

55

*Teachers' Mandate on Education and Social Development in Nigeria* draws articles across several disciplines in Education. These articles offer insights and analyses on educational issues, especially as they touch on teaching profession and both human and social development. The book draws its articles from the first University of Ibadan, Faculty of Education Conference, which was held in August 2001 after the rigour of peer review and editorial work. Teachers, educational administrators, researchers, social commentators, students of tertiary institutions, proprietors of schools, government functionaries and educational policy makers would find this publication a valuable resource.

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Shirley Holden Publishers (Nig) Ltd

ISBN 978-032-480-1



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# TEACHERS' MANDATE ON EDUCATION AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

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## Table of Contents

Chapters	Pages
Foreword	v
Preface	vi
Consulting Editors	viii
Notes on Contributors	viii
<b>1</b> Revisiting the Triple Mandate of Faculties of Education - Pai Obanya, Ph.D	1
<b>2</b> Realising Teachers' Mandate on Education for Societal Development: New Directions in the Production and Retention of an Effective Teaching Force - Kayode Ajayi, Ph.D	8
<b>3</b> Enhancing Access to Educational Opportunities for Pupils with Disabilities in Nigeria through Universal Basic Education- Abiola Ademokoya, Ph.D & A.M. Oyewunmi	27
<b>4</b> Relaxation Strategies as Antidote to Anxiety in Athletes' Optimum Performance - O.A. Adegbesan, Ph.D	36
<b>5</b> Boosting School Athletes' Performance through Nutrition: Tips for Physical Educators - J.F. Babalola, Ph.D	42
<b>6</b> Secondary School Physical Education Teachers' Awareness of Legal Considerations in the Teaching of Physical Education in Oyo State - A. O. Fadoju, Ph.D	53
<b>7</b> Nutritional Problems as Health Impediment to Optimum Educational Achievements of the School Aged Child - B. O. Ogundele, Ph.D	62
<b>8</b> Physiological Limiting Factors to Physical Exercise Performance -- I.O. Oladipo, Ph.D	76

<b>9</b>	Challenges of the Universal Basic Education: Issues and Implications for Counselling for All Round Development- A. O. Badejo, Ph.D	82
<b>10</b>	Pre-Primary Science Education as Foundation of Development – Ajileye, O.O.	88
<b>11</b>	Improving the Status of Vocational – Technical Education: A Route to National Development - Alade, Ibiwumi Abiodun	95
<b>12</b>	Teachers' Perception of Counsellors' Roles Performance in Selected Schools in Ibadan North East Local Government: Implications for the UBE Scheme - Gesinde, Abiodun Matthew	106
<b>13</b>	An Interdisciplinary Approach to Teaching Academic Writing in A College of Education - P.U. Akumabor (Mrs.), Ph.D	116
<b>14</b>	An Appraisal of Trends in Performance of Students in Economics at the SSCE in Ibadan North L.G.A. of Oyo State (1994-1998) – Adu, E. O., Ph.D & Ayeni, A.O., Ph.D	129
<b>15</b>	Management and Administration of Nigerian Education: Problems and Challenges Ahead - Oladejo, Maruff Akinwale & Ige, Nelson	142
<b>16</b>	New Challenges in the Methodologies of Teaching: A Case for In-Service Programme for School Teachers – Oluranti Ogunbiyi, Ph.D	152
<b>17</b>	Advances in Information Technology: Implications for the Future of Education in Nigeria - Charles .O. Omekwu	158
<b>18</b>	Organismic and Sociological Factors Affecting Societal Norms: Lessons from the Oriental Culture - Vasudev Das	172

<b>19</b>	The Symbiotic Relationship between Politics and Education – M. A. Adelabu, Ph.D	188
<b>20</b>	Beyond Schooling: Reflections on Approaches to Lifelong Learning – Abeke Adesanya. Ph.D	199
<b>21</b>	Repositioning Teaching and Teacher Education in Nigeria – O. A Moronkola, Ph.D, J. A. Adegbile, Ph.D & R. O. Adio Moses, Ph.D	209
<b>22</b>	Of Higher Education Administrators and Democracy – Can They Handle It? – Kola Babarinde, Ph.D	220

16

## New Challenges in the Methodologies of Teaching: A Case for In-Service Programme for School Teachers

By

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### Abstract

*One of the fundamental problems facing professional teachers today is the question of how current they are. A great majority of teachers have been doing the same thing, the same way all along. These sets of teachers use the same method and they have no knowledge of the current ideas and new innovations that have taken place in the educational field in recent past. Today one of the problems facing the teaching profession is the new approaches or method of teaching. Current literature is replete with some new ways of handling our classrooms. Whereas a great majority of our lecturers at the tertiary institutions are aware of these new methods but there is no way of passing them down to our teachers in the primary and secondary schools who are already on the job. Therefore this paper addresses the need for in-service programme for school teachers.*

### Introduction

In recent years, the teaching profession has attracted much attention as a result of the sudden realisation of the importance of education as an indispensable and dynamic instrument of socio-political and economic change by both the Federal and State Governments in Nigeria.

Perhaps one of the fundamental problems facing professional teachers today, is the question of how current are the professional teachers who are in schools today. A great majority of teachers who have been employed in the past decades have been doing the same thing, the same way all along. The same sets of teachers have been left in schools for long, because the government has failed to recruit new teachers. These sets of teachers, who have been exposed to the old order, use the same method and they have no knowledge of the current ideas and new innovations, which have taken place in the educational field in recent past.

In September 1976, the then Federal Government launched the Universal Primary Education Scheme. As a matter of fact, this programme was described as "the greatest social scheme ever embarked upon by any African Government."

The then Military Government embarked upon a massive programme for teacher training in order to make the scheme a huge success. More teacher-training colleges were opened to support the existing ones. Opportunities were provided for the training of jobless school leavers and those who are generally interested in the teaching career. At this period the government actually recognised the importance of the teacher in the overall development of the nation. As it was stated in our National Policy on Education that "teacher education will continue to be given a major emphasis in all our educational planning because no educational system can rise above the quality of its teachers".

At one time of the other teachers have repeatedly expressed their dissatisfaction for their job, both in terms of the salary enjoyed, in terms of the job satisfaction and more importantly in terms of the status accorded to teachers in the society. In Lagos State for example, when you read a notice pasted outside "House for Rent" and you make enquiries from the landlord, he will make you know that the house is not meant for teachers. This throws light to how teachers were placed in the society before the minimum wage era.

Today one of the problems facing the teaching profession is the new approaches or methods of teaching. Current literature is replete with some new ways of handling our classrooms. Whereas a great majority of our lecturers at the tertiary institutions are aware of these new methods but there is no way of passing them down to our teachers in the primary and secondary schools who

are already on the job. One major way of disseminating such information is through academic publication which teachers at these lower levels find difficult to understand.

According to Ndubisi (1981), teaching methods can be regarded as the sum total of all the principles of good teaching that are known to have been proved from psychological, biological and educational research. Certain methods, procedures and techniques of instruction have obviously been utilised through the long evolution of education. These approaches generally have coincided with the existing philosophies of education and the predominant theories of learning in vogue during any given period.

There is an ample evidence to suggest that many modern methods of teaching are in fact, adaptations of instructional procedures that were probably used in the past. The Greeks for example, used such methods as group discussion, field trips, and excursions, games and sports, forum, debate, argumentation, rhythmic activities through participation.

In essence, the over-riding "know thyself" approach which emphasised dialectic (question and answer) consisted of a five step proposition with reference to an idea, question, analysis, reason, conclusion and generalisation should be more emphasised in teaching. Plato's approach included the use of dialectic and intuitive reasoning. Aristotle advocated learning by direct experience.

Vitterine De Feltre the father of Secondary Education placed great attention on individual differences and practical education. The father of elementary education, Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi stressed the use of the immediate environment for learning through observations, sense impression and investigation. Herbert (1983) introduced a new psychology of learning. He identified five formal stages of instruction - preparation, presentation, comparison and abstraction; generalisation and application. Frederick (1995) the originator of Kindergarten, recognised the educational value of play, games, motor, expression, songs, language symbols, self-activity and participation in the natural environment.

Generally speaking then, methods of teaching consist of a simple or complex set of procedure used in the learning process. These sets of procedure are governed by some agreed rules. There are as many teaching methods as we have the teachers.

Still teachers are still searching for the best teaching method. Until we are able to discover the "best method" it is safe to assume the competent teachers will always use a variety of teaching methods.

It is important to note that teaching and learning are inter-related. In other words to assume that one method of teaching is the best is to suggest that we know how students learn best.

Certain fundamental instructional criteria must be considered before any single teaching can be operationally implemented. The selection of any method should adhere to the following educational principles.

- The teaching technique should be suited to the readiness and maturity level of the students using it.
- The method of presentation should be guided by the objectives of the subject matter and the purposes of the school.
- Adequate equipment should be made available to ensure effective implementation.
- The procedure should provide for sequential growth and development through a planned progression of activities and concepts.
- There should be adequate planning and preparation on the use of any instructional approach.

Notable teaching methods are: lecture method, discussion method, inquiry method, project method, problem solving method and questioning method.

**Lecture Method.** Lecture method is one of the oldest methods of teaching. In most cases the teacher does most of the talking while student's participation is reduced to nothing. This type of method is an economical means of transmitting factual information to a large audience even though there is no guarantee that effective learning will take place. Lecture method is autocratic in nature. The teacher may answer students' questions after he has concluded the lesson but this method provides little feedback to the teacher as to the effectiveness of his presentation.

In order to make an effective use of the lecture method, the following steps may be taken:

- The teacher should clearly state the purpose and major theme of the lecture.



- He should develop the lecture in a logical fashion that the pupils can follow.
- He should include clues that point out the logical development of the concepts step-by-step.
- The teacher should endeavour to provide concrete examples with some sort of summarising device.

Discussion Method: Discussion method simply means sharing information on a topic from various points of view by learners themselves while the teacher acts the role of the moderator rather than communicating knowledge.

Speaking, listening, and observing are the important attributes of the discussion method. Carin and Sund (1964) opine that discussion method provides unlimited opportunities for classroom interaction. This teaching technique can be used in the following forms; whole class discussion, small group discussion, debate, panels, and forum.

For effective discussion in the classroom the topics for discussion should be properly stated. The topic should be one which has some degree of personal relevance for the students. The teacher should also familiarise students with the material before it is discussed.

### **The Constructivist Teaching**

Development in science education in the last fifteen years have hinged on the rise of constructivism as both a philosophy and psychology for lecturing (Glassersfield, 1984). It has been advanced as a way of exploring learning through research in the classroom on learner's own dispositions to learning, and has been studied in the full range of teaching situations; from primary classrooms to undergraduate laboratories. Constructivism presupposes that knowledge is actively constructed by the knower.

This method of teaching is never certain of the system's appropriateness, and its always concerned with the expansion of self-awareness and consciousness.

### **Conclusion and Recommendation**

Perhaps after going through all the different methods of teaching, some of us may ask the question why is it that most of our teachers use the same method of teaching every year?

The answer is very simple, most of our teachers have left school for a long time and have not been given the opportunity for

re-training. Teachers should be encouraged to go for in-service training. This will brighten-up their ideas and it will enable them to know more about the recent developments in their subject area. In other professions, post-qualification examination is mandatory for their upliftment in their areas of specialisation.

Teachers should be sent back to the universities for at least three months for re-training after working for five years. This will enable the teachers to acquire more knowledge and latest techniques in teaching. More emphasis should be laid on practical instead of just theorising. Adequate provision should be made for the teachers, both the learners and the teachers should be motivated to learn. Vygotsky (1978) emphasised the need for the provision of effective teachers. According to him, this is because it is only effective teachers who know that they must focus their teaching on the learning needs of each student and build in students' strengths in seeking to remedy their weaknesses.

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