

# Essence of Teaching Practice to Professional Development of Quality Teachers for Nation Building

Sam Oluseyi Oyekan

*Department of Special Education & Curriculum Studies*

*Adeyemi College of Education, Ondo, Nigeria*

## Abstract

*Education is often regarded as vibrant instrument and strength of change for sustainable development, stable polity and viable economy of any progressive nation. The school is expected to provide an inclusive training of children and youths to develop creative thinking, entrepreneurial initiatives and critical abilities to earn gainful living through enduring wealth creation in a happy expectancy. It implies putting in place a coherent and functional teacher education that will produce competent teachers, who will discover and nurture the inherent talents of individuals into productive manpower for national development. The operational curriculum of a creative teacher education programme consists of general studies in education, basic studies in educational foundations, studies related to students' intended field of teaching, teaching practice and research project. Herein a school-based teaching practice becomes a mandatory practical instructional activity for professional development and ethical orientation of quality teachers over a period of time. A purposeful and well-organised teaching practice shall severally inculcate in the prospective teachers the relevant subject knowledge, creative pedagogical skills, rational professional standards and global best practices, which might facilitate their instructional proficiency and work productivity as well as students' conceptual understanding and academic achievement. This makes the teaching practice a viable quality control mechanism in ensuring meaningful teaching, teacher effectiveness and achievement motivation of learners in classroom practices. Hence, it is suggested that sufficient funding, provision of modern learning facilities, infusion of entrepreneurship and regular training of classroom teachers to improve their instructional delivery and students' academic achievement are the basic options for quality educational system.*

## 1. Introduction

The rapid changing world of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century presents new challenges of endless opportunities and realistic possibilities with great expectations from purposeful instructional leadership for human capacity development and progress of nations. Education has been widely recognised as the firm foundation for quality life investment in the process of nation-building process. A functional, comprehensive and equitable education is often regarded as vibrant instrument and strength of change for sustainable development, stable polity and viable economy [1]. It is informed by the fact that education nourishes the enabling capacity and capability of the people for the existence, development and management of resources in any democratic society. School is expected to provide an inclusive training of children and youths to develop creative thinking, entrepreneurial initiatives and critical abilities to earn gainful living. It implies putting in place a coherent and functional teacher education that will produce competent teachers, who will discover and nurture the inherent talents of individuals into productive manpower for national development. This demands a comprehensive teacher education that will embrace the global changes in school curriculum, pedagogy, world of work, economy and development prospects of emerging nations.

Many notable teacher-training institutions have continually placed more emphasis on preparing the classroom teachers, who will provide meaningful instruction and evaluation that could nurture competent and responsible school graduates. Courses in instructional methodology and in subject matter to be taught are utilised to prepare an effective teacher who will be versed in the formulation of learning objectives, organisation and presentation of good lessons, classroom management, assessment of curriculum contents, and provision of learning guidance. Hence, a school-based teaching practice

(TP) becomes a necessary statutory training experience for all student-teachers in practical teaching, professional development, ethical orientation and community service. The intention is to produce vibrant, responsible and competent teachers with professional dexterity in teaching, assessing and remediating identified students' weaknesses as teaching progresses in relevant subjects of the school curriculum.

Healthy and brilliant enterprising children are developmental heritage and secure future of any nation. Every growing child as a learner, therefore, deserves a great teacher imbued with a vision for a secure future. Though the students may learn a great deal from their parents and mates, the teacher centrally plays a vital role in shaping their attitudes and conditioning their behaviour and responses to our dynamic society [2]. The moulding process to drive the mental revolution, instill moral rectitude and develop entrepreneurial competence of the community is severally conceived, organised and nurtured in our schools [3]. Creative teachers should have intelligent insights and right perspectives to be smart, shrewd and innovative instructional leaders with an astute understanding of emerging problems of growing nations and learners being nurtured in a globalised community. Against this background, provision of functional education for sustainable development will require adequate preparation of quality teachers, close supervision of instruction, and continuous assessment of learning tasks with appropriate measuring instruments and support services. The quality of effective professional teacher development is better assessed during the TP exercise in real school settings. Well-organised TP shall provide classroom teachers with professional knowledge, pedagogical skills and ethical orientations required for excellent performance of their duties.

Hence, the objective of this paper is to highlight the organisation and essence of teaching practice in the professional development of quality teachers in Colleges of Education in Nigeria. Efforts would be made to describe the fundamental concept, organisation, challenges, purpose and prospects of effective teaching practice as a critical link in the quality education chain of any nation. It is hoped that sufficiently funded and well-organised TP in formidable teacher-training institutions shall provide the preservice teachers with the requisite intellectual stimulation, pedagogical competence and professional standards for effective teaching of subject curriculum contents.

## 2. Teaching Practice in Teacher Preparation

The school has a vital role to play in the training of children and youths to acquire adequate knowledge and skills to earn gainful living for economic prosperity, social cohesion and political stability in a fast-changing world. It implies that the teacher should always view their career progression and learning as a continuing process of academic and professional development of intellectual capacities, physical abilities and ethical orientations through guided discovery and enquiry methods [2], [4]. This may demand putting in place a coherent and functional teacher education that will nurture and refine learners into a crop of competent, responsible and responsive manpower for national development. Such resilient and visionary teachers shall become potent agents of social change, economic growth and political development in our quest for sustainable human capacity building, leadership excellence, industrial production and economic prosperity of the citizenry.

Teacher education is defined as the rational practices, strategies and policies designed to equip prospective teachers with professional knowledge, teaching skills, guidance-based evaluation techniques and ethical orientations for effective performance of their duties and development of their society [2]. It should take cognizance of the global changes in the school curriculum, pedagogy, world of work and development prospects of emerging nations. In Nigerian education system, teacher education programmes can be classified into three levels on the basis of their professional education, training and certification. They are the:

1. Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE) programme;
2. Bachelor's Degree in Education programmes, which produces B. A. (Ed.), B.Sc. (Ed.), and B.Ed. graduates; and
3. Postgraduate Degree in Education that produces graduates with Masters in Education (M.A. (Ed.), M.Sc. (Ed.)), Masters of Philosophy in Education (M.Phil. (Ed.)), Postgraduate Diploma in Education (PGDE), and Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D).

These programmes severally provide the mandatory professional education, training and standards ingrained with best instructional practices and work ethics for prospective and practising teachers at all levels of education. Such creative and responsible manpower supplies to the pre-primary, primary and secondary schools as well as Colleges of education, Polytechnics and Universities could facilitate effective citizenship and efficient

workforce that will produce goods and services to enhance joyful human life.

Hence, the main goals of Teacher Education in Nigeria as stipulated in the National Policy on Education [1] are to:

- (a) produce highly motivated, conscientious and efficient classroom teachers for all levels of the educational system;
- (b) further encourage the spirit of enquiry and creativity in teachers;
- (c) help teachers fit into the social life of the community and the society at large, and enhance their commitment to national goals;
- (d) provide teachers with the intellectual and professional background adequate for their assignment and to make them adaptable to changing situations; and
- (e) enhance teachers' commitment to the teaching profession.

In consonance with sections 94 and 100 (b) of the education policy, what structurally becomes important in achieving the overall philosophy and national goals of Nigeria is for all the practising teachers in our educational institutions to be professionally trained, qualified and registered with the Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN), Abuja. It is in consonance with its empowerment Act 31 of 1993, which upholds the critical role of teachers as the pivot of the education system. The TRCN is mandated to professionalise and sanitise teaching in Nigeria, and to ensure that only professionally qualified teachers find their way into the classrooms [5]. The stipulated minimum qualification for entry into the teaching profession shall be the NCE in all the public and private schools namely, primary and secondary schools as well as colleges of education, polytechnics and universities.

Achievement of these teacher education goals are relative pre-requisites to the attainment of the goals of education [1], which are the building of a:

1. free and democratic society;
2. just and egalitarian society;
3. united, strong and self-reliant nation;
4. great and dynamic economy; and
5. land full of bright opportunities for all citizens.

Similarly, related equitable policy is the United States of America's *No Child Left Behind Act* (2001), in which education plays a pivotal role to prosper in the job market. The comparative intention is to increase access to functional education and close achievement gaps between all students by providing each child with fair and equal life-long opportunities to receive quality elementary and secondary education [6]. As the key to nation building, the aspiration of any nation to transform into a great country can only be possible if there are competent and dedicated teachers

to impart the appropriate knowledge, attitude and skills [5]. Realisation of these policy initiatives depend on professional development of quality teachers, whose improvement mechanism is well-organised TP.

Hence, the functionality of any educational system is often determined by the quality of the teaching-learning process, which is only as good as the quality of its teachers [7]. Preparing, equipping and sustaining the student-teachers for effective teaching is one of the cardinal objectives of credible teacher education programmes. Thus, a meaningful teacher education for total development of brilliant, creative and decent teachers is usually made of three stages, namely:

1. Initial teacher training in the Institutes, Faculties and Colleges of Education;
2. Induction and orientation of new teachers into the teaching profession, and into their new schools; and
3. Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for teachers to keep up to date in a rapidly changing world of education and work.

In recognition of this pivotal role of teachers in the provision of quality education that will produce competent workforce and effective citizenship, teacher education should be given more priority in the national planning, Federal and State budgetary allocations, and corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives of private organisations. Existence of resolute political will, and philanthropic disposition of the individuals and organisations may provide sufficient human, material and financial resources for sustainable professional education and training, induction and orientation of teachers, and their CPD.

The operational curriculum for initial teacher training is, therefore, structured on these critical components:

- (i) *General Studies in Education* for global orientations toward good human life, through cultural harmony, ethnic and religious tolerance, good governance, environmental conservation and secured future of the nation;
- (ii) *Educational Foundation Studies* incorporate the general pedagogical principles and basic disciplines in education e.g. Educational Psychology, Curriculum and Instruction, Educational Technology;
- (iii) *Academic, professional, technical and vocational studies*, which are related to the student-teachers' intended field of teaching such as Basic Science, English, Auto-mechanics, Metal welding, Basic electronics, Agricultural science, Food and Nutrition, History, Accounting, Biology,

Chemistry, Geography, Economics and Religious studies;

- (iv) *Teaching Practice* that is mandatory practical teaching exercise (internship) for prospective teachers in their chosen teaching subject(s); and
- (v) *Research Project*, which is compulsory course for student-teachers as a guided experimental study or long essay during the last session prior to their graduation.

Candidates seeking admissions into teacher education programmes are expected to have five (5) credits at Ordinary/ Level in Senior School Certificate (SSC) examinations in their prospective teaching subjects. Thereafter, they sit for Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME) conducted by Joint Admissions Matriculation Board (JAMB), and selected by post-UTME screening exercise in their chosen Colleges of Education, Polytechnics and Universities before ratification with admission letters from JAMB, Abuja.

After the professional education and internship schemes, formal registration and induction of successful education graduates into the teaching profession should be organised by teacher-training institutions and conducted by the Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN). Induction is the introduction and acceptance of well trained and qualified persons into a specialised profession, occupation or organisation such as Accountancy, Army, Law, Medicine, and Nursing. Such an induction ceremony takes after several years of professional education and mandatory practical exposure before or after graduation (internship) as stipulated by their professional regulatory agencies. The modalities of the induction entail an envisioned proactive preparation in collaboration with the TRCN. Professional induction ceremony shall involve:

- (a) acquisition of data of student-teachers that were admitted and graduated each year in the teacher-producing institutions;
- (b) exposure of inductees to varying information on conventional conduct and globally acceptable best practices of teachers through organised seminars and workshops, using seasoned teachers;
- (c) registration of newly-inducted education graduates with respect to the typology of their teacher education programmes by TRCN, Abuja.
- (d) words of exhortation by the Heads of the institution, Faculty of Education and TRCN;
- (e) induction date is after the graduation examinations and production of the pass lists, which will be displayed in the induction brochure for the sake of

transparency, credibility and record purpose; and

- (f) the teacher-training institution provides the operational staff, a spacious well-equipped auditorium and logistics support in collaboration with TRCN.

Induction of education graduates is a vital activity that will inculcate a sense of professionalism, integrity and credibility with the requisite quality assurance into the teachers. The teachers shall be recognised and accorded the same honour as professionals in other professions. It promotes the pride of teaching in line with conventional best practices in all regulated professions [5].

On assumption of duties and during the orientation ceremony, the practising teachers at all levels of education system in Nigeria must be encouraged by their schools to embrace professionalism, teachers' code of conduct to restore the cherished high standards and integrity of our education system, and the mandatory CPD, which keeps them up to date in a rapidly changing world of education and work. It is intended to improve pedagogical competence and inculcate the virtues of professionalism thereby assuring quality in classroom practices and conduct of registered teachers in Nigerian schools. Such CPD opportunities at regular intervals for all the professional teachers to pursue higher education, attend conferences and workshops, or undergo in-service staff training programmes will upgrade their knowledge and skills toward excellent teaching. This would make

### 3. The Concept of Teaching Practice

Teaching is the oldest and mother of all professions as its refined products, the teachers, produce other professionals exemplified by scholars, experts, entrepreneurs, engineers, doctors, nurses, lawyers and company managers [2], [5]. Among others, functional teachers will epitomize creative scholarship, entrepreneurship, moral rectitude and excellent leadership in selfless service to sustainable development, harmony and prosperity of their nations worldwide. Consequently, teaching may be seen as a versatile profession that is always engaged in a constant transformation as a result of continuous changes and reforms of its dynamic society. It requires a reflective mindset, pedagogical competence and best practices to impart subject matter, pedagogical skills and ethical values in the subject curricula to learners. A creative teacher is expected to impart, train, socialize and cultivate the core values of humanity, enterprising skills of production systems, and specialised knowledge of quality life. This will assist children and youths in growing up to become

competent and responsible professionals, entrepreneurs and captains of industry. Hence, an organised TP is one of the vital components of good teacher education programme designed to nurture quality teachers in all human disciplines.

Collins English Dictionary [8] defined teaching practice as a temporary period of teaching in a school undertaken under supervision by a person who is training to become a teacher. It is the practical use of teaching methods, teaching strategies, teaching principles, teaching techniques and practical training and practice / exercise of different activities of daily school life [9]. Being a critical tool for quality assurance in professional teacher development, Anamuah-Mensah [10] viewed teaching practice as the heart of teacher education and an inseparable aspect of any professional training. As a kind of apprenticeship phase in the preservice education of teachers, TP is a vital recipe for teaching effectiveness and optimal performance of teachers.

Meanwhile, Oyekan [2] regarded teaching practice as a practical instructional activity by which the teacher-trainees are given opportunity, in actual school situations, to demonstrate and improve training in pedagogical skills and best professional practices over a period of supervision. It is a kind of apprenticeship phase in the preservice education of teachers, who are sent out to real schools to gain practical and professional experiences by translating educational theories into practice [10]. Herein TP is a compulsory training requirement for quality education assurance in the production of highly motivated and efficient teachers. Of what value is TP in professional teacher development? Whatever the name is called in different climes, effective TP universally embraces the actualisation of all the pedagogical frameworks that refine and facilitate the acquisition of practical learning experiences, purposeful instructional leadership, benevolent work ethics, and excellent service delivery expectations of student-teachers in successful subject curriculum implementation at all levels of education. As no nation could develop beyond its mental capacity, pragmatic educators and teachers should always imbibe, exhibit and impart socially-acceptable ethical standards as means to produce competent school graduates as manpower for the national economy [3]. This implies that adequate exposure of student-teachers to an enriched TP could make them acquire the theoretical concepts, principles and experiences which might be translated into practical realities in classroom situations.

Furthermore, Oyekan [2], Datta [11], Hardman, Drew & Egan [12] opined that a well-organised and sufficiently-funded TP in teacher-training institutions shall provide the preservice teachers with the requisite:

- Intellectual stimulation on basic issues of human diversity and environmental sustainability;
- Instructional planning with appropriate technologies in micro-teaching sessions to support blended learning;
- Professional competence in chosen subject disciplines for consistent career progression and job satisfaction;
- Creation of participatory learning environment that value and foster cultural understanding, safety and emotional wellbeing, religious harmony, and positive social interactions in a diverse world;
- Uses of multiple types of information from organised conduct of formal and informal assessments of student behaviour, achievement, and academic environment to design learning experiences that support the total development of learners;
- Effective study, extensive diagnosis and child-centred care of learners with exceptional needs in the school and society; and
- Ethical standards that foster their professional growth, and keep them current with evidence-based best practices.

In view of the above, effective TP will help to produce capable teachers with the ability to develop the passion and vision for quality education. As great teachers who are well-trained as life-long learners, they would be able to seek and use a variety of curriculum contents and materials, assessment tools, and soothing guidance procedures to cope with brilliant, underachieving and exceptional students. Such students might be educated, refined and nurtured to become creative manpower that will utilise their talents to produce goods and render services for sustainable development and wellbeing of their communities.

#### **4. Challenges Confronting Teaching Practice Exercise**

Education is often regarded as a vibrant instrument and strength of change for sustainable development, stable polity and viable economy. This requires the school to produce a crop of diligent, intelligent and efficient teachers in all human disciplines that will raise competent professionals, experts and captains of industry for the expansive labour market.

However, the basic impediments to creative TP in professional teacher preparation often emanate from the universal barriers to functional education, training and development of any society. All identified threats

to a successful TP should be rectified with strategic planning and viable resources. Notable operational and supervisory barriers to effective TP in teacher-producing institutions in developing nations, such as Nigeria often include:

- (i) sourcing for TP schools with inadequate transport facilities in difficult terrains and on poor roads;
- (ii) poor exposure of student-teachers to insufficient micro-teaching technological devices and techniques;
- (iii) inadequate field monitoring and defective instructional supervision of student-teachers;
- (iv) non-involvement and uncooperative attitude of subject cooperating teachers in TP schools;
- (v) insufficient funds to procure essential micro-teaching resources, and defray incurred ancillary running expenses;
- (vi) admission of students of poor academic background without much inclination towards career teaching;
- (vii) large number of student-teachers in TP schools as heavy workload for supervision and mentoring;
- (viii) lack of motivational incentives for student-teachers such as Teachers' Bursary, Scholarships or Students' Loans;
- (ix) doing the TP in poorly equipped, neglected and dilapidated primary and secondary schools;
- (x) misconception of TP exercise as a period of academic leave from the College or Faculty lectures;
- (xi) unmotivated student-teachers who chose education course as a last resort;
- (xii) inadequate period for TP exercise; and
- (xiii) poor language and communicative competence in defective lesson presentation by student-teachers.

The foregoing challenges portend inadequate teacher preparation with multiplier effects on school dropouts, mass failure of students, graduate unemployment, communal insecurity and poverty of the citizenry across the land. It can be deduced that the requisite professionalism and productivity of teacher-producing institutions, educators and student-teachers might severally be hindered in the course of performing their statutory duties. Overcoming these challenges will make the professional teachers the key to any meaningful change, stability and development of a dynamic secure nation.

## 5. Organization of Teaching Practice

Organisation of TP is the act of rational planning and prudent management of available resources to ensure teachers' effectiveness, instructional improvement and quality education. Meaningful organisation and supervision of teaching practice constitute a crucial responsibility of the Institutes, Faculties and Colleges of Education. It is seen as a forum to improve the teaching competence, work productivity and professional conduct of prospective teachers. Such a strategic vision would satisfy the critical needs of learners and their communities. The components of any organised teaching practice programme should comprise:

- (i) the constitution of a viable Teaching Practice Committee (TPC);
- (ii) conceptual exposition and purpose of teaching practice;
- (iii) specialised teaching of subject methods' courses;
- (iv) well-timed duration for teaching practice in tandem with the current school calendar;
- (v) appreciable geographical area of coverage; and
- (vi) thorough supervision by professionally trained, qualified and experienced teacher educators.

Hence, Oyekan [2] viewed effective organisation of teaching practice as a pervasive task that requires critical reasoning, pooling of resources within and outside the school setting, and sufficient funding to defray incurred expenses by TPC. A purposeful and well-organised TP by teacher-training institutions shall severally inculcate in the student-teachers the relevant subject knowledge, creative pedagogical skills and rational professional standards. This might promote clear teaching with varying instructional methods, blended learning and valid assessment tools.

Effective planning, management of resources, organisation of seminars and workshops for student-teachers, and assessment of practical teaching should be conceived and coordinated by TPC in collaboration with cooperating schools. Members of TPC must be highly experienced professional educators, who are deeply involved in extensive research and effective teaching of principles of education, chosen teaching subjects and their methods' courses.

Preparation for TP usually begins with exposure of student-teachers to mandatory methods' courses in their chosen teaching subjects. Emphasis must be placed on guiding student-teachers in the processes of formulating instructional objectives, writing of activity-based lesson plans, use of micro-teaching devices with a variety of instructional materials and

methods, construction and marking of measuring instruments, inculcation of healthy lifestyles and maintenance culture, and hints on classroom management. Exposure to valuable books, journals and magazines on viable instructional strategies, improvisation of learning materials, construction of assessment tools, practicable hints on classroom management, remediation of identified students' weaknesses and soothing guidance services can strengthen the character, mind and capacity of student-teachers. This can facilitate creative teaching and meaningful learning of subject curricular contents, and a secure future of classroom practices. Besides, effective instruction is anchored on provision of comfortable and functional lecture theatres and classrooms; and well-stocked libraries, laboratories, and workshops integrated with modern educational media and Internet resources.

Adoption of well-planned micro-teaching sessions using some relevant topics can help to identify and demonstrate vital teaching skills and habits expected of a professional subject teacher in regular classroom settings. Use and improvisation of educational resources with a combination of assessment tools, and guidelines for construction and marking of tests with comprehensive marking guide could alleviate emerging hardships and anxieties associated with classroom work.

As an integral component of professionalism (knowledge acquisition) and professionalism, adequate consideration must be given to appropriate duration and timing of TP with regard to the period of academic work in cooperating schools. Current practice of a two-tiered system of twelve (12) weeks for TP should be reviewed to one year for the sake of comparative professionalism and adequate professional development of teachers [4], [13], [14]. The strategic significance of an elongated period of teacher education from 4 to 5 years could inculcate more professional knowledge and ethics, effective instructional supervision and guidance, and redeem the collective image of teachers. A wide geographical area covered by Institutes, Faculties and Colleges of Education may satisfy the students-teachers' choice, provide more willing schools, benefit host communities, and ensure quality teaching through closer supervision and sharing of experiences by cooperating teachers. It also helps to reduce truancy and nonchalance resulting from posting a large number of 50-120 student-teachers to a TP school.

Furthermore, thorough supervision of teaching might help to ascertain the degree of proficiency, productivity and proclivity of student-teachers during the practical teaching exercises. It is envisaged to facilitate instructional competence and work productivity of teachers as well as conceptual

understanding and academic achievement of students. What must be assessed by Supervisors ought to reflect a variety of professional tasks and qualities that promote best practices of good teachers. A comprehensive Teaching Assessment Format (TAF) should be able to observe and measure lesson preparation and presentation, classroom management and personality of the student-teachers. Collective adoption and use of uniform TAF for evaluating the student-teachers shall elicit clear teaching, promote instructional proficiency and instill a quality control measure in the professional teacher training scheme.

## 6. Purpose of Teaching Practice in Teacher Development

At any point in human history, the professional teacher remains central and vital to the success of functional education at all levels. Such diligent, intelligent and efficient teachers are nurtured and sharpened by well-organised teaching practice. The purpose of TP must be clearly stated in specific, observable, measurable and achievable terms to monitor its impact on professional teacher development. A purposeful teaching practice preceded by adequate micro-teaching activities, therefore, will:

1. inculcate in the prospective teachers the basic teaching skills and professional standards which could facilitate meaningful teaching-learning process e.g. fluent speaking, audibility, questioning and decency;
2. meaningful reading, good use of the board, effective class management and drawing of diagrams;
3. expose the student-teachers to the dynamic social life system of the school when they interact with students and staff, use the physical facilities and participate in the curriculum activities;
4. provide student-teachers an opportunity to engage in self-reflection, and imbibe practical classroom life experiences that make them develop a repertoire of knowledge and skills for problem-solving situations;
5. identify the strengths and weaknesses of the student-teachers in lesson preparation and presentation;
6. inculcate the ability to use instructional materials to explain and illustrate basic concepts and processes for greater students' understanding, retention and achievement someday;

7. provide an enduring avenue for student-teachers and Supervisors to translate theory into practice: the basis for prompt correction and improvement in professional stature and vision of a rewarding career in teaching;
8. make student-teachers to be more enlightened and skilled in successful implementation of the school curriculum that integrates modern technology into their classroom instruction, evaluation and counselling; a sure means to attain greater professional success with the use of multimedia devices in blended learning;
9. develop desirable interests, attitudes and ideas relative to the teaching profession in student-teachers when their Supervisors act as resource persons, advisers, moral boosters, assessors, mentors and facilitators of adequate mastery of the subject matter, pedagogical skills and professional standards;
10. acquire the stellar qualities and work ethics of good teachers when the student-teachers participate in other routine work of the school such as co-curricular activities, setting of questions, and marking of answer scripts; and
11. nurture the prospective teachers and educators when exposed to the manipulation, production and improvisation of instructional materials with imaginative resourcefulness, and pedagogical efficiency.

The foregoing indicates that emerging resilient teachers would have been nurtured and sharpened by educators as lecturers of Subject Teaching Methods' courses, Cooperating Subject Teachers and experienced College Supervisors in actual classroom situations to enhance professional etiquette and quality education of learners. It becomes pertinent to develop productive teachers as potent instructional tools in functional curriculum implementation and evaluation, classroom management and learning mechanism in ensuring meaningful teaching, teacher effectiveness and achievement motivation of learners in classroom practices.

Hence, teaching practice acts as a quality mechanism in ascertaining teacher effectiveness, promoting diagnostic remedial teaching strategy and enhancing student academic achievement in classroom operations. It helps to develop productive and responsive teachers as potent tools in functional subject curriculum development, implementation, evaluation and improvement of educational programmes. As a pervasive task that requires extensive reflections, critical thinking, sharing of resources and cordial relationship with relevant

stakeholders, TP is envisioned to enhance the professional performance, development and growth of student-teachers in actual school situations. This may assist in easing out the challenges possibly posed by inadequacies of the schools, learners and the supervisors.

## **7. Prospects of Teaching Practice for Quality Teacher Development**

A well-organised and supervised TP in teacher-training institutions shall equip future classroom teachers with adequate mastery of the subject matter, pedagogical skills and professional practices required for effective instructional performance. What is envisioned is the production of professionally trained and qualified competent, conscientious and responsible teachers. Such a crop of brilliant and diligent teachers might become the resilient brainpower that will facilitate successful curriculum implementation of subject curricula, creative entrepreneurship and youth empowerment. This connotes that the inculcated scholastic excellence, moral rectitude and professional competence of practising teachers shall make them indispensable instructional resources for sustainable development and wellbeing of the citizenry. Effective TP shall produce great teachers who can display clear and comprehensive teaching, educational excellence and development of self-reliant individuals with brilliant resourceful minds.

Hence, a functional teacher-training programme is a vehicle for comprehensive studies in the development of viable teaching skills, methods, theories and principles of instruction, evaluation and guidance of learners. On this premise, well-organised TP could enhance sustainable teacher capacity building in vibrant attributes of teaching effectiveness, classroom management, continuous assessment and reinforcement of learning outcomes. Improvement of learning opportunities with modern facilities, integrated assessment tools and counselling services shall further promote increased students' academic progress and professional growth of teachers in their classroom practices.

Varying educational and training opportunities provided by properly organised TP can help to nurture capable professionals for excellent service delivery. Such competent, responsible and enterprising fellows may use their refined talents to produce valuable materials required in schools and their living communities. Efforts to maximise the potential of student-teachers might promote an inclusive development of their intellectual capacity, professionalism and entrepreneurial dexterity in



meeting the needs, interests and aspirations of learners within the context of their cultural heritage. In view of this developmental feat, teachers shall be recognised as the key to sustainable youth empowerment, economic growth and technological advancement of nations across the world.

Meanwhile, teaching is often regarded as a continuous human activity by which teachers connect the learners and learning experiences drawn from the subject curriculum. Against this background, teachers are the brain trust and light of the world that brightens and nurtures the vibrant lives of individuals with useful knowledge, practical skills and proper value-orientations [2]. Herein well-organised TP will strengthen the student-teachers with sufficient professional, communicative and analytical competence required to overcome the vicissitudes of human life. Perhaps schools should invest in modern educational research, technology and innovation for teachers to deploy different instructional materials and methods to raise well-rounded citizens. The tendency is for TP to shape the student-teachers' career mission, sharpen their intellectual vision and direct their instructional leadership towards moulding self-reliant educated people. Such well-informed, proficient and resilient professional teachers will have the capacity and capability to educate and train productive manpower for economic development, good governance and shared prosperity of the global community.

Furthermore, a fruitful administration of TP shall acquaint prospective teachers with their expected professional knowledge, instructional roles and stellar qualities in successful classroom practices. Much efforts could be made to expose the student-teachers to activity-based lesson planning, construction of integrated assessment tools, learner-centred teaching methods and cutting-edge technological resources with Internet facilities. These professional development initiatives are more likely to enhance their career development, facilitation of participatory learning, teaching effectiveness and self-fulfillment someday. As visionary teachers that display professional competence, creative entrepreneurship, courage and dedication to their duties, they will become a veritable source of pride and hope for achieving the United Nations' sustainable development goals (SDGs) of their countries worldwide by 2030. Functional education can, therefore, be regarded as the soul of any progressive society and the bedrock of economic growth, democratic governance and prosperous development of nations without borders.

The 21<sup>st</sup> Century imbued with information technology and industrial development demands a progressive change in teaching, training and learning

of concepts through basic research and innovation. Adequate exposure and effective supervision of research projects at the initial training of student-teachers will strengthen the professional competence, and foster the excellent spirit of creativity in lesson presentation beyond the TP exercise. Herein the acquired research competence and professional orientation to contemporary educational issues will largely assist in effective teaching, redemption of emerging instructional problems, and meaningful learning guidance of students in future research works. This could further strengthen the professional competence and intellectual vision of prospective teachers for activity-based lesson plans, prompt diagnosis and remediation of identified students' weaknesses, prudent resource management, and sustainable educational excellence beyond the school setting. The tendency is to consciously integrate, improve and utilise the acquired research and professional competence beyond the TP exercise. In future classroom practices, the trained teachers remain a viable beacon of hope for humanity as they help to facilitate sustainable capacity building of brilliant learners with generative knowledge, self-reliant skills, and decent disposition towards a purpose-driven life.

## 8. Conclusion and Recommendations

A professional teacher is central to any meaningful change, and stability of a dynamic community. Since no education system may rise above the quality of its teachers, teaching practice should be accorded much importance in the initial training in functional teacher education. Bachelors, Master's, and doctorate degree students should undergo practical teaching towards making total professionals out of them. It becomes imperative to enforce the admission requirements of five (5) credits at Ordinary/Level in Senior Secondary Certificate examinations while the duration of teaching practice is increased from the minimum of twelve weeks to a whole academic session. This will enable student-teachers to be closely guided, mentored and equipped with best classroom practices (e.g. writing of lessons) in the first two weeks of first term, understudy their Cooperating Teachers in the remaining portion of the first term expect their Supervisors to visit, observe and assess them at least once in a week, for the rest of the academic year. Emerging teachers are empowered with professional competence and visionary commitment to improve students' achievement, academic interest and inclination towards education.

Hence, the critical options for a quality education system include sufficient funding, provision and maintenance of functional facilities, induction and ethical orientation of professionally trained teachers,

adoption of supportive educational services, and regular training and retraining of staff to upscale effective instructional service delivery. What is required is sustainable assistance to facilitate and improve the quality preparation of competent teachers with adequate intellectual stimulation, creative entrepreneurship and professional dexterity. Schools might be energised towards sustainable human development for academic excellence, productive work, healthy living, purposeful leadership, and vibrant economy. Student-teachers, therefore, deserve adequate motivation with the award of bursary and scholarships to reduce their financial burden, learning hardships and devote full attention to TP exercise. This lends credence to the interventionist policy thrust and supportive posture of education-friendly organizations such as Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund), companies, alumni associations and communities to revamp the crumbling education sector and restore the lost glory of teaching for sustainable development.

Parents, educators and TP supervisors of student-teachers must be good collaborators, mentors and role models by encouraging their children and learners to acquire sufficient subject matter, creative skills and moral values in their schools, families and workplaces. They should display an inclusive exemplary life enriched with mutual love, trust in one's ability, respect of human exceptionality, creative spirit of excellence, and consistent accountability devoid of impartiality and criminality. These quality life assurance efforts will solidify the practising teachers' strength of character, learning, productivity, prudence and excellence in beneficial services to raise employable graduates as effective citizens and efficient workforce for infrastructural development, economic growth, and wellbeing of the people.

## 8. References

- [1] Federal Republic of Nigeria, (2014) National Policy on Education, Yaba-Lagos: NERDC Press.
- [2] Oyekan, S.O., (2000) Foundations of teacher education, Okitipupa: Ebun-ola Printers (Nig.) Ltd.
- [3] Oyekan, S.O., (2015) Work ethics and qualities of instructional leaders. In O. Atoyebi, B. Adamu, Y. Ogunsiji & F.O. Balogun (Eds.) *The Management of Tertiary Institutions for Qualitative and Functional Education in Nigeria: In Honour of Professor Adeyemi Ibukunoluwa Idowu*. Ibadan: Spectrum Books Ltd., pp. 87-98. Available on: [www.spectrumbookslimited.com](http://www.spectrumbookslimited.com).
- [4] Madike, F.U., (1984) Teaching practice as an in-built process teaching education: The case for and against micro-teaching. In O. M. Onibokun (Ed.) *The organisation, supervision and evaluation of practice teaching*, Ibadan, Nigeria: Evans Brothers (Nigeria) Ltd.
- [5] Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria, (2004) Teachers code of conduct. Abuja: TRCN, p. i.
- [6] Tavakolian, H.R. & Howell, N. (2012) School education: A gateway to success. *Journal of Educational and Social Research*, 2(2), 137-142.
- [7] Federal Ministry of Education, (2012) 4-year strategic plan for the development of the education sector: 2011-2015. In Federal Republic of Nigeria (2013) *National Policy on Education* (pp. 61-64), Yaba-Lagos: NERDC Press.
- [8] Collins English Dictionary, (2012) Complete & unabridged digital edition, <http://dictionary.reference.com/cite.html?qh=teaching+practice&ia=ced2>. pp. 61-64. (Access date: 27th October, 2014).
- [9] Gujjar, A.A., (2009) Teaching practice: Concept, stages, objectives & suggestions, <http://www.articlesbase.com/college-and-university-articles/teaching-practice-concept-stages-objectives-suggestions-749974.html> (Access date: 27 October, 2014).
- [10] Anamuah-Mensah, J., (2014) Role of practicum inteachereducation. <http://jaamensah.com/Speeches/Practicum%20inTEACHER%20.doc> (Access date: 27 October 2014).
- [10] Teaching Practice Committee, (1991) Supervision of student teaching: A cooperative endeavour. A paper presented by Adeyemi College of Education, Ondo at the Workshop on Teaching Practice at the NCE level, organised by the National Commission for Colleges of Education, Kaduna, Nigeria between 19<sup>th</sup>-23<sup>rd</sup> March.
- [11] Datta, A., (1984) *Education and society: A sociology of African education*, London: Macmillan Publishers, pp. 1-53.
- [12] Hardman, M.L., Drew, C.J. & Egan, M.W., (2005) *Human exceptionality: school, community and family*. Boston, United States of America: Allyn and Bacon.
- [13] Adaral Egbe, A., (1972) *A philosophy for Nigerian education*. Ibadan: Heinemann Educational Books Ltd.
- [14] Oyekan, S.O., (2014) The making of the total teacher: The role of teaching practice. A paper presented at the National Summit on Education with the theme: Towards a System of Education for Liberation in Nigeria, organised by the Academic Staff Union of Universities held at the Top Rank Hotel, Utako, Abuja from 27<sup>th</sup>October to 1<sup>st</sup> November.