

## TEACHERS READINESS, RESPONSIBILITY AND REFLECTION FOR SUSTAINABLE TEACHING PROFESSION

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### ABSTRACT

Teaching requires a kind of dispositions and skill sets that can be made possible by a network of groundwork. In addition, everything in education rises and falls on the teacher because good policies can fail without aspect of the teacher. Teaching is an art that is easier said than done, and so those who will teach must be a continuous learner, sharpened through persistent practice and developed through constant reflection. This work therefore, is a three-dimensional perspective discourse of the teaching profession in terms of;

- (i) Readiness
- (ii) Responsibility
- (iii) Reflection

**Keywords:** Teachers, Readiness, Responsibility, Reflection, Sustainable, Preparation, Policy.

### BACKGROUND

Teaching according to iDreamer Career (2020) is a profession that is a mother of all occupations. A teacher is like a potter who delicately forms student's sensitive minds and mold it into a vessel that dictates the student's perception and future ambitions. However, it takes a passionate teacher to produce the right doctors, sound engineers, vibrant lawyers, best entrepreneurs, honest politicians, and most importantly good citizens for society. According to (McKay, 1965), "Teaching is the noblest profession in the world,". Not only that, teaching is a profession that should only appeal to a special type of individual who is concerned about others, one who has a desire to touch the lives of the students and somehow leave them better than they were. More so, that the richest rewards of teaching come when a teacher can observe growth and development in students (McKay, 1965).

Similarly, teachers have always been respected in societies and should be noted that the parent lets the child to live while the teacher enables the child to live well. Even though, McKay (1965) submits that there are true parent-teacher who gives life and as well teaches a child to live abundantly. Today's societies have shifted the responsibility of training the child to live well from the parent to the teacher. The teacher is to prepare the student for a world that is yet to exist and more so, that today's child needs more than knowledge but the capacity to effect change in the society. Teaching profession needs a rethink for sustainability in line with the submission of Thorpe (2014) who among other salient points suggest that introducing an internship experience into the teaching profession would have a major impact on the culture of the profession and the quality of teaching and learning in schools.

Ingersoll and Collins (2018) noted that beyond both pre-service training and in-service induction for beginners, professions typically require continuous professional and technical development as well as growth throughout the teaching career. This is in line with the assumption that achieving mastery of knowledge, teaching skills, and attitudes that can inform teacher identity seems to be a prolonged and continuous process. Moreover, it takes continuous practice to update knowledge just as education advances in the society, and it requires a teacher

to belong in associations and organizations that, among other things, should provide mentorship and coaching, also mechanisms, such as seminars, periodic conferences, publications, and workshops, for knowledge distribution and skill acquisition.

Gradually, we are in a society where technology competes with people and so, the teaching profession cannot be exceptional in putting measures in place to meet up with the task of teaching.

Babu (2018) in a qualitative survey of the question “Can Technology Replace a Teacher” revealed that technology should only be a tool to complement the efforts of teachers, it should not replace a teacher. Even though, there may be instances where technology alone may serve and as such it should not be seen as a threat to the existence of teachers. Technology is changing the way teachers interact with students in the classroom, and teachers need to adapt to help students develop into responsible adults, as well as thrive in an economy heavily influenced by technology.

Moreover, Technology according to Molčanová (2017) will never replace teachers, but a teacher who cannot teach with technology will be replaced by another one who can teach with technology. The previous submission perhaps, caught the support of Aanchal (2019) that the modern age has seen technology replacing almost everything is so much that teaching does not require pen and papers, physical textbooks because of e-books and portable document formats. However, it is significant to remember that a teacher is more than just a facilitator of knowledge but a guide, a mentor, and an inspiration for students. It is much obvious that technology is assisting students in their learning and it is playing a crucial role in the field of education but cannot be an alternative to human skills and interaction that a teacher will provide (Trucano, 2015).

The previous statements are enough to justify that; *it is high time teachers began to change the lens with which they see the profession because no education succeeds without the teacher factor. There are good policies on education all over the world, but those policies may not be workable without a recourse to the teacher because everything rises and falls on the teacher in every educational process.* Consequently, the sustainability of the teaching profession in the global village steps on the three-dimensional discourse of;

### **Teacher Readiness**

Teaching demands readiness because education is constantly changing and the teacher plays the vital role of modeling a student’s life. The teaching profession requires professional growth plans and development to keep current with changing technology and practices in the profession. Professional development of teachers according to (Evans, 2002; Wong, 2004; Ulvi and Lunenberg, 2019) is in two phases; that is induction phase and lifelong learning. Furthermore, to adequately serve the modern-day students who are digital citizens, teachers must be well prepared for the use of technology integration in the classroom (Young, Young, and Hamilton, 2013).

Furthermore, Dewey (1944) in fairness to young generations claimed that 20th-century schools should reorganize their curricula to emphasize freedom and individuality that can respond to varying employment requirements. Also, suggested that education will need to embrace approaches that will provide for future societal needs and even predicted that “if we teach today’s students as we taught yesterday’s, we rob them of tomorrow.” In other words, teachers can not teach today the same way they did yesterday to prepare students for tomorrow. The

submission was nearly a century ago, and it would have been unthinkable for him to predict the current world of electronic resources, digital textbooks, instructional games, interactive blogs, and social media.

The basic message is still relevant today that any teacher who is not well prepared will find it difficult to measure up with today's students. More so, that today's students are the generation of digital natives in agreement with Fleer (2011), and these digital natives live in a world that is characterized by their daily usage of technologies according to Prensky (2001a, b). Conversely, it is worrisome based on the submission of Ertmer (2005) that most classroom teachers are still struggling to integrate technology in teaching, and this a challenge for higher education to better prepare teachers to ensure that they are ready to face these challenges in the classroom.

### **Teacher Responsibility**

Teaching is not just a profession but a multi-dimensional responsibility that is determined by cultural, social, and environmental factors. However, teachers' role is constantly changing due to the dynamic situations of the globe, and while considering the qualities that provoke teacher responsibility, Ustner (2017) suggested a training for sensitivities and practice in the teaching profession. The responsibility bearing however, bothers on knowledge of what to do, when, how, and where to doing what should be done as a professional teacher.

Teachers responsibilities today are becoming so important that it requires hard work than ever, to nurture manpower that society required in the teaching profession. Loeb, Miller, and Strunk (2009) have indicated that professional development and teacher education policies have the potential to greatly affect teachers' abilities to teach and, as a result, students' abilities to learn. Teachers may have all the skills and all the knowledge but will still be worthless without practice (Snoek, Dengerink and Dewit, 2019). In other words, teachers learn much about teaching by doing.

Additionally, bearing responsibility is teachers' deliberate practice according to Marzano (2011) that involves more than just recurrence; it requires activities that are designed to improve performance, challenge the learner, and provide feedback. The use of every activity to develop strategies that capitalize on students' different backgrounds, cultures, beliefs, language, conception and misconceptions, position, and disposition to enrich the learning environment for every student (Shulma, 2015). Hence, today's teaching profession requires a global-minded teacher with intercultural competence based on the ecosystem of practice.

### **Teacher Reflection**

Teacher reflection is not different from the thinking route of Palmer (2018) who submits that *"My goal is to be a wonderfully inspirational teacher, always available to my students, and constantly encouraging, supporting, and challenging them. I intend to provide my students with a life-changing experience. I want to be renowned for my exceptional teaching skills and for getting my students actively engaged in their learning"*. Teaching involves thoughtfulness that will generate an intention to stimulate students to be good citizens and as well help them to dream and achieve the dream. According to Finlay (2008), teacher reflection is about teachers looking at what they do in the classroom, and thinking about why they do it and if it works.

However, one of the best features of teaching is thinking skills particularly, reflective thinking skills which can be linked to the educational world according to Dewey (1933). Also, meaningful experiences that are based on reflection because teachers can not only learn from

experience but from reflecting on experience. Teacher reflection encompasses thinking about what was successful in their lessons and what should be done to improve. It means that reflective teachers will think about their students who are learning well and those who appear to be having difficulty with learning. This is to help them according to the submission of Tate (2020) that if students are not learning by the way we teach them, then we must teach them by the way they learn.

Moreover, reflective teachers will think about issues and also create awareness for their students about what goes on in the society. They constantly think about values, beliefs, and traditions to be passed across to their students also, reflection is like looking into a mirror, and in this case, teachers look at their practice and decide to accept or change what they have done to improve (Bilash, 2011). Therefore, three types of teacher reflection have been identified in studying to be a reflective teacher.

### **Reflection in Action**

Reflection-in-action describes the teacher's ability to resolve situations while they are happening; it is mostly done unconsciously while drawing on previous experiences. This kind of reflection does not happen after the in-class occurrence, rather the teacher tries out several solutions until the most appropriate solution is found. It involves a mixture of knowing and doing; Schön (1983) described this as 'theory-in-use'.

### **Reflection ON Action**

Reflection-on-action takes place after the event has taken place. This involves developing a repertoire of experience and forces teachers to think about what they would ideally do if the situation happened again. Schön (1983) believes that both types of reflection are necessary to become an effective practitioner. Reflecting on one's strengths and weaknesses help in teacher professional development.

### **Reflection FOR Action**

Reflection-for-action by extension of the work of Schön (1983) is purposeful according to Eraut (1995). It is about the intentions of the practitioner for subsequent actions as a result of the experiences lived during the processes of reflection-on-action and reflection-in-action. In this case, the teachers' future thoughts and actions are formed for execution (Tican and Taspinar, 2015) Reflection is a tool in the continuous development of teachers' knowledge and a major condition for change in practicing to be a spontaneous teacher. It is a deviation from routine action to informed action in the teaching profession and so, teacher reflection is a rescue from being a routine teacher to an informed teacher.

## **CONCLUSION**

This work explores contributing factor of teacher in the process of teaching and learning. It aimed at working on the lens with which the teacher and the society at large view the teaching profession in order to create a platform for sustainable education. It therefore, concludes that teacher continuing professional development perspective, practice in place of principle, and situations instead of a program will persistently produce teachers that will be responsive to facts rather than policies in education. This could also mean the trademark for teachers of all times and that certainly will sustain the teaching profession because through this kind of concept, every teacher will be ready, responsible, and reflective in practice.

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