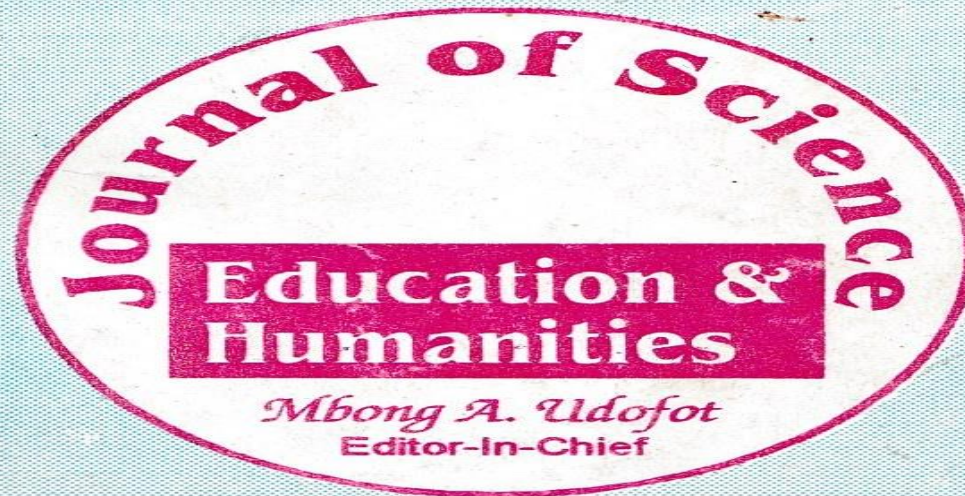


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**DIDACTIC MATERIALS AND HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT
FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF NIGERIAN EDUCATION:
THE WAY FORWARD**

By

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ABSTRACT

Material and human resources are significant input to any educational system and these are the major components of Instruction Technology. This paper views appropriate input to the system as the only way to ensure a qualitative educational output. Applying the principle of Instructional Technology, the paper discusses the current educational problems at the three levels of Nigerian educational system and proposes a model for a sustainable media production and utilization. It also suggests procedures for the development and retention of high quality teachers as appropriate input to the system.

INTRODUCTION

A society that cannot transmit knowledge and has no way of perpetuating the societal ideals is definitely moribund. The value placed on education globally is inestimable and the provision of quality input to the system is the only assurance for quality output. The pace of innovation in the field of education has been kept considerably high especially in the developed nations as a result of remarkable availability and accessibility of learning resources in various formats. Educators and educationists who care about the quality of the products from the school systems have realized that effective use of instructional technology principles is a prerequisite for high quality education in any nation. A skillful application of the

instructional technology principles will enhance the development of didactic materials and human resources required for the advancement of knowledge in contemporary Nigeria.

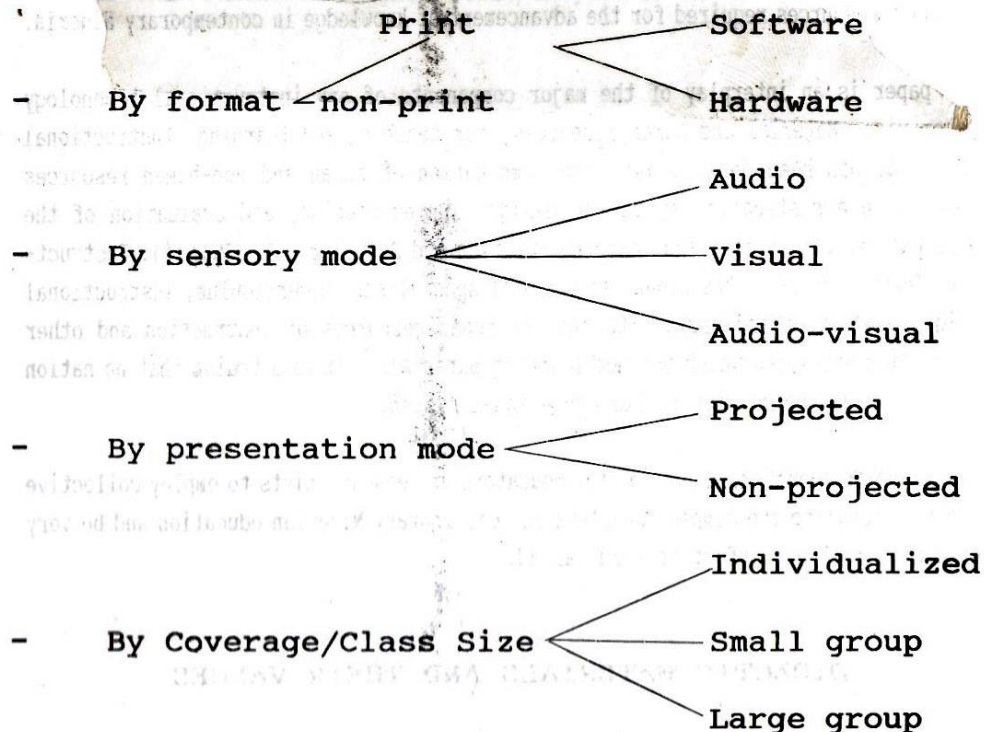
This paper is an interplay of the major components of any instructional technology system viz: Material and human resources, for teaching and learning. Instructional Technology has been defined as: The combination of human and non-human resources employed in a systematic way in the design, implementation, and evaluation of the total process of learning and teaching (Wittich and Schuller, 1979 P.xvii). Instructional Technology links the human resources of specialists in curriculum, instructional design, evaluation and media with the non-human resources of instruction and other information networks which include learning materials. It is a truism that no nation can rise above the quality of its educational system.

It is therefore essential for educators and educationists to employ collective wisdom in tackling the complex problems in contemporary Nigerian education and be very optimistic in their effort to forge ahead.

DIDACTIC MATERIALS AND THEIR VALUES

Didactic materials refer to a variety of teaching, learning instruments systematically developed or found in the learning environments e.g. the industrial based resources.

These materials may be classified according to various modes viz:



These materials can be used for instruction in two identified broad patterns. They could be used as supplement to a formal classroom teaching and as the core material carrying the primary task of teaching. Teachers are familiar with these two use patterns, though supplementary use has been reported as the most likely use pattern to win approval of the classroom teacher (Schramm, 1977; Percival and Ellington, 1984). This use pattern is not indicative of unawareness of the instructional values of these media, rather this is according to the quality of resources at their disposal. Teachers commonly use materials that are at close proximity to their learning environments. Such materials are of the low-technology quality and these are what the teachers can develop on their own. An earlier work by Ekpo (1992) revealed that teachers' competence in the development of these didactic materials has been generally low.

These materials do play active roles in the transfer of knowledge and in the provision of different types of motivation to the learner. When they are systematically developed, or selected and used in instruction, learners are encouraged to participate better in the learning process. Novelty which stimulates learning is also introduced into the learning situation. When human and administrative barriers are removed or suppressed and these materials are used by the learners, they do assist teachers to reach their instructional objectives and teach with increasing effectiveness at all levels of education.

HUMAN RESOURCES IN EDUCATION AND THEIR RELEVANCE

Human resources in education include teachers, learners, curriculum developers, parents, professionals and resource persons within the community. For various reasons, the teacher occupies a focal position whenever human resources in education are outlined. He plays a strategic role in all instructional situations directly or indirectly. Specifically, a teacher is expected to perform the following functions:

- development and/or selection of materials to be used;
- selection of the presentation strategies;
- physical presentation of the learning tasks and experiences to the learners;
- regulation of the level and extent of learners' participation;
- preparation and management of the learning environments;
- monitoring of the intellectual growth of the learners, and their social-emotional development;
- presentation of himself as a role model to the learners.

These multiple functions of a teacher single him out as a unique component in the system and the need to have him properly trained and highly motivated becomes

imperative. The society expects an intelligent and responsible teacher to exercise a positive influence on the growth and development of the learners under his care.

Learners constitute other veritable resources in an education system. A highly motivated learner is crucial to the advancement of knowledge for they are the hub or the educational wheels. Individuals within the communities with special skills or expertise do also serve as important human resources. Other professionals or community resource persons are often used to fill the gaps created where acute shortage of teachers is experienced. The quality of such persons however, must be ascertained to ensure that they are competent and suitable to provide instruction to the learners. The curriculum developer is yet another important specialist resource person in education. His role in the system is quite crucial because he designs, develops, and produces a curriculum that is appropriate for achieving all stated learning objectives. However crucial the roles of other human resources are, the teacher still occupies a unique position in the system and he is the target in this paper.

NIGERIAN EDUCATION: THE STATE OF ART

Hardly does one hear a favourable comment as far as Nigerian education is concerned during the present decade. The general public feels the standard of Nigerian education has fallen even when they cannot say what the standard was. The industries want to design and mount their educational programmes because they feel the products of Nigerian education are not meeting their specific needs. The barons would swear never to send their children to any Nigerian classroom. The market women would sometimes assert that Nigerian education is in shambles while the University teachers would weep for a crumbling edifice before their eyes. Their disillusionment can hardly be concealed.

PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL LEVELS

The foregone assessment of Nigerian education is not too far from the reality of the situation in the field. It appears the worst tragedy of Nigerian education is at the foundation levels - primary and secondary levels. When the foundation is faulty, the structure is bound to crack, nay, collapse. Some primary and secondary school teachers are still being owed their salaries and allowances. The executors of

the system sometimes appear oblivious of the fact that the teachers are in the same economically hostile environment. Many of the teachers have reverted their primary assignment of teaching to a hobby while searching for alternative avenues of livelihood. Maintenance of discipline in such a situation would tend to become problematic.

In the past a teacher was a society's model of a disciplinarian and a moralist, respected by both the students and the parents. The once attractive profession has tended to suffer untold social decadence. Thus, leaving the teachers without sufficient respect they used to carry. Recently, when the author was on a field study at Port Harcourt, she came across an advert by a local landlord at the gate of his building, which read, "Room available, teachers need not apply". That is the current status of a Nigerian teacher. The need to improve teachers' status was one of the issues which Akinyemi (1969) raised in the proposal submitted to the National Curriculum Conference twenty seven (27) years ago. In it, he stressed the fact that if a good and efficient teacher was to be kept in the service, such a teacher should be given:

decent salary and service conditions as is his counterpart with identical or similar qualifications and experience in the service of his state (NERC, 1969; 122).

Besides the poorly motivated teachers, basic infrastructural facilities like classrooms, laboratories, workshops, sporting facilities and libraries are inadequate. Some schools do not have facilities for staff convenience. Where classrooms are available, they are over crowded and the structures are dilapidated. Majority of the students lack the basic texts, at times even the teachers do not have personal copies of the prescribed texts in their subject areas. A one time Honourable Minister of Education gave this first hand information at the end of his state tour:

Down in Enugu and Abia States, we encounter a very strang phenomenon. We observed fourteen classes holding simultaneously in one open hall, with two teachers sharing one blackboard (Ayu, 1994.6).

Against this background is the cancerous problem of examination malpractice perpetuated by naive parents and poverty-stricken teachers. In the absence of inadequate provision of learning resources and facilities, students resort to rote

learning and scramble for examination papers the so called 'expo'. Some parents encourage this practice by providing money to facilitate the illegal deal. Some teachers on their part faced with non or irregular payment of salaries easily fall pray to students' pressure and financial enticement thereby encouraging examination malpractice. Examination practice is described here as a cancerous problem because it favours mediocrity.

TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS

Nigerian tertiary institutions, the power house of ideas and creativity also have problems. Persistent unrest in all campuses of higher learning has created a culture of violence, insurity and uncertainty. The campus atmosphere has given rise to various clandestine groups, the most notorious being the secret cults. Members of these notorious groups kill members and non-members without any discretion and debase womanhood at will.

Increase in students' population does not match an equitable increase in human and non-human resources. Poor funding in these institutions has left behind many uncompleted projects, empty libraries/resource centres, and laboratories. Teaching materials, stationery and laboratory consumables are no longer priority needs. The students no longer have flare for studies yet they solicit around for undeserved marks. At the heart of all these, the tertiary insituations being the conscience of the nation are expected to respond to the political, social, economic and cultural rhythms of the wider environment. Where there are no facilities to carry out fruitful teaching and research activities, students and their lecturers become fully committed to campus and Nigerian politics. They agitate against every discomfort and take part in all sympathy strike actions at the expense of their studies.

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

It is the author's strong view that a problem that is diagnosed is partly solved. A skillful application of the principle of system technology which a rational problem solving approach will ensure a prompt attention to these educational problems. In spite of the numerous problems prevalent in Nigerian Education, this paper is addressing two (2) major ones, namely: The sustainable development of didactic materials and human resources for the system. The questions one may ask at this point are:

- (a) What type of teachers can sustain the Nigerian Education System and work towards the advancement of knowledge?
- (b) If didactic materials have such numerous instructional values, how does one ensure their continued availability and utilization?

DEVELOPMENT AND RETENTION OF HIGH QUALITY AND EDUCATED TEACHERS

The type of teacher education that will cope with the challenges of the 21st Century is one that is capable of producing dedicated conscientious, well trained, properly rewarded and highly motivated teachers who will show confidence and pride in the discharge of their professional responsibilities. Such a training should ensure a reasonable long period as is the case in other professions. Teacher Education Programme (TEP) in Nigeria was planned with regular in-service education of teachers in mind. The policy statement specifically stressed that this will be systematically planned so that successful attendance at a number of such courses will attract incremental credits and/or count towards future advancement. In practice, however, this is not so (Ekpo, 1995). Training of teachers on the job which was expected to be the responsibility of National Teachers' Institute has been relegated to the background. The National Teachers' Institute was mandated by the Decree No.7 of 1978 to organise programmes for the upgrading of practising teachers at all levels. In practice, it is concentrating more on the Nigerian Certificate in Education by Distance Learning System (NCE by DLS). The DLS programme enables unqualified teachers in the system to have an upward professional growth (a vertical mobility) but the retraining of qualified teachers (horizontal mobility) for competency is yet to be adequately addressed.

Education industry unfortunately is such a crucial one and should not be toyed with. The solution to educational problems is distanced by incessant change of chief executives at the Federal level and/or at various State levels but approximated by monitoring and controlling them. Nigerian government has both a moral and an economic responsibility to have its youth well trained. Education is acclaimed to be a significant agent of socialization. Ignoring education tantamounts to sowing seeds of indicipline and Nigerian government might have no moral justification in destroying the seed they sowed. This probably accounts for why the War Against Indicipline and Corruption (WAI-C) campaigns have failed to yield the expected results.

If education is considered expensive, (as every citizen may observe) the prize of ignorance is unbearable. Nigerian problems be they educational, political or economic bother on inappropriate activities or leadership. When at a point in time a leader emerges who has a clear vision and can assemble the interpreters and control the populace, the system will be salvaged.

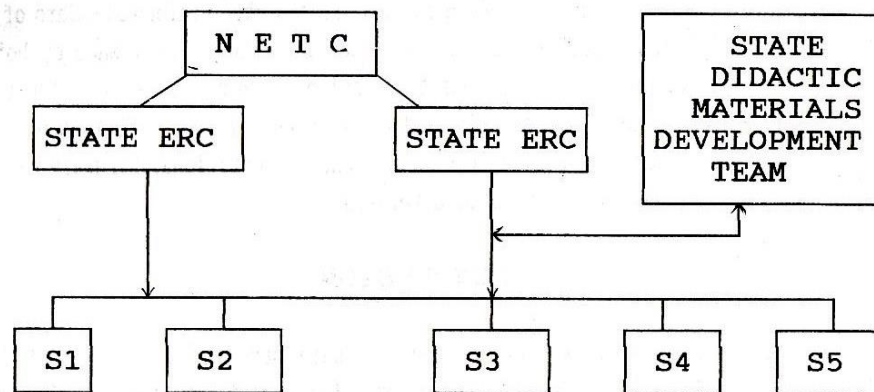
Thus, the model of Teacher Education Programme (TEP) that is most appropriate in Nigerian circumstance is one paralleled to the clinical training model. Initial teacher education exposure is not adequate to produce conscientious teachers. One short training is not enough. Teachers need to be trained and retrained to be effective agents in the advancement of knowledge. During such retraining sessions, they should be made to enjoy some material comfort. Secondly, the status of Nigerian Teachers can also be redeemed by a drastic policy implementation whereby teaching profession is significantly esteemed by the government. As a starting point this implies looking into all inspection/appraisal reports submitted to the three tier system of education. It also entails taking a decisive step not to owe teachers for jobs they have performed so long as these teachers have been adjudged as achievers.

A MODEL FOR SUSTAINABLE MEDIA PRODUCTION AND UTILIZATION

Earlier in this paper, problems of availability of didactic materials and its effect on the use pattern were discussed. A competently trained teacher needs these resources to be effective in his teaching. He should also be in position to creatively design and produce those materials or modify the commercially acquired ones to meet his learners' characteristics/learning needs. Some teachers may feel that competent local craftsmen from the communities should be called upon to produce teaching/learning materials in large quantity. This is still in order, but the actual design of the prototypes ought to be carried out by the teachers. There is no need to over stretch the over-burdened classroom teachers nor is it the intent to withdraw this role completely from the teachers. In developed nations teachers are made to develop didactic materials while they are on secondment to the teacher resource centres. They also use an Action Research Approach to develop these materials pleasurably without making the exercise burdensome. Such approaches might be used in the development of these materials for Nigerian schools. Using this approach, certain

calibre of teachers could be withdrawn from the classroom on periodic bases to serve at each State Media Resource Centre (SMRC). These teachers could systematically design and produce instructional materials under the supervision of trained media developers, visit schools in their environs and have the prototypes tested. The advantage in this approach is the establishment of a link between the school used as laboratories and the media resource centres (see Fig.1)

FIG 1: A PROPOSED MODEL FOR SUSTAINABLE MEDIA PRODUCTION AND UTILIZATION



NOTE:
 NETC: National Educational Technology Centre
 ERC: Educational Resource Centre
 S1: Schools for Testing of Prototypes.

The teachers could therefore act as catalysts stimulating other teachers in the field to work. Teachers will be proud to use their own creations. It is essential therefore that each State Educational Resource Centre be staffed with trained subject teachers with interest and aptitude for media development and experience in media utilization. The set of teachers has to be equipped with appropriate facilities to produce curricula based materials and means of circulating them to schools. They must be able to visit schools regularly to interact with classroom teachers and test their prototype hence, they need roadworthy vehicles or have an assurance of reimbursement of any

expenditure incurred. The skeletal media services provided by the National Educational Technology Centre (NETC) at Kaduna should be expanded and improved upon especially the production of the broadcast programmes. This proposal could make more high quality didactic materials available to the teaching/learning environments at affordable prices and their continued supply will be ensured.

When trained teachers use these resources in their instructions, diverse teaching approaches which would have otherwise been impossible will be introduced into their instructional processes.

As a starting point to get such a model functioning, there must be a definite government involvement. A policy statement establishing the minimum standard of media provision in all Primary/Post Primary schools has to be officially made by both the federal and state governments. This has to be followed up practically by the two (2) authorities ensuring that the schools under their control are provided with rich collection of print media, essential production and presentational hardware resources for use of projected and non-projected materials.

CONCLUSION

In the discussion so far, an attempt has been made to evoke interest in the advancement of knowledge through efficient development of human and material resources. Nigeria as a nation must recognize education as the most significant agent for her development.

Government must not pay lip service to the development of education, but it must also be seen to be actively and purposively involved in the advancement of knowledge. The quality of education provided will determine the pace, extent of national development and Nigeria's position in the committee of nations. Government at all levels should decisively show commitment in the revampment and restoration of Nigerian Education to ensure a qualitative output. There is no magic about economic and technological advancement, appropriate education is the answer.

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