

**TEACHER EDUCATION IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY: WHITHER NIGERIA'S  
COLLEGES OF EDUCATION**

**A CONVOCATION LECTURE**

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**AT THE KWARA STATE COLLEGE OF EDUCATION, ILORIN**

**ON FEBRUARY 12, 2019**

**PROTOCOL**

**INTRODUCTION**

The graduands of this year's combined convocation deserve our hearty congratulations. So congratulations to all of them, their families and friends. The College Management and staff also deserve our appreciation for their efforts and determination to arrange this age-long highly respected academic tradition in spite of the challenges. Congratulations too.

I like to start this lecture on '3 Ws' meaning (i) **Where** we were in Colleges of Education (COE); (2) **Where** we are now; and (3) **Where** teacher education ought to be in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Then we would examine the contributory factors and proffer some solutions. Many rhetorical questions would also be raised as food for thought in this lecture.

To begin with, we need to touch briefly the genesis of the Colleges of Education (COE). Their birth name was Advanced Teachers College and were four in number namely Advance Teachers College, Ondo; Advanced Teachers College, Zaria, Advanced Teachers College, Kano and Al van Ikoku Advanced Teachers College. The report of Ashby Commission in 1958 which condemned the quality teachers in Nigerian schools then and raised the need for higher grade or more qualified teachers gave birth to those three Advanced Teachers Colleges which have now metamorphosed into today's numerous Colleges of Education spread across the country. So it was demand for better quality teachers that led to the establishment of the colleges of teacher education. A logical question to ask now perhaps is- Are we back in the same situation we were in 1950s?

In order to fully appreciate the role of teachers and the colleges, we need to underscore what correct education is. This becomes necessary in view of our experiences today.

### **What is education?**

It is becoming increasingly difficult to identify who is truly educated in Nigeria today. Is education simply about being present in school? The education space is so confusing these days that I guess the students are equally confused on their role in education. Truancy, lack of seriousness, anti-social behaviours, and even crimes are common in schools and Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). There appears to be what I classify as ‘scholars’ who take their studies seriously and are hardworking as against ‘schoolers’ who just move about the campus without any substance in their head and just waiting for ‘let my people go degree’.

Attempts to define education have been mainly stating its importance rather than its components. For instance, for Nelson Mandela,

Education is the great engine of personal development.

It is through education that the daughter of a peasant can

become a doctor,....that a child of farmworkers can

become the president of a great nation. (Mandela, 1995, p. 166).

Ijaiya (2012) also affirmed “The intention behind education is pure and good. It is to equip the child, as early as possible, with the knowledge, values and skills he needs to navigate this complex world for the sake of his comfort and that of the society” (p.6). The Federal Government of Nigeria captures it as a tool for sustainable development and national unity. From the World Bank perspective, the quality of a country is not so much as number but on the total quality of its citizens (World Bank, 2003) and that is highly dependent on the quality/values of its educational system

Then Mandela provided this wisdom about education “It is what we make out of what we are given, that separates one person from another” (p. 166). Isn’t it true? Today the rise in education standard is creating challenges for quality and confusion for education managers and students that need to be sorted out. How do we match the rapidity of change with quality or funding? This is where the role of the teachers comes in, referring to parents as the early teachers and the school teachers as the guardians of the child.

A look at Nigeria’s National Policy on education, 2013 edition, shows the following specific objectives of our education system: To

- a) Ensure and sustain unfettered access and equity to education for the total development of the individual;
  - b) Ensure the quality of education delivery at all levels;
  - c) Promote functional education for skill acquisition, job creation and poverty reduction;
  - d) Ensure periodic review, effectiveness and relevance of the curriculum at all levels to meet the needs of society and the world of work;
  - e) Collaborate with development partners, the private sector, Non – Governmental Organizations and local communities to support and fund education; and
  - f) Promote information and communication technology capability at all levels.
- (Federal Government of Nigeria, 2013, pp. 14-16)

From the above objectives, something about education is conspicuously missing, which is character - training. It was perhaps, assumed that it is automatic in schools. This may be because the writers were products of the ‘good old days’ we all yearn for its return, when our parents and the community held themselves accountable for the moral training of their children and other people’s children, and thus complement the schools’ efforts. The society in those days was an embodiment of morality and decorum. Can we say the same today in Nigeria? Where are the credible models?

What therefore is *correct* education?

From my professional experience, education has three components: Knowledge, Skills and Character (KSC). They are not in any particular order. In fact, they complement each other. Knowledge is about acquisition of information and processing it such as arts and sciences and technical and vocational subjects, while skills are practical-based including language, and now ICT skills, critical thinking, creativity, etc. Language proficiency is basic to all of them and to life-long learning. Character i.e. our behaviour which encompasses core values such as honesty, integrity, trustworthiness, hard work, shame, empathy, humility, respect, morality, accountability, loyalty, etc. The three must be balanced in a correct curriculum. Shamelessness was a big thing in those days frowned at in the community. Without morality, knowledge and skills can become counter- productive and an enemy of the individual and the society. It was part and parcel of the curriculum right from primary schools. It was taught in poetry and practically monitored. Today’s parents prevent teachers from disciplining their children sometimes by beating the teacher while the children are the worse for it because teachers simply give up. They become victims of cultism, rape, hard drugs, examination fraud, peer group influence, prostitution, etc., due to inability to think for themselves. Why are Government and private businesses collapsing? Were things like that in those good old days we now reminiscent

about? Were teachers' colleges or the training of teachers the same as today? At no time in the history of man is critical thinking and morality more in demand than today with the knowledge explosion we now witness that creates anything no matter how dangerous, e.g. the GMO rice, eggs, fake drugs, adulterated drinks, etc.

### **Where we were in the COE: the good old days**

Nigeria's expectation of teacher education as stated in the national policy on education goes thus, 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 the teachers;
- c) Help teachers fit into the social life of the community and the society at large and enhance their commitment to the national goals;
- d) Produce teachers with the intellectual and professional background adequate for their assignment and to make them adaptable to changing situations goals;
- e) Enhance teachers' commitment to the teaching profession.

Can we say these goals are being achieved? Is the teacher education space as conducive as that of yesteryears?

Please permit me to use this college as a typical example of teacher training of four to five decades ago in this country. I am using this college to represent others of the time not because of convenience, or because it was my college or for favouritism but rather because in those years it fairly represented its peers professionally in terms of quality of training and output. Those colleges may not have the best of facilities but with what they had then, the professional training was good. The Kwara State College of Education, Ilorin was established in 1974 by the Kwara State Government. After the pioneer four COE, Kwara State College of Education, Ilorin was another destination for teacher trainees. It attracted students not only from Kwara State but also from different parts of the country particularly from the South western Nigeria. I joined the college in 1981 and moved on in 1994 after 13 years of service here and as a Principal Lecturer and Acting Dean of the School of Education. I served no fewer than three substantive Provosts and an Acting one. Any lecturer in the School of Education would have come across all students in the college for lectures at least. So I can say a few things at least about that period.

In terms of administration, we had it good. All the Provosts demanded and received high level of discipline from the staff and students. Students' results must be out on official date. I recall the era of "if you do this, axe will fall". Every staff had to be on their toes. In the presentation of results at the Academic Board meeting, the lecturer must account for every missing result. No

blank space and failure to do that would earn you a subtle reprimand you would not enjoy. What it means is that, the lecturer must be able to find out why a student did not take the examination or test and indicate it on the result sheet before presentation to the Board. Any Dean whose results were not ready for presentation would also get the ‘reaction’ of the Provost and his colleagues. Sometimes laughter could be a reprimand.

The lecturers responded to these administration’s challenges with all sense of responsibilities. Professionalism was the main focus. We were conscious of the fact that we were to produce highly disciplined and professionally qualified teachers and that was what we did. Right from student admission, quality was never compromised by the Provosts. Credit in English and Mathematics and three other relevant subjects or full Gd II teachers certificate was our admission requirements. Even to qualify for Pre-NCE programme, credit in English was not compromised in our time. Permit me to recall an incident that occurred when I was in charge of the PRE-NCE programme. A ‘big’ person sent admission request to the Provost for a candidate with a Pass in English. The Provost sent for me and asked for my advice. I can still recollect my reply. ‘Sir, we should not compromise our admission requirements’. He said but some colleges are taking a ‘P’ in the North. I said if they are taking it for whatever reason, this college has enough qualified candidates to choose from without lowering our standard. Besides, this college is closer to the western part of the country whose standard is high and which we are drawing our students from. The person should go to where they take a ‘P’ in English. He agreed and that closed the chapter.

Such was the quality of our students. Most of them were matured, qualified Gd II teachers teaching in various schools and who wanted to improve their qualification in the profession they have invested their life in. That was our luck then, may be. They were ready to learn and improve their competence. I remember that the book I wrote here “A Guide to School Supervision” was initiated by my students then because of the dearth of textbooks on educational supervision, which was a compulsory course. I am not sure if such students exist nowadays, at least not in teacher education. When students read text books, from experience, their discussion and answers in class and in examinations are usually richer.

On the practical component, i.e. the Teaching Practice (TP), it was serious business and the students knew it. The supervision was carried out with all sense of responsibility and no lapses were tolerated. If supervisors came to a school and the student teacher was absent without permission from the Principal, or if he was reported for any offence by the school, or recycling notes of lesson, he knew that he has to face the disciplinary committee. The cooperating schools were good and held themselves accountable. Our products are now doing very well. Some are

Professors, Lecturers, Permanent Secretaries, Education Administrators, Lawyers, Principals, School proprietors, etc.

In the case of funding, the college did not have enough facilities and it deserved right from inception, to have more beautiful structures than what was inherited from a secondary school. However, what it had was well managed such that it did not generate any crisis. Salary was not fantastic but met the standard of that time and was paid promptly. The issue of subvention, big or small, adequate or inadequate, was not an open issue. There was relative job satisfaction. What I can add is that the college did not have to do special admissions to make ends meet. When the Pre-NCE course was introduced, it was because the intakes from the Gd II teachers were dwindling fast and there was a need to initiate secondary school products into the teachers' college before they enter the professional training. It was purely a professional move. And such candidates would already have the necessary admission requirements to be admitted into the NCE programme. They were those genuinely interested in the teaching profession, not as a last resort. Such was the environment in which some of us seated here today were trained. Such was the level of professionalism in all colleges of education in those days that produced valuable manpower for the educational system of today: Provosts, lecturers, school administrators, etc. That was 20<sup>th</sup> century. So what is the situation now in the 21<sup>st</sup> century?

### **Where the Colleges are now**

Number of colleges - Change, as we know it, is the most constant phenomenon in this world. And colleges of education are not immune to changes. As against the few colleges of education in the eighties, there are as at 2012, 82 accredited colleges in Nigeria comprising of 44 State-owned, 22 private-owned and 14 belonging to the Federal Government. Kwara State has five: 3 State-owned and 2 private). Can the system accommodate all their products? Between the colleges and the Faculties of Education, thousands of teachers are being produced annually, have they been employed? This college alone graduated about 1,900 teachers last session. Are schools not short of teachers nationally and begging for more while many trained teachers, if not most, are still job-hunting? What is the essence of their training by 82 colleges? Over production of professionals more than the market can cope with can become counter-productive especially on quality. The case of Kaduna State sacked teachers is typical of other States. It has tainted the image of that noble profession among other factors. The good thing about the number is that they have helped to expand the much needed access to higher education which was a major concern of the international community in the last two decades. However, can we say the same thing of quality which is now the concern of the 21<sup>st</sup> century?

Some of the changes that have taken place apart from access which have bearing on colleges of education include:

1. Education policy – the introduction of Basic Education comprising 9 years of 3 years Lower Basic, 3 years Middle Basic and another 3 years of Junior Secondary education. It eventually led to disarticulation of Junior Secondary School (JSS) administration from the Senior Secondary school (SSS) section – a radical change that makes it very clear that colleges of education should be more focused on the production of quality teachers for the Basic education sub-sector.
2. Curriculum change:
  - i) Introduction of new subjects in Basic schools - In order to improve the standard of education at Basic level, new subjects were introduced such as Basic Technology, Information Technology, Civic Education and Security Education. Some older ones were merged such as Christian Religious Studies, Islamic Studies, Social Studies, Civic Education and Security Education and classified as Religion and Natural Values (FRN, 2013). The most important issue is the preparation of teachers for the changes. Have colleges trained enough teachers for the new subjects? If they have, were they employed and in sufficient number? Are they willing to teach after acquiring the necessary qualification? But the most challenging aspect in schools today is that the so called Religion and Natural values cannot achieve the desired effect and it is not. The level of immorality among students cannot be said to be improving today. Many parents have abdicated their responsibilities in disciplining their children and preventing teachers from doing it.
  - ii) Introduction of Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development (IECCD) by the Federal Government in public schools threw another challenge to the COE to produce trained teachers for this category of pupils. That means more specialist lecturers, facilities and funds.
  - iii) The development of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) – The astronomical development of ICT in this century has changed so many things including school curriculum and teaching strategies, social communication and inter-personal relationships, government business, the way we think, information management, new vocabulary, etc. It threw challenges to teachers and policy makers to accommodate it in the education sector. Some of the effects are positive especially helping to complement teachers' efforts through the internet numerous applications and software. However, the wrong use of the social media by students in particular, has produced negative consequences on the educational system. Rather than use their cellphones for their studies, many now use it for music, downloading films and even fraud using the campus Wi-Fi. Teacher education of the 21<sup>st</sup> century has no choice but to prepare teachers in ICT as the new generation of pupils is referred to as 'digital natives' who would live, study

and work in the unpredictable world of technological development. Even though ICT development is specifically mentioned as one of the objectives of education, it is yet to receive the necessary funding.

The ICT development seems to have also reduced education to mere information and downplayed critical thinking, reading books, and intellectual development. This is taking a toll on the quality of education and teaching.

v) Introduction of Pre-vocational and Trade/Entrepreneurship subjects in the schools, colleges and Universities – In addition to the regular subjects and programmes in sciences, arts, social sciences, students have to do skill-acquisition and the list is endless. In the Universities, skills could be as many as possible from cake baking to hair dressing, fashion design, paint making, toiletries, etc. The idea behind it is excellent which is to make school products employers of labour rather than job seekers. But like most things, there are side effects. Without proper planning and implementation, this laudable innovation perhaps may amount to introducing confusion into the educational system. Many Nigerians, including the Government is already aware and complaining about the dwindling quality of education at all levels. What they see is a tip of the iceberg. They need to enter the schools and observe the level of deterioration especially in the students' attitude to studies and their character. Most do not want to invest one kobo on text books and lecture note. If they have at all, it is a jotter or primary school exercise book or some pieces of paper. Before you start blaming them, the age of entering the colleges and Universities is a factor. Some hardly know why they are there to appreciate their admission. Another factor may be confusion between their programme and the skill acquisition. May be in their mind, they wonder 'which one should I focus on'? One of the two would suffer as an adage says. What one sees nowadays in the lecture room is that many students no longer exert their energy on their studies - no lecture notes, no extra study in the library, assignment is rushed over, no participation in group assignment, poor language proficiency, etc. For teacher training, that is a serious matter. No teacher can give what he doesn't have.

v) Motivation especially of teachers – We cannot talk about work without motivation. Research findings have linked motivation to job performance and effectiveness. There was unprecedented increase in salary and allowances a few years ago but the irregular payment mars the joy in some places. Payment of salary, according to Herzberg theory of motivation, is not a motivational factor because if you work, natural justice demands that you get paid immediately. Delay in payment of salary has been causing havocs in the teaching profession in this country for decades making the noble profession look inferior



to others. I recently had the opportunity of meeting some teachers across the country as external examiner and what pricked me were their general complaints about lack of motivation. I had to ask some of them- what do you teachers actually want? Are you not paid your salary? The reply was “we need more peps from time to time because we are doing a lot of work”. Can we blame them? May be a ‘13<sup>th</sup> month’ for teachers and teacher educators would not be out of place in addition to prompt payment of salary.

vi) Underfunding – Education, normally, is a social service that any Government must provide as a right for all its citizens. It therefore makes a big demand on Government budget. Colleges of Education have serious mandate of producing effective and efficient and conscientious teachers to train the young citizens. They need adequate resources to do that. Research findings have established positive correlation between resource availability and utilization and goal achievement in academic institutions. Such resources include teachers, administrative staff in sufficient number and quality apart from facilities. They need to be motivated to deliver the mandate.

It is understandable that there are other competing sectors of the economy, roads, water supply, power, etc., and education has to compete. But education is basic to every sector. Teachers, as ‘mothers’ of all professions, occupy a prime place in national development because they can make or mar any educational system and the young citizens would be at the receiving end. Nigeria has witnessed enough of that. No funds can be adequate for education at a given time but funding that ‘cage’ protest is the adequate funding. The consequence of inadequate funding is over admission beyond the carrying capacity and available resources to make ends meet.

vii) Quality of Intakes – The cancelation of Gd II teacher training is a major drawback to teacher education. They used to provide solid foundation for teacher training in those days. Now it is IJMB, JUPEB, SS products that are being admitted for Faculties of Education programmes when NCE graduates have not been exhausted. Besides, it is well known that many of these intakes are not interested in the teaching profession. Colleges of Education have become a ‘last card’ after all else have failed to secure admission to preferred HEIs (Universities and Polytechnics). Recently, I conducted a survey in the Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin to find out how many of our students would want to make teaching their career after graduation. Out of 334 students sampled, 180 representing 53.9 % emphatically indicated that they would not want to teach after graduation. Their interest and enthusiasm in their programmes are better imagined. Colleges and Faculties of Education have been turned into ‘anything is better than nothing’. The entry cut-off marks are even lowered for them. But can the educational system survive for long on this generation of teachers? I recently had a rare opportunity of meeting about 70 JSS and SS students from some schools at a sensitization

programme and they were asked to indicate by show of hand if they liked to be a teacher, only five (7.1%) raised their hands. For now, we still have some older generation of teachers in schools but the number is reducing.

Combine these factors: weak and uninterested intakes into teacher training, poor training and working environment, poor motivation of teachers, inadequate number of teachers in schools especially in critical subjects, among others, the reason for the dwindling quality of education is obvious.

### **Where teacher education ought to be in the 21<sup>st</sup> century**

Isn't it interesting that in this century we now talk of 21<sup>st</sup> century technology as if there was no technology before year 2000, 21<sup>st</sup> century teachers or learners or classroom or colleges as if there was no 18<sup>th</sup> or 15<sup>th</sup> century teachers or learners or classrooms or colleges. We even hear world class this and that. Of course, there had been revolutions in the past with profound effects on many parts of the world. But the development of ICT in this century is magical and beats them all in various ways. Unlike the others, it spreads information like bush fire, revolutionizes the means of communication, what is communicated, the timing, relationships (business, social, professional), and in particular brought education to the door step of anybody who cares. With one's smart phone and a bit of language proficiency, one can reach many parts of the world from the corner of one's home. It does not exclude the illiterates. How does a college of education or teacher training feature in this revolution?

To appreciate where a COE should be in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, we need to understand what should be the quality of a 21<sup>st</sup> century student. When teacher educators know what their students should be or know, it helps to direct their teaching strategies.

Based on the rapidity of change and widespread nature of the ICT revolution, today's students should possess certain qualities. They should:

1. Be broad-minded and demonstrate deep understanding of the world and its diversity and challenges;
2. Make interdisciplinary connections – Mathematics, Sciences, History, Social Sciences, etc.;
3. Think critically and creatively – should be able to receive information and process it, ask intelligent questions, query, analyze and evaluate issues, make well informed suggestions, solve problems, etc.;
4. Demonstrates readiness to communicate and collaborate with others in appreciation of the importance of sharing knowledge and skills in today's world;

5. Be well-grounded in ICT operations – this is fundamental and has no alternative. They should be able to use ICT to solve problems, create, access, store and retrieve information, e.g. create their own blogs, make intelligent contributions to public issues, etc. as well as demonstrate enthusiasm in ICT development; they must see their cell phones as tools for their learning and intellectual development.
6. Must be adaptable – the world is not static and ICT has even increased the rapidity. So today's students must be prepared to adapt to rapid changes locally and globally and that includes career readiness;
7. Must be ready to make their contributions to lectures. With the benefits of access to information through ICT, today's students can no longer claim ignorance and remain passive in class. Lectures should be two-way communication with emphasis on participation by all students. Students must own their learning. Students of yesteryears own their learning;
8. Must be continuous, lifelong learners to meet new developments;
9. Language proficiency- the 21<sup>st</sup> century child is branded a digital native and a global learner. He must be proficient in language usage (at least two foreign languages and his mother tongue) so that he can be more relevant globally. Proficiency would be oral and written.  
(Dublin, nd; Palmer, nd).
10. Acquire core values- very important for teachers who should be good models to their students.

How then should today's student teachers be trained or what should the 21<sup>st</sup> century colleges of education do to meet the challenges thrown on them by the knowledge revolution? Palmer (nd) provided some characteristics that a 21<sup>st</sup> century teacher and by extension teacher educator should possess:

- ✓ He must create learner-centered classroom and personalized instruction – allow students to own their learning; this can produce intrinsic motivation and improved learning;
- ✓ He must be 'digitalized'; know that his students could be more digital than him;
- ✓ Make his students producers of knowledge – get students to own and use smart phones or laptops to create digital information of their own (write blogs, digital stories, poems, movies, cartoons, etc.) that they would be proud of;
- ✓ Make them learn new techniques, new approaches to solving problems, enrich their assignments, projects, etc. using the internet;
- ✓ Make them go global – encourage them to navigate the world using their cellphones; make your class discussion robust with active participation by students; stimulate them;
- ✓ Make students see their smart phones as learning tools for intellectual development;

- ✓ Should go paperless as much as possible – teaching strategies should be mostly digital;
- ✓ collaborate both nationally and internationally – to improve himself;
- ✓ Use social media to meet others to grow professionally; and as an exemplar to his students;
- ✓ Must be innovative in his teaching strategies; rote learning is unfit for 21<sup>st</sup> century learning; encourage multi-task; projects;
- ✓ Must be a continuous learner to enrich his own competence; and
- ✓ Bear in mind that his students belong to the future  
(Dublin, nd; Palmer, nd.; Eaton, 2011).

However, the dilemma that the colleges face are many, First, how do teacher educators trained in the analogue fashion produce digital teachers? Second, how do student teachers trained by digital immigrants who were trained with analogue methods teach ‘digital natives’ to meet the challenges of the demand of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and beyond? Already there is a generation gap. You would have seen it in your class. Students of today especially student teachers:

- do not write own notes or take notes during lectures. They just listen if at all they are;
- At best they come with jotters which they easily throw away after the semester examination;
- Their major companion is their cellphone and handbags, which are for anything but their studies;
- They do not buy or own textbooks; and
- Give them assignment, they rush over it. Some would not bother to participate in group assignment.

These are some of today’s HEI students we have to deal with and prepare for the 21<sup>st</sup> century tasks. They cannot be classified as ‘digital’ yet.

With this scenario, the 21st century task looks insurmountable for teacher educators who are already operating in a difficult terrain (Ijaiya, 2013; Ijaiya and Alabi, 2013) but it is not an impossible task. But to overcome the challenges lecturers would need:

- i) Additional training not only in computer operations which can be done locally but in advanced digital operations including teaching strategies. They would need international training, workshops, conferences and collaboration in related fields;
- ii) Well-equipped laboratories and lecture rooms with necessary gadgets (overhead projectors, computers, consumables,);
- iii) Special classrooms and sitting arrangement designed for group discussion;
- iv) Laptops; and
- v) Regular motivational funding.

But again, there are challenges which are perhaps based on the lackluster attitude to the enormity of the tasks ahead of the future generation in this century and beyond because there is no end to technology. **What we see now in technology is telling us there is more coming, possibly much bigger.** One can reasonably say that technology is unpredictable in context, content and application. The message is ‘be prepared’. Even if the Government and its agencies are aware of this challenge, underfunding of education is a major drawback.

## CONCLUSION AND GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

The demand on Colleges of Education for quality teachers has not changed in any century. What is changing is the standard of education over the centuries. That of the 21<sup>st</sup> century happens to be spectacular driven by ICT. Its veracity is making a huge demand on the next generation of youngsters and the teachers whose task it is to guide them. The dilemma is that the task to do that now fell on the analogue Colleges and Faculties of Education. While the Government is changing policies in schools, they perhaps inadvertently left out teacher educators who must go digital. One cannot give what he doesn’t have. Students may have access to the internet, but without proper guide and control by teachers and parents, it could be anything but academic excellence. The internet is full of the good, the bad and the ugly without any system of control. Many countries are adjusting by pumping funds into ICT. So, whither Nigeria’s Colleges of Education?

To make Nigeria’s Colleges of Education 21<sup>st</sup> century colleges and satisfy the aspirations of the young generation, the following recommendations may be necessary:

- i. Government must appreciate more the enormity of the ICT challenge to education and the economy of the next generation and connect it to training and re-training of teachers, teacher educators, as well as provision of necessary digital facilities; International aids could be sought to address the aspects of funding; and training;
- ii. Doing the same thing in the same old ways has not helped this country. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, ideas rule the world. Education policy makers should always evaluate policy implementation to get feedback to overhaul the system;
- iii. To improve the quality of intakes to teacher education, the Federal Ministry of Education should bring all the agencies presiding over Nigeria’s educational system to one table (UBEC, NCCE, NUC, STMOE, and one must be created for the SS). The connection among the various levels can no longer be ignored. The poor quality of the Basic schools is taking a toll on the quality of the upper levels. Imagine an undergraduate student who does not know when to use past tense, or commas and full

- stops. Such meetings should have teachers and lecturers in attendance, not just administrators to the feedback more robust;
- iv. The proprietors of the Colleges of Education should re-double their efforts at funding the institutions by increasing the budgetary allocation. Teacher training is too important to be made commercial;
  - v. The NCE candidates should be given priority in the admission to Faculties of Education and age should be of concern;
  - vi. There should be more thorough monitoring and credible accreditation of the Colleges; Digital readiness should be one of the criteria;
  - vii. The Federal Government should also beam its corruption flashlight on the education sector at all levels in the interest of quality education. If ‘War Against Indiscipline’ (WAI) worked very well till today, ‘War Against Corruption’ (WAC) could also work if taking to the grassroot level including schools to fight ‘Miracle centres’ etc.
  - viii. Learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is mostly unconventional. Lecturers should rise up to the occasion;
  - ix. The college management and lecturers should demand discipline from their students. Core values should never be compromised in teacher education and lecturers should hold themselves accountable.
  - x. The college management must also feel accountable for 21 century innovations.

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