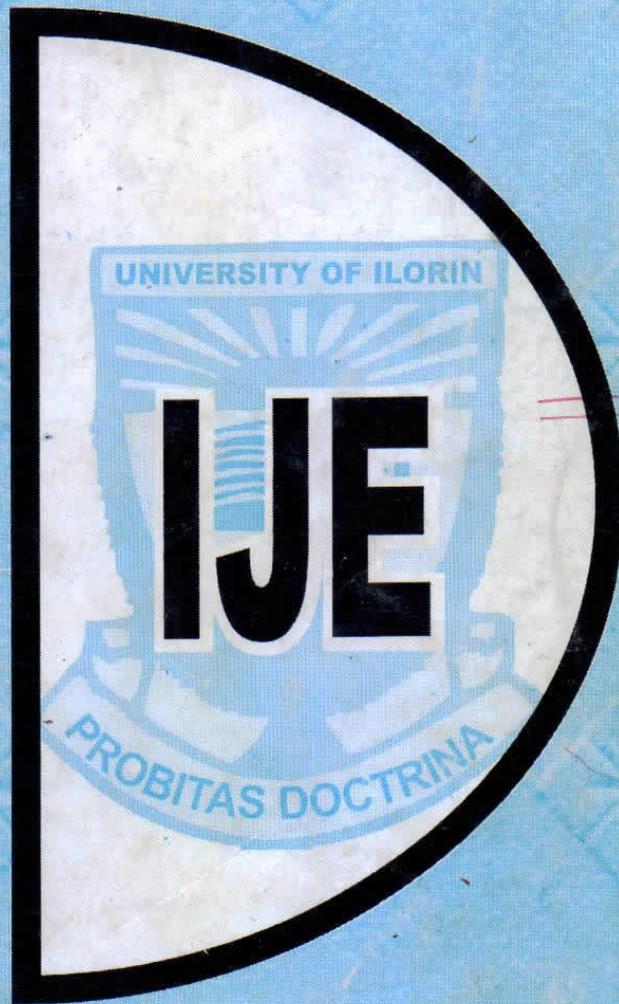


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THE RELEVANCE OF STAFF DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES TO STAFF PERFORMANCE IN THE SCHOOL SYSTEM

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Abstract

Schools have a mandate to educate children to acquire relevant skills and knowledge for application in solving practical life problems. To do this successfully, schools need well qualified teachers, administrators and support staff. Since no employee can remain qualified with continuous changes in societal values and expectations, some form of on-going education and training becomes a necessity. The different methods used in developing staff in schools include induction, conferences workshops and seminars. Others are staff meetings, visits and demonstrations, professional training and higher studies. Development programmes need to be organised for teachers - to improve their instructional methodology; school heads to acquire skills relating to their job of overseeing and directing; and support staff to acquire necessary skills for improved performance at work. Based on the highlighted relevance of staff development programmes as prime vehicles for improving staff performance in schools, some relevant suggestions were-made. These suggestions relate to the responsibility of the individual staff to seek self-improvement, and that of the school authority and the employing body to make such improvements possible.

Introduction

It is literally impossible for any individual to learn a job or enter a profession and remain in it for long with his or skills basically unchanged. This is more so in a complex and constantly changing organisation like a school that must adapt to changing societal demands and instructional methodology. Thus, no matter how excellent the pre-service preparation and how well qualified school personnel are at the time of employment, efforts should be made to develop them personally and professionally on a regular and continuous basis.

The schools need well qualified administrators, teachers and support staff to provide quality learning experiences for students. In line with the saying that "no school can be greater than its teachers" and changes in position and job requirement within the school system, school personnel must be well developed. It is important to develop the teachers that directly impart knowledge to students; the school heads that supervise, guide and support the teachers; and other support staff that make the work of the teachers and the school heads easier. It is only then that appropriate and adequate knowledge can be imparted to the students, resulting ultimately in successful achievement of the goals of education.

Staff Development Programmes in Schools

Every organisation is expected to be committed to creating an equitable,-developmental and motivating working environment which values and empowers people at all levels. Staff development is seen by Support Council Education Services (2004) as one of the main routes of achieving this commitment. Staff development programmes are therefore aimed at professional and personal development of the three categories of staff in the school system. These are the teachers, the administrators and the support staff. Staff development, according to

Adesina (1980), connotes the ways and means by which staff performance needs are recognised and the extent to which leaders ensure that these needs are met. Likewise, Piper and Giatter (1983) cited by Health (1989), defined staff development as a systematic attempt to harmonise individuals' interests and wishes, and their carefully assessed requirements for furthering their careers with the forthcoming requirements of the organisation within which they are expected to work.

Staff development helps educators keep abreast of expanding knowledge base on education so they can continually refine their conceptual and craft skills (Gusky & Huberman, 1995). There is the need to ensure that the development programmes serve the expected purposes through the acquisition of the required knowledge and skills by the staff. Thus, needs analysis or assessment should precede any development programme, in line with the goals and objectives of the school system. The needs analysis techniques include, among others, checklist of staff skills and lack of them, interviewing, survey and performance appraisal. A typical model for staff development programme is presented in Figure 1.

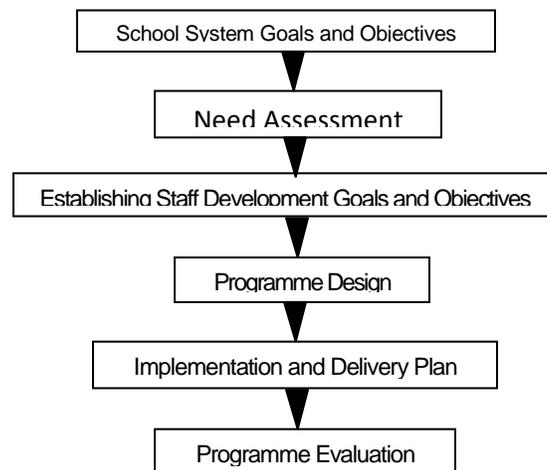


Figure 1: A Model for Staff Development Programme

Adapted from Rebore (1982).

The components of the model are discussed as follows:

The Goals and Objectives of the School system: Which are primarily concerned with developing in children the basic skills and imparting in them knowledge and understanding.

Needs Assessment: Preceding staff development programmes, needs assessment determines any discrepancies between the existing and the needed competences to achieve the goals of the school.

Staff Development Goals and Objectives: These continually change to meet the changing needs of the individual staff members and the school. For instance, in this information age, there is the need for computer education and application by staff and students in schools.

Programme Design: This is a process of matching staff needs with available resources through an effective delivery method. Delivery methods include seminars, classes and courses, workshops, conferences, research and work experience.

The Implementation and Delivery Plan: This involves providing employees with appropriate incentives to participate in development programmes. Such incentives include satisfactory time arrangement; effective and supportive management and leadership, reimbursement for expenses incurred and improved remunerations.

Programme Evaluation: Effective evaluation of staff development programmes is necessary to determine if they are accomplishing the specific training objectives, as a basis for future programme design.

According to Adesina (1980), staff development programmes in the school system can be conceived as:

- 1) those which aim at correcting certain deficiencies at the time of appointment (induction/orientation);
- 2) those which enable the non-professionals to professionalize;
- 3) those which enable the teaching staff to face the challenges resulting from innovation in the school curriculum; and,
- 4) those which allow for acquisition of higher qualification for greater responsibilities and status within the school system.

1. Programmes that aim at correcting certain deficiencies at the time of appointment

The beginning of staff development is induction or orientation. This is the type of training given to new employees to give them a good start. New staff needs to be introduced formally into the school system to minimize the likely initial problems of adjustment. Orientation provides new employees with basic information regarding working conditions, policies, procedures, pays and benefits, and introduces management and- co-workers. Induction programmes fall into- two categories namely, informational on matters such as pay and work schedules, and personal adjustment programmes for meaningful interactions between the new employee and other people for whom and with whom he will work. Induction programme could last for between a day and a week, and involves activities such as visitation, seminars and meetings.

2. Programmes which enable non-professionals to professionalize

Teaching is technical in that specialized training is needed in the areas of child development, child psychology, theories of learning, teaching methodology, pupil evaluative procedures and general principles and practice of education. However, due to misguided courses and careers studied at higher institutions coupled with increasing rate of unemployment in Nigeria, many university graduates with single or double honours find

themselves teaching, as a last resort. No matter how knowledgeable these people are in their subject areas, they lack the necessary skills in teaching.

To rectify these deficiencies, most Nigerian universities run Post-Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) for the non-professional teachers. The programme is run by the Faculty/Institute of Education for two long vacations, representing two semesters. The students are exposed to, in addition to theories of education, simulated teaching through supervised teaching practices. At the end of the course, they become trained teachers.

Table 1 shows the number of secondary school non-professional teachers trained by the Institute of Education, University of Ilorin, between 1991 and 2000.

Table 1: Graduate Teachers with PGDE Certificate from University of Ilorin (1991 -2000)

Year	PGD Graduates
1992	62
1992	166
1993	189
1994	102
1995	54
1996	NA
1997	95
1998	46
1999	32
2000	29

Sources: 1. Student statistics, Institute of Education, University of Ilorin (Mimeographed and Undated).

2. University of Ilorin Convocation Proceedings. NA means Not Available. No graduation in 1996 due to ASUU strike.

Table 1 shows graduate teachers in secondary school who have acquired the teaching qualification (PGDE) between 1991 and 2000. The figures in the table showed a gradual but continuous decline in the number of PGDE graduates. This might be an indication that majority of the non-professional teachers have acquired the professional qualification, or have quitted the teaching job.

3. Programmes that enable the teaching staff to face the challenges resulting from innovation in the school curriculum

These programmes are tailored to the dynamic nature of the societal expectations from education. For instance, the societal demand for technological advancement led to the introduction of the 6-3-3-4 system of education in Nigeria. The junior secondary school level requires the use of different scientific, technical and technological equipment and machines. -Relevant teachers (and technicians) had to be, and are still being trained in these areas. Likewise the introduction of students' continuous assessment system in the 80's necessitated the training of subject teachers and school counsellors in its techniques. The on-going global emphasis on information technology has resulted in the inclusion of

computer education in the school curriculum of some schools such as Federal Government Colleges and some private schools. By the time computer education is introduced to all schools, many teachers would need to be trained in computer technology.

The techniques used in developing teachers include on-the-job training, coaching and teachers meetings and visitations. Other techniques are workshops, conferences and seminars, professional publications and lectures. These techniques expose teachers to exchange of useful facts and ideas necessary for their professional growth.

4. Programmes that enable acquisition of Higher Qualifications

These involve studies in higher institutions of learning. They include Nigerian Certificate in Education (NCE) for Senior School Certificate (SSC) and Grade II holders and Bachelors in Arts and Science Education (B.A. [Ed.], and B.Sc. [Ed.]) for NCE holders, at the universities. Like P.G.D.E, these courses are offered to secondary school teachers on sandwich and part-time basis. The resultant higher education is associated with greater responsibilities and higher status in terms of posts and remuneration. Tables 2 and 3 show Grade II teachers trained at the Kwara State College of Education, Ilorin, and NCE teachers trained at the Institute of Education, University of Ilorin, respectively, on sandwich basis, between 1991 and 2004.

Year	NCE Graduates
1991	1773
1992	2927
1993	4234
1994	5342
1995	5716
1996	5694
1997	4411
1998	3012
1999	430
2000	370
2001	141
2002	81
2003	443
2004	391

Source: Kwara State College of Education Ilorin. Research and Statistics Unit (Data for NCCE, Mimeograph and Undated)

Table 2 gives the figures of Grade II teachers, mostly in the *primary* schools who took part in the NCE sandwich programme of the Kwara State College of Education Ilorin, and graduated between 1991 and 2004. Nigerian Certificate in Education (NCE) Sandwich

programme is for a 5-year *period*. The figures show a gradual decline from 1997. By 2002, only 81 students graduated. This might be an indication that majority of the *primary* school teachers have complied with the policy of NCE as the minimum requirement for teaching at *primary schools*.

Table 3: B.A. Ed. and B.Sc. Ed Sandwich Graduates between 1991 and 2000

Year	B. A. (Ed.)		B.Sc. (Ed.)	
	(Language/Social Studies)	(Mathematics)	(Science)	Total
1991	705	99	152	956
1992	609	146	94	846
1993	446	84	45	575
1994	412	93	75	570
1995	501	69	42	612
1996	NA	NA	NA	NA
1997	736	136	33	905
1998	491	109	54	654
1999	410	83	59	552
2000	436	61	54	551

Source: Students statistics. Institute of Education, University of Ilorin (Mimeograph and undated). NA means Not Available due to 1995/96 ASUU strike.

Table 3 gives the number of Bachelors degree holders in Languages and Social Studies, Mathematics and Science at the Institute of Education, University of Ilorin, between 1991 and 2000. A look at the table reveals more graduates in Arts (B.A. Ed) than in the sciences (B.Sc. Ed). This could be due partly to the fact that languages are varied - English language, Yoruba, French and Arabic -and partly due to lopsidedness in the number of applicants for science and Arts courses.

Staff Development for School Administrator

The roles of the school heads are ever-changing and multiple in nature. Thus, development programmes for them should focus on development of relevant skills to perform these roles. Major areas of development programmes for school administrators include instructional skills, management skills, human relations abilities and leadership skills. Other areas are political and cultural awareness and self-understanding. The methods of training include workshops, conferences and seminars, and further studies especially post-graduate studies in Educational Management and Public Administration (M.Ed, and MPA)

Staff Development for Support Staff

Many categories of support staff currently work alongside teachers in schools. These support staff includes secretaries, bursars, clerks, store-keepers, typists, librarians', -and

"laboratory and workshop assistants /technologists. They render support functions to ease out the tasks of teachers and school heads in imparting knowledge to students. Methods of developing support staff include on-the-job training and off- the-job .training such as seminars, workshops and lectures given in schools and' specialised centres for staff development. Table 4 shows the secretaries and typists trained at Kwara State Staff Development College, Ilorin.

Table 4: Secretaries and Typists trained at the Kwara State Staff Development College, Ilorin (1991-2004).

Session	Secretaries (CSII-IV)	Typists	Total
1995/1996	146	90	236
1996/1997	141	90	231
1997/1998	143	88	231
1998/1999	153	94	247
1999/2000	93	96	189
2000/2001	93	88	181
2001/2002	62	44	106
2002/2003	77	36	113
2003/2004	41	31	72
2004/2005	.,30	12	42

Source: *Kwara State staff Development College, Ilorin (Examination Unit)*

Note: CS means confidential secretary.

Typists and secretaries trained at the Kwara State Staff Development College, Ilorin, between 1991 and 2004 are shown in Table 4., This is an indication that support staff also need to be developed professionally in order to ease the jobs of the teachers and administrators.

Staff Development and Performance

Effective performance on the part of employees is essential for the success of the organisation. Such performance, to a large extent, will depend on their knowledge and skills, and confidence in originating ideas as to how best to carry out the tasks of the job. Hence, the need for staff development programmes which should aim at improving the effectiveness of individuals at work and for greater responsibilities.

One of the conditions requiring staff .development is low productivity (Nwachukwu, 1988). An organisation may have employees with appropriate equipment, yet productivity may fall below expected standards. The missing factor, in many cases, is the lack of adequate skills and knowledge which are acquired through training and education. The primary aims of staff development, as submitted by Health (1989), include enhancing professional competence which will also have some impact on personal growth and awareness, increasing job satisfaction and developing potentials for future work, and improving the individuals and institutions' abilities to achieve their aims and objectives. (Osborne, 1996) also opined that when

training is provided in a supportive climate, it can among others, increase productivity; enhance group work at all levels; create greater employee versatility; improve communication, morale and co-operation; and improve employee job satisfaction. In other words, planned development programmes provide a means of maintaining acceptable level of employee and organizational performance. Specifically, orientation contributes to organisational effectiveness by facilitating the socialization process so that new employees become integrated into the organisation as soon as possible. The sooner the employees feel comfortable in the organisation, the sooner they can be productive (Stoner, 1982). Other forms of training and development provide employees with the knowledge and skills they need to remain qualified for their jobs in the face of changes and new challenges. Such challenges include keeping abreast of current developments in one's field as related to new responsibilities, performance standards, equipment, or work methods.

The main purpose of staff development in schools therefore is to enable staff to achieve their potential as employees and to effectively contribute to the achievement of the schools' objectives. The effectiveness of staff development programmes in schools entails consideration of improvements in student learning in line with modern educational improvement efforts. Gusky and Sparks (1996) proposed a model of the relationship between staff development and improvements in student learning. The model is based on the premise that the quality of staff development is influenced by a variety of factors classified as content characteristics, process variables, and context characteristics. These are the "what", 'how', and 'who, when, where and why', respectively, of staff development. The writers concluded that high quality staff development programmes are important pre-requisites to improvements in student learning.

Staff development's influence on students is accomplished principally through its direct effect on teacher and administrator knowledge and practices. Improved knowledge and practices, as the most significant outcomes of staff development effort would lead to better job performance. With improved teachers' professional knowledge and 'classroom practices, improved student learning would be expected.

Administrator knowledge and practices are also influenced by the quality of staff development programmes available to them. Their competencies are reflected in their interactions with teachers through activities such as clinical supervision, coaching and formative evaluation (Gusky and Sparks, 1996). Secondly, administrators exhibit competencies through their leadership roles in formulating policies on the curriculum, assessment, discipline and other school activities. These activities have a powerful and direct effect on the content, process and outcome of student learning.

Support staff undertakes responsibilities in support of teaching and learning activities in schools. Their competencies are equally improved through appropriate staff development programmes. Training for support staff can be delivered through a range of media including mentoring, job shadowing individual learning, conferences and courses (National Joint Council for Local Government Services, 2004). These training activities

would enable those with the right aptitude and abilities to make rapid progress in their careers and in the process, contribute significantly to improved teacher and administrator job performance, and ultimately, student learning. In order to adequately meet the aims of staff development, therefore, an employing authority and its managers would need to provide within the framework of agreed policies, a wide range of developmental opportunities for all categories of staff. Such opportunities should include well-organised in-service education and training in a climate in which staff feel that they are being adequately supported in professional and resource terms.

Recommendations

Every person who pursues a career as distinct from a job holder should expect to continue his development in form of education and training for the rest of his professional life. This is more so in teaching which is a dynamic profession requiring continuous up-date of knowledge and skills for performance. Therefore, for all the personnel in the schools, development programmes are a pre-requisite for better performance, resulting ultimately in high personal and professional productivity. The following suggestions are made to improve staff development programmes in schools.

Since it is the responsibility of the individual to seek self-improvement, it also becomes the responsibility of the employing authority to make such improvement possible. Hence, training and education of all staff in schools should become an integral part of educational programme, with incentives such as release and financial assistance, provided for their conduct. Such training programmes should be an entitlement -which is equally accessible to all employees based on good practice in development activity .and teaching and learning. In this direction, the ministry of education should provide a wide range of quality trainings that support and develop .school staff in teaching, leadership and .management skills. Other partner organizations in providing development opportunities should include higher educational institutions and professional associations.

Education and training programmes for school personnel may not achieve their goals if the school environment precludes learnt skills from actually being utilized. Such training programmes should be clearly linked to the school development plan, the implementation of local priorities and the delivery of national standards, as well as meeting individual needs. As such, the needs of the staff as well as the needs of the school should be assessed to determine the appropriate, training activities required. The new skills and knowledge should, be capable of improving the employee's understanding of his job and of immediate application to the job performance.

Moreover, the aims and objectives of a development programme should be clearly stated and agreed upon by the school authority before commencement. The staff should study just what he's expected or allowed to study by his employer in order to be relevant.

In addition, the preparation of the development programmes and organisation of activities should be *carried* out well in advance to ensure that those who participate are informed in good time.

As a prerequisite to active participation of staff in development programmes without allowing the school programmes to suffer, school time -table should be arranged according to the exigencies of the training.

Training and education should provide for better performance, greater responsibilities and higher status. As such, the training programmes should provide for continuous evaluation by both the individual and the school to determine the worth and effectiveness of the training activities. The result would form the basis for future training programmes, thereby providing a continuous pathway for development and improvement of the school staff, and lifelong learning in the students.

In view of the fact that support staff are increasingly expected to take on wider and deeper roles in support of teaching and learning, their training and development should be considered as an integral part of school development strategy.

Professionalism in teaching should be enforced as a statutory condition of employment of teachers. Likewise, appropriate pre-requisite management and leadership skills should be ascertained in appointing school administrators. Adequate induction programmes should also be given to staff promoted, taking on additional responsibilities or transferring to new jobs.

Conclusion

Teachers, administrators and support staff have crucial roles to play in bringing about improved learning in students. Their ability to effectively carry out these roles would be determined largely by the quality of staff development programmes made available to, and utilized by, them. Staff development efforts in schools should consider the complex relationship between staff development and improvement in staff job performance. Such improvements could then lead to marked improvement in content, process, context and outcomes of student learning in schools. Thus, the student learning outcomes would be the starting point for further school if improvement and staff development efforts (a cyclical process).

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