

RESOURCE-BASED LEARNING AND TEACHER EDUCATION: A SYNERGY FOR REVAMPING THE NIGERIAN ECONOMY

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ABSTRACT

This paper advanced the paradigms of modern technology use in pre-service teacher education in Nigeria using the Resource-Based Learning (RBL) model. It is based on the need to diversify instructional practices in all the disciplines in teacher education. It is a framework for achieving qualitative education, a driver for the attainment of the nation's philosophy and objectives. The application of this model is hoped to achieve knowledge emancipation and the production of a highly skilled workforce that will subsequently put the nation on a sound footing to economic recovery. For this to happen, teacher education institutions need to provide modern technological tools for the effective and efficient training of teachers in various disciplines. This alone may not avail much until teacher educators' capacity to interact with technology in their instructional practices is improved and assured.

KEYWORDS: *Resource-Based Learning, Teacher Education, Diversification, Education and Economic Development*

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INTRODUCTION

Education has been acknowledged world over as a potential medium through which nations achieve their hopes and aspirations. At the center of every educational programme is the teacher, who is the epitome of knowledge and excellence among those that he teaches and the society or community where he lives. Teacher education guarantees the provision of trained teachers in different levels of education to perpetuate the knowledge impartation to learners from the early childhood levels and beyond.

The tremendous power of education can be used to surmount the numerous developmental challenges facing the nation through the proper use of eclecticism, which comprises taking the best from every method, including technological tools in its teacher education. Prominent among these challenges is the Nigerian economy which has recently been said to have come out of there cession that is yet to be felt by the ordinary citizens. Effective use of modern technology in teacher education based on the Resource-Based Learning model could keep the Nigerian economy out of recession forever, with the proper preparation of the Nigerian teacher to inspire pre-service teachers to acquire high, complex and creative problem-solving skills (Maiyanga&Maculay, 1998). Teacher preparation methods that comprise digital technologies'

inclusion in teacher education could also improve the quality and quantity of manpower development in schools which have a positive effect on economic growth (Omojimate, 2010).

Over the years the role of the teacher has shifted in paradigm due to the evolution of the improved technological base of every facet of the society, making things to be done easier, faster and better. This has paved way for teaching to be done using various modes, thereby shifting perspectives on teaching and learning. The rapidly expanding use of computer networking in many parts of the world is transforming the way we communicate with each other and conduct instruction transaction as well as produce knowledge. It has now become possible for learners to access educational or learning materials and extend learning materials to worlds far beyond the classroom. Educational resources in teacher education in the form of methods, materials and teaching procedures are available online for pedagogical purposes (Warschauer & Kern, 2002; Dankaro, 2017).

The presence of modern technologies has necessitated the call for teacher educators, to incorporate these technologies in their instructional practices. This will be a diversification strategy aimed at radically departing from the use of not only textbooks and chalkboard in lesson delivery, but also interacting with modern technology in the classroom. This could increase in tandem the rate of assimilation of the knowledge being imparted to the learners. The end users are the pre-service teachers being prepared in teacher education institutions to execute the skills acquired in their work ethics and practice for maximum efficiency in nation-building and economic recovery. The challenge now is to stock teacher education institutions with high definition Information and Communication Technology (ICT) resources make teacher educators ICT compliant as well as provide a framework for its utilization in lesson delivery in the various disciplines of study.

Sadly though, Tahir as cited in Maiyanga and Maculay (1998) observe that “teacher education in Nigeria is oblivious of the recent advances in the area of telecommunication and digitization of information technology”. Before the advent of digital technologies, teacher education depended on textbooks, chalkboard and the teacher educators’ oral rendition of his knowledge of the subject matter. Similarly, Ada (2013) decries the low level of ICT literacy of teachers when he posits that, “A teacher of the 21st century must be ICT compliant. The issue of illiteracy even among teachers is a worrisome one”. This development does not make way for creative innovations and ingenuity in teacher education, especially in the aspects of accessing digital educational resources in the form of methods, materials, and procedures in learning environments.

The Resource-Based Learning Model (RBL)

The Resource-Based Learning (RBL) model gives this paper the theoretical backing due to its potential to supplement instructive teaching methods. This is based on the information available and the ability to transmit that information in multiple formats (Hill & Hannafin, 2001). The RBL perspective is an educational model designed to actively engage students with multiple resources both in print and non-print form. Resource-based units are planned by the teacher educator and the media specialist. Learners take responsibility for selecting resources, human or otherwise, that appeal to their own learning preferences, interests, and abilities (Harkness, Chandra & Hettich, as cited in Orey, 2010).

Resource-Based Learning (RBL) resources that could be incorporated in lessons, in reports, the globe, books, map, slide projector, computer, video, field trip, floppy disk, and CD-ROM. These resources’ inclusion into planned, authentic tasks, afford students opportunities to develop the skills and techniques necessary to become autonomous, self-directed learners and effective users of information. RBL model propounded by Hegel, Marx and Auguste Comte

(McBeath, 2008) is pre-digital learning model, the digital age has changed the very nature of the resource as a result of technological developments and the ability to catalog and classify digital media.

The model offers considerable opportunities to teacher educators and pre-service teachers through the provision of data that provides information about documents that can be retrieved by searching for the author, creation date, or content (Hill & Hannafin, 2001). It also allows teacher educators and pre-service teachers to use those parts of the resources that will satisfy their curiosity, educational needs and engender learning. It has closed the distance that once stood between teacher educators/pre-service teachers and resources use in teacher training.

Diversification

At the mention of the word diversification, one often contemplates the biblical injunction, “you have stayed too long on this mountain” (Deuteronomy 1:6), suggesting the need for a change of course or direction. The allegory, “you have stayed too long on this mountain” could symbolize or serve as a wake-up call for teacher educators to diversify their instructional strategies by incorporating modern technologies into their instructional practices, in addition to complementing the textbooks and chalkboard that they use.

Weihmeier (2001) defines the term diversification as “the development of a wide range of products, skills, and interests, in order to be more successful or reduce risks”. The same dictionary goes further to talk of diversification as “to change or to make something change so that there is a greater variety”.

In business or commercial parlance, Brown (2015) conceives diversification to be “an investment policy of spreading investments and risks among a number of securities or funds”. It is the process of helping to reduce risk by investing in different types of individual funds or securities. Diversification is an investment strategy for spreading the principal among different market sectors, industries, and securities. The overall goal is to protect the value of your portfolio in case single security or market sector takes a serious downturn and drops in price. In a lay man’s language, diversification could mean. “not putting all your eggs in one basket”.

It is in line with these definitions that this paper makes a case for teacher education to detour, take an alternative strategy or deviate into instructional strategies that incorporate ICT resources in their instructional practices and a change from the usual oral presentations, using chalkboard and textbooks. Consideration should be given to the adoption of modern technological tools and enmeshing them in traditional lesson delivery as it is done in some parts of the world. Research has shown that Information and Communication Technology (ICT) resources used in content delivery in State and Federal Colleges of Education in Nigeria are fairly available (Zubairu, 2014 & Dankaro, 2017). Teacher educators have also perceived ICTs as very useful in their teaching and are aware of the inherent potentials of ICT resources in their content delivery (Zubairu, 2014). The Nigerian teacher educator needs to be equipped adequately to function maximally in his or her world of work to produce the desired workforce needed to maximally achieve the provision of a highly skilled workforce that desirous in the economic development in the country.

Education and Economic Development

It is a known fact that education is the manufacturer of society, whatever the government of a nation desires in the society is usually put into a school programme to bring about the desired change (Mallum & Abiola, 2002). This position is adequately amplified in the philosophy of Nigerian education as enshrined in the National Policy Education (NPE, 2004) thus;

Education is an instrument for national development; to this end, the formulation of ideas, their integration for national development, and the interaction of persons and ideas are all aspects of education. For the philosophy to be in harmony with Nigeria's national goals, education has to be geared towards self-realization, better human relationship, individual and national efficiency, effective citizenship, national consciousness, national unity, as well as towards social, cultural, economic, political, scientific and technological progress (6-7).

Similarly, the goals of teacher education in Nigeria include the following;

- To produce highly motivated, conscientious and efficient classroom teachers for all levels of our educational system;
- Encourage further the spirit of enquiry and creativity in teachers;
- Help teachers to fit into the social life of the community and the society at large and enhance their commitment to national goals;
- Provide teachers with the intellectual and professional background adequate for their assignment and make them adaptable to changing situations;
- Enhance teachers' commitment to the teaching profession.

Nigeria's philosophy in education and the goals of teacher education all express the hope of achieving economic emancipation and national development using the instrument of education. Teacher education, one of the forms of higher education in Nigeria, is rapidly expanding, which does not only translate to higher income but also economic development. Kruss, McGrath, Petersen, and Gastrow (2015) asserts that;

Investing in education leads to improved incomes, but that's just too simple a model to account for real development in the real world. There has been an increasing understanding that higher education plays a key role in economic development..... higher education increases skills and knowledge and results in higher income (24).

It is in the same vein that (Ogunyinka, Okeke&Adedoyin, 2015) affirm that;

The teacher has the responsibility of translating educational policies into practice and programmes into action. It is clear that the role of the teacher in sustainable development cannot be quantified, especially in training personnel in various areas of the workforce. For national development and peaceful coexistence to be attained, there is a need to give priority to investment in human capital through teacher education and training (112).

The potentials of teacher education institutions to provide manpower needs in education imply that human beings are the active agents who accumulate capital, exploit natural resources, build social, economic and political organizations and carry forward national development. Clearly, a country which is unable to develop the skills and knowledge of its people and utilize them effectively in the national economy will be unable to develop anything else (Omojite, 2010).

The Synergy of Resource-Based Learning (RBL) and Teacher Education

In the current educational policy of Nigeria, the integration of ICT in education has been acknowledged as a

potential instrument for easing teaching and learning across the curriculum. Fakeye (2010, p. 270) contends that, "... increased access to ICT in the home, at work and in educational establishments could mean that learning becomes truly a lifelong activity..." The changes that have been heralded by the advent of ICT in all facets of life including education, informed the review and its inclusion in the National Policy on Education (FRN, 2004). According to the document, this was "in keeping with the dynamics of social change and their demands on education". The 4th edition was necessitated by some policy innovations and changes and the need to update the 3rd edition (FRN, 1998, p. 5) accordingly. These innovations and changes were nine and include: "introduction of ICT into the school system."

In addition to the Federal Government's position on ICT education, the National Commission for Colleges of Education's (NCCE) minimum standards for the Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE) (FRN, 2012), in some disciplines has stated categorically that ICT components are the facilities for preparing pre-service teachers. This is to ensure effective and efficient instructional delivery of lessons in the teacher preparation process as has been testified above, concerning the benefits that are inherent in the use of ICT resources. The government did not stop at that, in order to ensure that all aspects of the nation's life over time were transformed, a National Education Policy Implementation Committee was set up to translate the policy into a workable blueprint. This was aimed at providing guidelines for the bodies whose duty was to implement the policy. The committee was also to develop monitoring systems for an educational plan as it evolved (NPE, 2004). It is in place, therefore, to adopt any teaching strategy that incorporates ICT tools or its elements for functional instructional purposes that will aid human resource development, a virile tool for a nation's economic advancement.

The foregone discussion on digital tools in teacher education is to pave way for instructional models like the Resource-Based Learning (RBL) to thrive. RBL is a view which gives prominence to the role of resources in the teaching and learning process. It is concerned with the principles which guide the selection and the organization of the content of learning materials and the use of such materials, which includes;

- The nature of the activities which learners will be carrying out
- Whether students will be working individually or in groups
- The nature of the support students can get
- The ways in which learning will be assessed
- Technical and professional issues, which include;
- The design and production of materials and the appropriate use of the various media
- classification issues for cataloguing or retrieval systems

RBL therefore, conceptualizes learning as a process which foregrounds the importance of the resources available to learners and in so doing presupposes that the interaction between the learner(s) and the resources (which may include electronic resources and human resources) are the main structuring device of the learning situation. Good teaching methods help the students to question their preconceptions and motivate them to learn, by putting them in a situation in which they come to see themselves as the authors of answers and as the agents of responsibility for change. This stance is a rightful step in the right direction towards promoting academic excellence in Nigerian teacher education which is a viable tool for economic development.

The Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) had built and equipped ICT centers in many Colleges of Education

across the nation between 2012 and 2014 to facilitate the utilization of ICT resources. The National Communications Commission (NCC) also distributed laptops in higher institutions of learning as some of the efforts of the Federal Government of Nigeria towards achieving its commitment to the pronouncements in the National Policy on Education and the National Policy on Information Technology. Teacher educators from different fields in Nigeria were also sent on capacity building workshops and training on computer use in education at the Digital Bridge Institute, Utako-Abuja. These were efforts towards enabling teacher educators to use methods with elements of digital tools application in them.

The utilization of ICT tools in education has been increasingly felt in recent times and it focuses on bringing a lot of advantages to the learner. The primary advantage of using ICT tools is that they facilitate retrieval of up-to-date information at a click of a mouse, which enhances teacher educators' lesson delivery. According to Samuel (2009) ICT tools can perform four important functions as follows:

- The speed and automatic functions of ICT can enable a teacher to demonstrate, explore or explain aspects of his teaching and his pupils' learning more effectively;
- The capacity and range of ICT can help a teacher and his pupils to gain access to historical, recent or current information;
- The provisional nature of information stored, processed and presented using ICT allows the work of teachers and pupils' to be changed and improved easily, for example, writing materials which require corrections or several edits;
- The interactive way in which information is stored, processed and presented can enable teachers and pupils to explore models, communicate effectively with others and present information efficiently for different audiences.

Oliver (2003) explains seven distinct advantages of using ICT in English classrooms, for example. The advantages are as follows:

Catalysts - Computers act as a catalyst for pupil activity. Unlike television, computers invite learners to be active. Pupils cannot just sit staring at a computer screen, they have to do something. Related to this point is the idea of a challenge. Working with computers offers an almost continual series of minor (and sometimes major) problems that have to be solved in many cases before the user can continue.

Collaboration - Another key concept is collaboration or co-operation. The computer screen allows pupils to do things together, two or three or seven, even a whole class, if the screen is big enough, all can participate in the same activity.

Creativity - Computers also encourage creativity. Sound, pictures, animations, video, and text can be put together in new and different ways to make stories more convincing and explanations clearer than they would have been without this multi-media tool.

Complementary Function - Computers seem to work best as tools for learning and teaching when they complement other teaching and learning activities. Many computer programmes for young learners can be used as sources of teaching materials such as flashcards for oral activities, materials for wall charts and classroom displays. Electronic reference materials such as dictionaries can be consulted when needed for writing.

Control - Most uses of ICT do not lend themselves to teacher control. The internet is a good example where

millions of texts are available. Once pupils have learned basic ways of obtaining information, they can find out many things for themselves that the teacher may not know much about (Oliver, 2003).

Competence - Competence is a key concept, both linguistic and technical. The computer is not a mechanical surrogate teacher. Teachers cannot get pupils to create internet web pages if they have no idea how to do web pages themselves. It is no use for teachers to tell the pupils to use an electronic dictionary if they do not know what it contains how to get at it or (at least) how to interpret it. Some pupils already know a lot about computers and teachers should invite them to help where this makes sense.

Communication - The primary purpose of ICT in second language teaching is to stimulate real communication among pupils and between teachers and their pupils within a class. ICT has an obvious role in furthering communication between learners from different countries who are learning English as a vehicle for international contact and understanding (Oliver, 2003).

To support this, Muodumogu (2013) posits that children are growing up in a world where the availability and use of technology are growing at an alarming rate and that the present generation has become computer/ICT natives. The use of these technologies has become a culture unto which they are hooked. Rather than try to sever them from the gadgets, they should be harnessed and used for instructional purposes.

In addition, any teaching model with elements of electronic devices like RBL, allows multimedia and hypermedia applications to be used in teacher education. These have a significant impact on the learners because they can incorporate a wide variety of visual and audio data forms to help the learner to learn. Multimedia and hypermedia software can provide interesting learning environments and can simulate authentic tasks for students. Research in the neural sciences (a collection of disciplines unified by a concern for the function of the brain) support the view that multimedia exercises can be designed to take advantage of how neural processes work together in the learning process (Knowles, 2004).

Khan, Hasan, and Clement (2012) acknowledge that ICT enhances higher education by enabling effective storing/sorting of information, offering new or fast ways of communication that enable the reduction of information quantity towards higher quality and better structure. It can be integrated into teaching and learning strategies – and used to support relative learning theories. ICT (computers, Inter and Intranet) can be used to create new types of interactive learning media for improved quality, equity, and access in higher education for skilled manpower generation.

The benefits of RBL with elements of ICTs in them education as enumerated in the foregone discussion have shown that digital resources possess massive information deposits that could impact teacher education in all the schools in the teacher education programme as follows;

- Pre-Primary Education or Early Childhood and Care Education
- Primary Education
- Junior Secondary Education
- Adult and Non-Formal Education
- Special Needs Education (NCCE2013. Curriculum Implementation Framework for NCE, 2012 Edition).

These have the potential to provide leverage to problems of lack of instructional materials in teacher education.

Research has shown that a strong correlation exists between ICT supported education and economic development in Nigeria (Ukpe, 2016). It is for this reason that this paper advocates the adoption of the RBL model in teacher education in Nigeria to keep its economy out of the doldrums.

CONCLUSIONS

The Resource-Based Learning (RBL) model demand that teacher educators adhere to a more didactic and informative pedagogy. This allows them to diversify and alter their instructional practices and use the resources to satisfy the curiosity of learners in interactive environments; where learners collaborate with their peer, teachers, and communities to access information resources. Teacher education in Nigeria using this model is hoped to raise the quality of teachers in different disciplines with the capacity and skills to the developmental challenges in Nigeria and give its economy a turnaround.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The position of this paper strongly supports the promotion of teacher education in Nigeria using resource-based learning perspective and too fast track the recovery the Nigeria that has just come out of recession and keep it out of recession, the following have been recommended;

- Resource-based learning materials need to be provided in Colleges of Education in Nigeria for optimal utilization in instructional delivery.
- Teacher educators' capacity to interact with technology in lesson delivery has to be attended to. This could be by way of training them to be ICT compliant, through attendance to capacity building workshops that will further sharpen their ICT skills.
- The National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) should review its conditions for employing teacher educators to include ICT competence as a requisite condition for the hiring of teacher educators.
- A road map for the adoption of RBLmodel in the various disciplines needs to be drawn to give direction to teacher educators on how best they could apply the model in lesson delivery. To be ICT compliant alone will not avail much until a guide on how to use the RBL in different disciplines and topics is developed.

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