

Teaching the “Would be Teachers” with Innovative Pedagogy: A Panacea for Promoting Quality Teacher Education in the Post Covid-19 Pandemic, in Enugu State, Nigeria

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Abstract

COVID-19 pandemic created a gap in teaching and learning. The problem of the study is that the art of teaching the would-be-teachers with traditional methods are being employed by some teachers without a reasonable change to innovative methods of teaching. The would-be-teachers should be exposed to effective learning processes to enable them acquire knowledge for a quality teacher education in the teaching profession. The teaching methodologies could include the use of zoom, WhatsApp, Google classroom, virtual learning, power point and telegram to facilitate their learning abilities in this post COVID-19 pandemic. The aim of this paper is to encourage the use of innovative methods as fastest ways to facilitate teaching the would-be-teachers to enable them get more exposed to the challenges of the changing society which will help them improve in their teaching profession in this post COVID-19 pandemic. Data were gathered mainly from textbooks, journals, internet and other secondary materials. This paper recommends that teachers should adopt and adjust to innovative pedagogy for effective output in teaching the would-be-teachers, especially in this post COVID-19 pandemic.

Keywords: Quality teacher education, would-be-teachers, innovative pedagogy, COVID- 19 pandemic

Introduction

A teacher is referred to as a professional who is meant to help the students gain worthwhile knowledge, competence, good attitudes/behaviours and virtue. A teacher could also be seen as a person with accurate and specific abilities, intuition, appropriate qualifications, experience, skills and knowledge which would help students become more effective in their environments (Ibrahim, 2020).

The phrase ‘would be’ is used to describe someone professing to be or intending to be something (Collins English Dictionary, 2016). Longman dictionary of contemporary English, new edition defines ‘would be’ as someone who hopes to have a particular job in a profession or intends to do a particular thing. A ‘would be’ teacher is someone wanting, professing to be or intending to be a teacher in whatsoever level of degree he chooses in the educational system. The intending teacher must as a matter of fact undergo the designated training through the institutions where the precepts of teaching and learning are taught. A person professing to become a teacher depends on the teaching institution which he enrolled in and depending on the level of degree he wants to obtain. For example, a would-be-teacher could be certified as an NCE holder, B.Ed. and M.Ed.

A would-be-teacher is someone who is intending to take up teaching as a career and purposely enrolls himself/herself in the institutions that train teachers with the clear intentions to undergo the process of teaching, imbibe the various methodological induction into the teaching profession. The clear definition of a would-be-teacher in this paper is a person (persons) who has completed the secondary level of education and in advancing his/her academic pursuits decides to seek for an admission in any institution where teachers are trained. The act of teaching the would-be-teachers should not only be the usual obsolete methods and litany of the same instructions, year in year out which some teachers employ every year round, but should also involve a reasonable change in innovative methods in teaching and learning to enable them have effective learning process and knowledge acquisition in the teaching profession.

The emergence of COVID-19 pandemic came as a strong wind of change which brought unforeseen lapses to all spheres of the affairs of the global society including the educational system. Merriam-Webster dictionary defines pedagogy as the art, science or profession of teaching. Innovative pedagogy refers to the study that gears towards developing new ideas in teaching and learning. Innovative pedagogy is a process which re-invests teaching practices with the goal of supporting the students’ learning abilities. Being innovative involves applying a new teaching approach that differs from the old to enhance teaching and learning process. Innovative pedagogical approaches are new approaches of interactions between teachers and students in order to achieve effective teaching and learning processes. The innovative pedagogy could be conceived

as the new method of teaching or doing something other than what has been in use before the innovation in the methodology (Chukwu, 2023).

Therefore, Innovative pedagogy in this paper is seen as those new ways or methods that are necessary to close the lapses sustained in teaching the would-be-teachers at least in Nigeria. These changes caused by COVID-19 was perceived to be a challenge but it calls for innovative pedagogy to enhance a consistent growth towards the educational system both in Nigeria and across borders (Sharma, 2018). Karguya,(2023) states that innovative measures of training the would-be-teachers were gradually permeating the academic system but after the COVID-19 pandemic, it was advisable to apply the innovative measures to be able to close the lapses caused by COVID-19. COVID-19 pandemic brought the transformative process which the educational system in Nigeria needs to boost the proposed ideas which it has nurtured over the years. These ideas are how to go about the introduction of an innovative pedagogy in this 21st century to complement the traditional methods of teaching which has been the norm to the future teachers. The emergence of COVID-19 pandemic hastens up the introduction of innovative pedagogy to close the lacuna of the post COVID-19 (Ibrahim, 2020). The implementation of the innovative pedagogical approaches in learning is very vital in determining the success of the would-be-teachers in the teaching profession (Pacho, 2013). The challenge which educational system is experiencing in this post COVID-19 pandemic would be facilitated by restructuring and redesigning of the teaching methodology to help the would-be-teachers acquire the necessary skills and knowledge which they need to be qualified teachers. The innovative approaches in this post COVID-19 pandemic would promote the learning processes of the would-be-teachers to become more skilfully versatile in the teaching profession.

In this post COVID-19 pandemic, education has been sourcing to embrace significant alternatives in teaching and learning processes, these alternative means are expected to close this gap created by COVID-19 at this post COVID-19 era. These alternative means are expected to improve the innovative pedagogies such as the use of zoom, WhatsApp, virtual classroom, Google classroom, power points and telegram which will enable the would-be-teachers to attain the intended goals of education in this 21st century. Educational disturbances have stirred up innovations in researches

and growth in the sector (Tenuto, 2021). It is very significant to note that knowledge and skills were more or less impacted mainly through manual measures like use of chalk and chalk board, demonstration, close contact discussion and illustration classes, but in this post COVID-19 era, the use of zoom, power, point, virtual classroom and what's App have become very paramount and a must. Both the traditional ways and innovative pedagogy should be included in the blue print of instructions at the teacher training institutions, to enhance the improvement of quality teachers in the educational system. This paper seeks to advocate for the introduction of the innovative pedagogy on the existing teaching methods in the curriculum of teacher training institutions in Nigeria to help improve teacher quality in this post COVID-19 pandemic.

Teacher quality refers to the characteristics which teachers possess that helps in stimulating the students to learn (Sharma, 2018). Some of these characteristics are commitment, mastery of subject matter, having different models of teaching and having the capacity for reflection. The quality which teachers possess contributes to how passionate and efficient they become in the teaching profession. Teacher quality does not only depend on the qualifications of the teacher rather on how well he teaches the students with effective pedagogical approaches which improves their learning outcomes. Inculcating and adjusting to innovative pedagogy by the teachers could be seen as a strategy to tackle setbacks created by COVID-19. The research adopts the phenomenological design because the researcher seeks to state things as they were without being biased. Data were organized from both primary and secondary materials. This paper intends to address the issues created by COVID-19, it has also discovered that the use of innovative pedagogy should be encouraged in teaching the would-be-teachers. The problem that bothers this study is that the art of teaching the would-be-teachers with traditional methods are being employed by some teachers without a reasonable rethink to connection to the innovative methods of teaching. The data gathered were analyzed with descriptive method of data analysis.

Teacher Training Institutions in Nigeria

The Nigerian policy on education spelt out clear mandate to the teacher training institutions to train the would-be-teachers. Teacher Training Institutions (TTI) is the body of institutions that educate and train the would-be-teachers to become professional teachers. They provide both pre-

service and in-service training for teachers. The Nigerian policy on Education opines that the teacher education shall continue to be given major emphasis in all educational planning and development because no education system can rise above the quality of its teachers (National Policy on Education, 2014). The policy categorically spelt out both the minimum qualifications for entry into the teaching institutions that will grant intending would-be-teachers the exact qualifications they will come out with. More so, the policy included that all teachers in educational institutions shall be professionally trained and the Teacher education programs shall be structured to equip teachers for the effective performance of their duties (National Policy on Education, 2014). The under listed are the Nigerian Teacher Training Institutions as prescribed in the National Policy on Education with the mandate of training the would-be-teachers to improve their professionalism. They include: Faculties of Education, Institute of Education, Colleges of Education, National Teacher Institute (NTI), Schools of Education in the polytechnics, National Institute for Nigerian Languages (NINLAN) and National Mathematical Centre (NMC).

Although, the National Policy on Education (NPE) has embedded quality specifications on the blue print that tends toward quality education of would-be-teachers, yet through observation, one can see that most teacher training institutions in Nigeria do not have very effective teaching and learning processes for their students (would-be-teachers). The same obsolete curriculum of instructions used decades ago are still in use in this post COVID-19 period. This may constitute to the factors militating against the quality of education so sought for in education system today, this obsolete curriculum cannot help in contributing to closing the lapses created by COVID-19 in this post pandemic period. The need in this dispensation centres on the inclusion of innovative pedagogy in the curriculum of teacher training institutions (Tenuto, 2021). Teachers are the fulcrum of every activity that ensures that every member of a given society becomes useful, valuable and effectively indispensable individuals who are capable in all ramifications (Onyema, 2019). During the pandemic and this post COVID-19 period, the public or government owned schools are yet to arise from the fatal blow of COVID-19 where a serious rift was created between public schools and private schools. The later was able to creatively introduce innovative means of engaging their students (would-be-teachers), such as zoom cloud meeting, WhatsApp, PowerPoint, virtual classroom, goggle classroom and telegram, whereas most of the government owned schools

in Nigeria are yet to recover from COVID-19 effects, this is because they are reluctant in adopting sophisticated innovative pedagogy. The pandemic created a serious lacuna in the teaching enterprise no doubts, but we cannot continue to nurse the wounds sustained from COVID-19 pandemic, it is time to adopt and adjust to innovative methodology in teaching and learning (Akilo, 2023).

Henry Schofield's maxim agrees to the fact that curriculum of instruction should inspire a balance between the knowledge transmission and the development of an individual when he opines that we must avoid the tendency to think of the curriculum solely in terms of knowledge to be transmitted rather than of a balance between knowledge to be transmitted and attitudes and beliefs to be developed, values to be established, individuals to be made capable of ultimately emerging as useful and valuable members of a society. In addition, David (2019) asserts that major curriculum policies, shift for innovative pedagogy especially for teacher education institutions across the world, it is his believe that curriculum policy strategies in many countries seek for the promotion of competencies as well as knowledge. He further stated that pedagogical innovative approaches in teaching and learning processes employed by the teachers for the would-be-teachers are highly essential for promoting educational quality in this post COVID-19 pandemic. Sharma (2018) states that recognizing the key roles of pedagogy is not about the policy which dictates the best teaching methods, rather, it is a matter of broadening the teaching methods, teachers' skills and techniques and helping them explore new ways of thinking, reflecting and understanding. In doing the above, he suggests that innovation in the classroom will be fostered through the learning processes in which teachers identify their creativities, intuitive knowledge and personal capacities and align them with pedagogical approaches. The new task of adjusting to the innovative approaches of teaching and learning requires that teachers especially the would-be-teachers should be ready to adopt measures which can sustain the approach in this post COVID-19 pandemic to enable them live up to their expectations in teaching profession.

Innovative Pedagogy as a Panacea to Improving the Quality of Teacher Education in the Post COVID-19 Pandemic

The problem that bothers this study is that in the art and process of teaching the would-be-teachers with obsolete and traditional methods which most teachers still employ in Nigeria, without a reasonable introduction and connection to innovative pedagogy or methods would slow down the need to cover up the lost sequence in teaching and learning prompted by COVID-19 in this post pandemic period, hence the adoption of speedy innovative pedagogy. The outbreak of COVID-19 affected all aspects of human activities globally, Nigeria inclusive ranging from education, economy, social interactions and communications, the reality of the situation was really challenging and unbearable, the educational sector remains one of the worst-hit by this outbreak. The COVID-19 problems not only had negative repercussions on the educational sector, but they also served as a wake-up call since they sparked interest in potential alternatives to the educational system. After the pandemic, educators are thrown into the throes of optional academic measures of tackling the menace. Wright (2013) states that the transformation of roles, functions and expectations which endures qualitative evolution in the education of the would-be-teachers was part of the plans after the pandemic. According to Pacho (2018), the COVID-19 pandemic has created an unanticipated negative gap in education, prompting efforts to design and promote new teaching and learning pedagogies that will aid in fostering high-quality teacher preparation for addressing issues and motivating future educators.

Innovative teaching methods that can provide aspiring teachers with the necessary knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes to respond appropriately to the day-to-day realities of a changing world should replace the previous traditional teaching methods that are overwhelmingly dominated by memorization, repetition of content, and theoretical and physical one-on-one examination oriented in nature (Pacho, 2013). The understandable and outstanding role of an educator as the knowledge transmitter who solely prepares lesson plans and delivers them in class is no longer the only representative of the demands in this 21st century education which calls for an intertwined with technology (Luthra & Mackenzie, 2020). The responsibility of the educator in the classroom needs to be re-evaluated, most especially teaching the would-be-teachers. Having access to innovative

ideas and knowledge, the would-be-teachers will be exposed to getting engaged, interested and invest in their education (Onyema, 2019).

Additionally, teachers can personalize and innovate their instructions while integrating the four Cs of 21st century teaching and learning—communication, collaboration, critical thinking, and creativity—they are considered to be knowledgeable (Onyema & Deborah, 2019). The would-be-teachers should be exposed into anticipating transformation in education which could come as a result of equipping them with information communication technology (ICT) skills to allow them to have a more interactive classroom ambience. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, educators and decision-makers will need to reevaluate their strategies and develop innovative educational approaches that will better prepare students for life after the pandemic than they would have otherwise (Onyema, 2019). According to Pacho (2013), education is seen as a practice of freedom in which teachers and students engage in critical and inventive responses to the challenging process of learning how to engage in everyday situations. Educational systems across the world including Nigeria have discovered that there is a need to cover the lost lapses in education by reviewing the curriculum and teaching methodologies which will allow global connectedness and adjustments in course contents, methods of delivery, assessments, addressing issues and challenges in the society (Pacho, 2018).

Furthermore, in order to accomplish these goals of education in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, policymakers and educators must introduce more creative methods of instruction. To better prepare instructors to serve as facilitators and coordinators of the learning resources, teacher education needs to take a more proactive role in the classroom. As the students learn, they need to learn by themselves by deciding on the necessary things to learn which promotes their creativity and critical thinking (Pacho, 2018). Pacho (2013) maintains that a good education is one that is effective and well-organized to shape an individual's mind both spiritually and intellectually. The saying that goes thus, 'I hear and I forget, I see and I believe, I do and I understand' can be an inspiration in the choices of pedagogy for enhanced retention of knowledge and application of skills. Technology which has become the key component of education in this 21st century is aimed at facilitating teaching and learning during the pandemic and in this post COVID-19 pandemic to

be a reality (Pacho, 2013). The use of these technologies in education would modify teachers' methods from the traditional approach and places them to a more flexible approach where the teachers are perceived to be facilitators, mentors and motivators who inspire the would-be-teachers to participate and learn (Onyema & Deborah, 2019).

Teaching the would-be-teachers and placing them on the quality scale to achieve a quality education for the future generations would only be achieved if there is a reasonable change to innovative methods of teaching and learning, this will enable the would-be-teachers to have an effective learning process and knowledge acquisition in the teaching profession. The teachers of the would-be-teachers are now perceived to be the mirror through which the actualization of the innovative pedagogy for improving teacher education in this post COVID-19 pandemic is made possible. Therefore, improving the quality of education in Nigeria in this post COVID-19 pandemic, the teacher-centered approach to learning must be interchanged with the learner-centered innovative approach. The innovative approach must be relevant and emphasize innovation and active acquisition of knowledge for solving societal problems to enhance social, economic and political development of both the would-be-teachers and the future generations.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The COVID-19 pandemic creates a serious gap in the landmark event to the educational institutions globally, especially in Nigeria which brought the inevitable lapses we are witnessing today. It is very important that all institutional heads and policy makers should stay co-operated to ensure teaching and learning continuity guided by the principles of innovative pedagogy. The educators should as well pick up their roles of ensuring that the would-be-teachers embrace readiness for a digitalized teaching and learning in this post COVID-19 pandemic. The needs for disruptive innovation which COVID-19 pandemic has triggered should be utilized to enable a full recovery to take shape in the field of education in this post COVID-19 pandemic. It is very imperative to have a rethink about education by finding innovative and possible ways which will make education to be constructive, reasonable, critical and creative towards solving the fast challenging world in the post COVID-19 pandemic society (Okafor, 2023).

In this study, it is therefore recommended that:

- 1) Teachers should adopt and adjust to innovative pedagogy such as the use of zoom, Google classroom, virtual classroom, What's App and power point for effective output in teaching the would-be-teachers, especially in this post COVID-19 pandemic.
- 2) The blended and articulated mode of delivery should be efficiently implemented in education, most especially now that the COVID-19 pandemic is almost over.
- 3) Learning methods should be focused on the pedagogical learning approaches and learner-centered methods and approaches.
- 4) The norms of teaching and learning need to be more authentic, inquiry-based, with the aim of inculcating desirable knowledge, skills, values and positive attitudes to enable learners to be more active in solving both existing and unknown problems.
- 5) The government should put more effort in education in financing the development of technology, teacher training and strengthening the technological infrastructure which will help in the development of education in this post COVID-19 pandemic.

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