government, but the reverse is the case as most of the institutions lack ICT facilities. The crux of the matter is that, the education sector cannot meet up to the 21st Century development challenges if the information and communication facilities are not put in place. This is because, Information and Communication Technology faculties enhance teaching, learning and research. In this age of science, technology and informationalism revolution, the education system is greatly disadvantaged because the different arms of our government, who are the managers of the sector have failed to provide the facilities required for students and teachers to keep abreast of time

7. **Poor Technological Skills That Will Enable Students Access To Global Information and Telecommunication network:**

Importance of education is making students to be relevant, functional and be able to compete globally. This can be actualized through the learners association with information, knowledge and skills in modern day technology. This can only be achieved if there are adequatelytrained personnel in the area of Information and Communication Technology. If the teachers who are at the centre, who are responsible for curriculum implementation, are not trained, how then can the students acquire the skills? Most of the students in the secondary section lack the technological skills to access global information, due to lack of trained personnel.

8. **Poor Electricity or Power Supply:**
   The electricity in Nigeria is epileptic and cannot enhance the use of modern day technology which requires constant power supply. For the education sector to meet up with globalization, there must be constant power supply to enable the use of the equipment to access information, but the reverse is the case in Nigeria as most times there is power failure

9. **Poor Policy Formulation and Implementation:**
   There is lack of well-articulated policy by Nigerian government on how to meet 21st century development challenges on education. Government pays more attention to other sectors than education. This is evident in the budget allocated to the sector and this is posing a challenge to the management of education.

Personnel Re-training Programmes to Meet 21st Century Development Challenges

The effectiveness and success of a school or organization depends on her work force. Personnel re-training for teachers refers to the programmes or activities organized in order to enhance the skills and improve the knowledge the teachers acquired during their pre-service education. The training programmes include deliberately designed activities which the staff engage in to help them improve their performance as teachers and foster their careers as well as increase productivity in school. Iwundu (2008) posits that personnel re-training has to do with the diverse activities organized to upgrade teachers to carry out additional duties and take up more challenging positions in the organizational hierarchy. It is a way of preparing the teacher so that they can flow with the trend of things, as drastic changes occur in the educational system. He argued strongly that the teacher like his colleagues in other professions requires re-training in order to meet the developmental challenges of the modern society.

Adeniyi (1991)on his part, argues that personnel re-training is a systematic development of the knowledge, skills and conduct employees need to deliver adequately on a given task. It encompasses all the processes a teacher passes through to polish his skills, knowledge and behavior through learning experiences, in order to achieve effective performance in a range of activities. In support of this, Cole (2002) asserts that personnel re-training is any learning activity geared towards the acquisition of specific knowledge and skills, to excel in an occupation. Personnel retraining therefore, refers to an organized approach to training which involves a logical sequence of activities that begin with establishment of policy and the resources to manage it and terminates at evaluation and feedback.

In-Service Programme

Sergiovanni and Starrat (1999) referring to in-service education as a form of personnel retraining, states that it is the efforts put in by the administrator of an institution to enhance the quality of their staff through seminars, conferences and workshops. These trainings are occasioned by a feeling of lack of efficiency in the teachers. In-service programmes are aimed at helping teachers, administrators and other educators to improve their professional knowledge, competence, skill and effectiveness. Iwundu (2008), on his part, sees in-service education as education acquired in an organized setting which allows teachers to become more competent in their subject matter areas in order to be on a par with developmental changes and explore different educational and technological content to improve self-competence. Sophisticated forms of teachers are required to develop students' competencies such as deep mastery of challenging content, critical thinking, complex problem solving, effective communication, collaboration and self-direction. To achieve this, the teachers need to engage in training activities in addition to their professional certification, to improve their knowledge, skills and attitudes, in order to effectively educate their students.

Seminar and Conference

They can take the form of seminars, conferences, workshops, in-service education, learning teams, networking, Cambridge Professional Development, independent study, G-suite training for teachers and webinars. Personnel retraining courses may require assignments or collaboration tasks, just as a college class might require. These retraining opportunities should be well defined and related to something that can be functional in the classroom. Many personnel re-training culminate with a certificate of completion. Adamolekun (1998) views seminars and workshops as short duration exercises for more experienced staff which focuses on specific problems or issues. The advantage of these types of trainings is that both the trainers and participants have the opportunity of acquiring new ideas and clearing confusions they have in their heads through questions and answers. The participants can ask questions relating to areas they have difficulties in their jobs and at the end of the session, they become better equipped to deliver on their jobs. Iwundu (2008) identified lectures, workshops, seminars and conferences as effective personnel retraining where resource persons, scholars and professionals present papers on issues and problems in education. These methods of training involve different resource persons discussing a problem, examining new techniques and imparting knowledge to a group of people who are also given the opportunity to ask questions.

Collaboration and Team Building Programmes

National Staff Development Council (2001) states that the personnel re-training which has high levels of learning for its students, teachers and administrators as its objective requires an approach different from the work-shop driven approach. It asserts that the most powerful forms of personnel training occur in on-going teams which meet on a weekly, bi-weekly or monthly basis with the purposes of learning, joint lesson planning and problem solving. Collaboration and team work as stated earlier, are key skills of the 21st century. Prichard and Ashleigh (2007) states

that team building is one of the mechanisms used by organizations to develop sustainable organizational culture where employees work together and one feels happy to go to work daily, which in turn improves the relations and strengthens the bond among employees. These learning teams read articles, attend workshops or courses or invite consultants to assist them in acquiring knowledge or skills. In addition to the regular meetings, the team members observe one another in the classroom and conduct other job related responsibilities.

Many teachers also benefit from networking with other schools that share common interests. Some of such networks have face-to-face meetings, while others use electronic means such as e-mail, hangout, whatsApp, Zoom, Google Meet and bulletin boards to communicate between meetings or as a substitute for meetings. Such virtual networks can provide important sources of information as well as interpersonal support required to remain relevant in a changing, complex classroom practices.

The school can invite school intervention consultants who help teachers and administrations implement new instructional strategies and successfully use technology in their classroom. The school can also provide full-time in-school coaches who assist principals in implementing standards-based curriculum in the classroom. Additionally, the school can employ external consultants or facilitators who assist schools and teams in planning and evaluation of program efforts. They can also employ substitutes who cover classes while teachers learn lead-edge ideas and practices from them.

Common Core State Standards

This is taught in separate sessions to administrators and teachers. The workshops answer questions related to the interpretation of specific standards as well as offer strategies for implementing the teaching of some content area standards.

Assessment and Evaluation

A personnel re-training course on a weekend, or single session on assessment and evaluation will help educators and administrators develop new and innovative ways to assess students in a variety of content areas. Not all assessment needs to be written. In fact, there are a variety of assessments ranging from performance tasks to informal and formal. Some assessment and evaluation training sessions will focus on particular types of assessment that will be required in the following school year, but most will share a variety of forms in which assessment can be used to evaluate learning.

Differentiated Learning

Students learn in different ways and meeting the individual needs of every student in the classroom can be quite tasking, but it is most expected in the 21st century learning environment. This type of training offers teachers new ideas on how to differentiate their instructions in order to meet the individual needs of the students.

Closing the Achievement Gap

Some students come into the classroom at a disadvantage maybe because of their family background or upbringing. The teacher is expected to work toward closing that achievement gap for all students. Culturally relevant pedagogy and the use of visual and performing arts can be of help in closing the achievement gap. A workshop on this will offer the teacher new strategies and real life situations through which the achievement gap can be closed throughout the school year.

Guided Reading

Guided reading helps to enhance students' reading skills as well as offer them the opportunity to discuss and criticize the books they read. A

workshop on guided reading will offer new strategies for teachers to make reading fun to students.

Nonfiction/Content Area Reading

Real world reading is most often informational in nature. Workshops such as these offer teaching strategies that use nonfiction writing and texts to build background knowledge and vocabulary through scaffolding content area instructions. This workshop opportunity also helps teachers to foster inquiry and 21st century thinking skills through the use of different teaching techniques.

Adolescent Literacy

Adolescent readers and writers are often reluctant to take part in reading based activities. This workshop will teach teachers how to foster a classroom community of readers and writers who use critical discussions, mentor texts, and mediation. Strategies to re-engage males at this level will also be shared.

Conclusion

The world is going through a period of rapid change in an increasing globalized world to which teachers need to adapt to remain relevant in the school environment and the classroom. One of the many challenges confronting teachers in this era is lack of technology training. The only way to remedy it is through personnel re-training. Therefore it become very important to give personnel retraining a holistic approach in order to make teachers to be at par with the students who are digital native at the global world.

Suggestions

1. Funding of the sector should take a holistic approach.
2. Government should embark on re-training of all personnel in the education sector.
3. Education managers should be equipped with the appropriate and requisite skills in information and technology so as to be able to impact such skills to the students.
4. Power supply in the country should be massively increased and improved upon so as to enhance information and technology in the country.

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