A PHILOSOPHICAL DISCUSSION OF QUALITY ASSURANCE IN TEACHER EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

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Abstract
This paper attempts to discuss 'Quality Assurance in Teacher Education in Nigeria'. This is with the view to discuss quality assurance in Teacher Education generally and quality assurance in Teacher Education in Nigeria specifically. The discussion was in philosophical perspective, thus the method of research involves philosophical analysis which includes logical, linguistic, expository and critical analyses. It was found that Teacher Education involves the education of Teachers for the acquisition of various levels of knowledge, understanding and disposition towards the development of the society. It was also found that Teacher Education involves education of Teachers in various areas of specialization and various professions. Quality assurance in Teacher education would involve ensuring education for balanced development of the learner and progressively specialized/professional development of the learner towards balanced development of the society and specialized/professional development of the society. Teacher education in Nigeria is found to be good in content but not so good in terms of learning environment which in turn affects the quality of Teacher education and the quality of development of the society. It is therefore recommended that the learning environment be drastically improved upon for quality assurance in Teacher education and in turn quality assurance in the development of the society.

Keywords: Philosophical analysis; Faculty of Education; School of Nursing; Police College; Nigerian Defence Academy.
Introduction

Education involves the acquisition of knowledge and understanding for the development of oneself and the society (Peters, 1966, Hirst & Peters, 1979, Akinpelu, 1981, Akinpelu 2005, Plato 360 BC). Thus the hallmark of education is the manifestation of knowledge and understanding. However knowledge and understanding that do not lead to desirable disposition of the individual towards the development of the society is not considered to constitute knowledge and understanding. For instance the knowledge of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) that explores hacking of confidential information of other people on the internet is inimical to the development of the society.

Thus education involves a process that recognizes the need for acquisition of knowledge and understanding for desirable disposition of the individual towards the development of the society (Frankena 1973, Akinpelu 1981, Akinpelu 2005, Plato 360 BC). This implies that education warrants the acquisition of learning and character; whereby learning would imply knowledge and understanding; and character would imply desirable disposition, desirable attitude, towards the development of the society.

It follows that Teacher education, which is the education of teachers, implies the acquisition of knowledge, understanding and desirable disposition for the development of teachers and the society.

Thus teacher education would warrant the acquisition of skills and desirable disposition in basic disciplines and specialized and professional disciplines like: history, language arts, communication and information technology, space science, religion, nursing, medicine, engineering, police work and military work.

This is further justified because the various institutions of education (basic, specialized or professional) have people who teach learners how to develop in the knowledge transmitted in the institutions for the development of the learners and the society. Any knowledge that does not lead to the development of the learner and the society is not knowledge; thus those who teach in educational institutions recognized for the development of the learners and the society are teachers whether they are teachers in basic schools, specialized educational institutions or professional educational institutions.

It follows that Teacher education in this paper would be discussed in terms of education of learners in institutions that teach people to teach others in basic educational institutions, specialized educational institutions and professional educational institutions like: Universal Basic Education schools, secondary schools, and specialized/professional educational institutions including school of nursing, faculty of agriculture, college of medicine, faculty of education, police college and Nigerian Defence Academy.

Thus this paper would focus on discussion of Teacher education in the various educational institutions: what the curriculum should be; and what may be done to be sure of good quality education in these institutions; and particularly what
may be done to be sure of good quality Teacher education in Nigeria.

The Curriculum of Teacher Education

In this section of the paper Teacher education, with specific reference to the curriculum of Teacher education is discussed; moreover what may be done to ensure good quality Teacher education is discussed briefly. The curriculum of Teacher education means the learning experiences that the education of teachers should feature. The education of teachers should feature all-round learning experiences because the learners that the teachers-in-training would eventually teach are supposed to acquire all-round knowledge for all-round development of the society. Gradually the education of teachers-in-training should feature specialized learning experiences so that they could teach learners for development of the society in one area of knowledge or the other.

Thus the curriculum of teacher education should feature learning experiences for societal development in the arts, the social sciences, and the natural sciences. Subjects like history, languages, communication and information technology, biology, chemistry, physics, mathematics, space science, religion, and later on specialized disciplines like: nursing, engineering, law, medicine and security work (like police work and military work) should feature at various levels of Teacher education. This is necessary so that the learners that the teachers would eventually teach could be exposed first to general knowledge and then to specialized knowledge towards general and specialized development of the society.

It follows that the curriculum of Teacher education should be carefully organized such that the teachers in training would have balanced experiences in curriculum offering initially, and later on specialized and professional experiences. This would make them perform in balanced and specialized manner when they eventually graduate at various levels and in various areas of specialization. It would help them to teach in good quality manner in various schools, colleges, faculties, academies, and universities.

In effect the curriculum of Teacher education is supposed to be balanced and later on specialized and professional so that the teachers-in-training could display good quality teaching in various educational institutions when they graduate. However the curriculum content is supposed to be taught in a conducive learning environment so that the teachers-in-training could be sure to acquire the education in a realistic manner.

Teacher Education in Nigeria

The curriculum of teacher education in Nigeria and indeed of education generally in Nigeria appears to be balanced at the initial stage. This is because teachers in training are exposed at the initial stage of their education to all-round learning experiences; that is experiences in the arts, social sciences, and natural sciences. It is a basic requirement for admission to educational institutions that
would teach prospective teachers. The applicants are supposed to have acquired some amount of education in five basic (school certificate or equivalent) subjects, including English, Mathematics, a social science subject, and a natural science subject.

This is a balanced basic entry requirement for applicants for teacher education. Moreover during the course of study whether at the Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE) level, or Degree level or some other professional level, the teachers in training are exposed to certain amount of balanced learning experiences before they proceed to learning about certain areas of specialization — such as arts education, social science education, science education, or some other specialized/professional education (e.g. nursing, social work, police, and military).

However, although the basic entry requirement and the initial learning experiences appear to constitute good basic learning experiences in teacher education, (because they are balanced learning experiences for balanced development of the society) subsequent learning experiences do not appear to constitute good enough learning experiences for balanced and specialized development of the society.

This is because as the teachers in training mature they are supposed to learn the curriculum content in learning environment that would buttress what they are learning. When the environment does not buttress the curriculum content, they tend to disbelieve the content and seek alternative disposition towards their development and the development of the society.

The progressively mature teachers in training have the intellectual and psychological maturity to interact with the curriculum content in more intensive manner than the less mature learners at the basic and secondary levels of education. Thus the content of the curriculum at the specialized/professional level of teacher education need to feature balanced and specialized experiences in realistcally conducive learning environment, so that the mature teachers would be sure that the content is realistic in the light of the societal learning environment.

The learning environment in this context is not just the immediate school (educational institution) environment but also the extended (larger society) environment wherein the teacher education is taking place. When the learning environment (immediate and extended societal environment) appears to disregard or belittle what the teachers in training learn, they tend to disregard or belittle their learning and opt for the "reality" in their experience of the larger society. If the reality in their experience of the larger society is corruption instead of fairly moral disposition in the society, they tend to opt for corrupt disposition to the society regardless of their curriculum experience in the teacher education institutions (which might appear to be good in terms of balance and specialization). Thus the immediate and larger society which constitute the real learning environment for the internalization of the curriculum content in teacher education need to be realitstically fairly good, balanced and specialized, before the teachers in training could be expected to have fairly good, balanced and moderately specialized teacher.
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education.
In effect assurance of good quality teacher education would require ensuring not only good curriculum content but also good learning environment (immediate and extended) in the light of the society in which the teacher education takes place.

Unfortunately in Nigeria there are worrisome evidences of corruption in the larger society that constitute the real learning environment wherein the curriculum content of teacher education takes place (Awokoya 1980, Clinton 2009, Gowon 2011 a, Gowon 2011 b). It follows that the learning environment depletes the quality of good, balanced and specialized education that teachers in training at various levels and in various areas of specialization receive. Thus for good quality teacher education in Nigeria the societal environment within which the education takes place needs to be drastically improved upon.

Conclusion and Recommendations

From the foregoing it is obvious that teacher education involves curriculum content and learning environment. It is also obvious that a good curriculum content can not survive realistically in an unconducive learning environment. It is also obvious that the learning environment can not realistically be limited to just the teacher education institutions (basic, secondary, specialized/professional). The immediate societal environment and the larger societal environment constitute the realistic learning environment of teacher education. Thus for good quality, balanced and specialized/professional teacher education in Nigeria to be assured there is need for assurance of good quality curriculum content in a realistically conducive societal learning environment.

References
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