Sustaining the Interest of Teaching/Learning of Agricultural Science in Schools/Colleges in Nigeria

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Abstract - The issue of teaching/learning of Agricultural Science is every science education is to put man on the high-way towards a conscious effort of making students acquire the relevant knowledge accomplishing some of those basic tasks that keep the society healthy, productive and progressive (Oriaifo, 2002). and skill of agricultural science in order to contribute to the The goal of Agricultural Science Education at school/college level The production of relevant and required manpower in agriculture; so it importance of the other can adequately contribute to the can strictly be considered arbitrary and in recognition of the dominant national economy. The issue has remained fundamental to the progress of the agricultural sub sector. This paper is a review work on the teaching/learning of agricultural science in our essential requirements that make life comfort and worth of the agricultural science professions. These two goals were hardly given any emphasis. Hs led to the development of passivity, docile importance of the other two in achieving our national educational issues of our national life. It has become imperative that the system needs to be repositioned to deal with the realities that so glaringly stare us in the face. The primary aim of this paper is to draw attention to issues that can sustain interest in the choice is strictly arbitrary and in recognition of the dominant active/practical learning in which teachers/textbooks are learning and dependence on teachers and textbooks instead of expected to acquire an understanding of agricultural economy necessary to teach student all the scientific information they will need. Instead, both (1981) suggested that children should be given opportunities to discovery, invent, and get caught up in the rapid expansion of science and technological information.

I. INTRODUCTION

The issue of teaching/learning of Agricultural Science in our schools is facing a lot of challenges in the contemporary Nigeria. Giussani, (1995) in the above preamble lucidly expressed the increasing dysfunctionality in contemporary Nigeria education. Many Nigerian educationist and indeed, non-educationist have since come to the conclusion that the Nigerian educational system is not addressing the relevant issues of our national life. It has become imperative that the system needs to be repositioned to deal with the realities that so glaringly stare us in the face. The primary aim of this paper is to draw attention to issues that can sustain interest in the learning/teaching of the agricultural science profession in our schools/colleges. We recognize that there are three education systems operating in Nigeria, viz; the indigenous system, the Quranic Muslim system and the European/modern/formal system. This is not to under rate the importance of the other two in achieving our national educational objectives. The choice is strictly arbitrary and in recognition of the dominant role which the modern or formal educational system plays in our attempt to adopt to a new global environment.

One of the most important goals of education is for to be functional and utilitarian, preparing the individual for life in the community and reforming the society for relevance, adequacy and competitiveness in the world. Education is known to be the key to the economic, political, sociological and human resource development and well-being of any society. The concept of Agricultural science education adopted in this write-up is that which can provide those essential requirements that make life comfort and worth living. The bottom line of Agricultural Science Education like

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(Aval, 2002) this is acquired through modern training to handle all technological and business aspects of the agricultural sub-economy. Federal Republic of Nigeria (1981) refers to it as an aspect of education which leads to the acquisition of practical and applied skills as well as basic scientific knowledge in the subject matter.

With adequate training in agricultural science, food supply will be abundant, employment will be generated and poverty will be reduced. There will be steady income for the country and the farmers. Raw materials will be available for industries and the general improvement in manpower development. Graduates of agricultural Science Education programme will be fully equipped to participate in the scientific transformation of agriculture and practice in the country. Hence it is pertinent to note that Agricultural Science Education curriculum is designed to provide for the development of the cognitive, psychomotor and affective domains, thus Agricultural Science Education programme provides experiences that enable recipient to be sound intellectually, acquire different skills that make for active and efficient participation in the production of food, fibre and raw materials food and services (Aval, 2002).

According to Adekojo (1998), the inclusion of agricultural science in the education system, of old was just for learning how to make successful living from it most cases, agriculture was offered (at schools and colleges) because it was either made compulsory to keep farm going or to make up credits in the final examination. I its objectives had never been to develop an individual that will be competent enough to take up farming on a business. However, Agricultural Science Education had helped to disseminate vital information as to the various ways to reinforce the depressing nature of the productive sector of the economy e.g. the present state of the Nigerian economy that is beggarly inviting agriculture for the rescue. The tentacle of technology spread by Agricultural Science Education has helped to bring fruits of science to the farm gate in the form, amount and time they are needed most educate the enlistment of the living standard (Idachabe, 1991).

III. TEACHING/LEARNING OF AGRICULTURAL SCIENCE IN SCHOOLS/COLLEGES IN CONTEMPORARY NIGERIA.

Fafunwa (1995), maintained that the central theme of the new national policy on Education is the three year of junior Secondary Schooling whose broad aims include preparation of pupils for useful living within the technical and scientific skills, inspire pupils with desire for achievement and include real practical experience in industries for every pupil. This will minimize the high level of unemployment amongst secondary school dropouts.

Although Agricultural Science Education is one of the compulsory subjects in the junior secondary school, nationwide, student’s teachers show very little interest in the practical aspect to a point that some refer to it as a dirty subject. It is a truism that when agricultural science is only theoretically taught, the obvious objectives of the National Policy on education at this level cannot be achieved. According to Ekwunife (1993), the content of the secondary school agriculture course in Nigeria include elementary appreciation of living things and non-living things like e.g. N-cycle, carbon cycle, water cycle, concepts of an ecological and physiological nature of plants and animals including their inter/intra relationship. The syllabus at this level of education has the objectives of:

- Stimulating and sustaining their interest in agriculture;
- Acquire basic knowledge and practical skills in agriculture;
- Acquire the knowledge of interpretation and the use of the data and
- Stimulate their ability to make deduction using the acquired knowledge in agriculture.

The syllabus is divided into:

- General agriculture
- Agronomy
- Animal production
- Agricultural economics/extension and
- Agricultural technology.

The curriculum is boosted with practical approaches in order to fulfill the provision by the Nigerian policy on education.

PROBLEMS OF TEACHING/LEARNING OF AGRICULTURAL SCIENCE IN SCHOOLS/COLLEGES IN CONTEMPORARY NIGERIA

According to Fafunwa (1995), education experts have picked holes in the implementation of agricultural science curriculum as specified in the syllabus due mainly to the following problems:

- Poor funding of education in Nigeria which includes agricultural science.
- Inadequate classroom, laboratory and workshops.
- Lack of qualified teachers/technicians in most schools.
- Dare absence of relevant textbooks and printed materials in some relevant aspects of agricultural science.
- Lack of teaching aids and relevant instructional materials.
- Lack of sufficient time to enable the teacher use the enquiry and discovery methods which leads to ineffective teaching.
- Lack of active participation by student during the process of teaching/learning. This singular factor leads to inability to observe unfamiliar object and situation to make records of deduction, inability to use follow up instruction about them, inability to use relevant manual skills, inability to recognize and describe familiar agricultural objects.
- Negative influence of the sociology of the rural farmers on the psyche of the young students.
- Get rich quickly syndromes in the society.
- Poor remuneration of agricultural science teacher despite the hazard of the profession.
- Congestion in schools coupled with inadequate staffing.

PROSPECTS FOR SUSTAINING THE INTEREST OF TEACHING/LEARNING OF AGRICULTURAL SCIENCE IN SCHOOLS/COLLEGES

According to Nwabueze (1993), opinion of the Nigeria Association of Professional Education (NAPE) be adopted and called for immediate professionalization of teaching to avoid or prevent quack teachers from teaching as they rather cheat the students instead of teaching. According to him,
teaching in Nigeria has a long time been invaded by all manner of persons who lack both professional knowledge and skills required for practicing it at all levels of the country’s education enterprise. That professional training, specialized knowledge and skills are required but are lacking in quacks that have taken over from the professionals in the corridor of education in Nigeria.

Fadareb (1980), suggested that the provision of basic infrastructure and teaching facilities must be within the reach of any approved Schools/colleges to offer agriculture apart from the issue of manpower. He also called for a unified condition of service for science teachers including an enhanced opportunity for advancement and retraining.

Elaturiti (1988) stated that because of its multifarious advantage on the teaching/learning process, teachers are recommended to use slide/tape as another effective medium of instruction in classroom. The teaching method can be patterned in such a way that medium instrument will be efficiently and effectively utilized with the assistance of school librarians.

Olaitan (1984), observed that the greatest contributory factors to choice of teaching method in agriculture were in order of performances;

a. Teachers mastery of subject matter
b. Availability of sufficient materials.
c. Nature of content for the lesson.
d. Nature of both the internal and external examinations. Consequence upon this hierarchy of factors, the predominant method has continued to be that lecture and chalkboard, with its characteristics practice of teaching facts and facts alone with little or no room for skill transfer to the young students. The teaching methods currently lack room for thinking and creativities needless to emphasis the adoption of any taught skills.

Agriculture should be seen as production oriented programme in which the resultant effect is to acquire skill for production. Perhaps the one way by which the teaching system is made truly vocational is to accept conceptional approach in the selected and organization of teaching topics. Teaching should be centered around ecological, practical, production, storage and processing skills for both crops and livestock. This will lead to integration of theory and practices necessary for food production.

Agriculture at this level must have a clear cut objective and skills for which any evaluation instrument must test.

For effective teaching and learning of agriculture, the teachers must possess and use effectively such skills as observation, classification, identification, and experimentation, demonstration and copious solution to agricultural problems that exist in secondary/colleges in Nigeria.

Teacher should realize the principle of individual difference in learning styles and experiences so as to adequately promote the learning the students. Douglas (1964) said that there are variation among the student’s ability, sensitivity and reactivity. Learning should not be teacher centered, as was the tradition in the schools of the past. The modern approach to teaching is to make students center of attention as the teacher applies the instrumental materials. It is a known fact that practical demonstration helps to enhance concept formation in students and reduces the degree abstraction.

In the same vane, laboratory/experiment experience can help develop insights that include:

Observation through personal experience that knowledge is constructed not discovered.

Scientific knowledge is tentative and incomplete.

There are usually several possible explanations for any observed experimental results.

Agricultural science teachers should be resourceful and innovative to Play the role of a thinker who works with bits and pieces to be picked around homes to provide material for student experimentation. Issue of improvisation is drastically cut down.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is only reasonable and meaningful to use concrete materials in imparting knowledge to the students at this level of education as the only means of helping the student gain an understanding of the concept to be taught as scientific knowledge is gained by direct experiment so that activity based learning that has a dual benefit of matching the essence of seeing-through constant reference to objective reality rather than shadow of reality as portrayed on the chalkboard is achieved.

Experimentation/demonstration method be adapted (affective domain) for promoting understanding. The activity methods for difference in talent to allow students discover knowledge at their own pace.

V. CONCLUSION

Emphasis should be on the method that encourage interactions between students both slow and the fast ones. Any method(s) built on the avoidance of coercion or compulsion but encourages exchange among students/teachers, advice on utilization, openly influencing a student’ knowledge level and attitude, manipulating or influencing the students knowledge level and attitude without the students’ social and/or economic structure will sustain the interest of teaching/learning of agricultural science in Nigeria. These approaches will largely reduce the hydra headed challenges facing the teaching/learning of Agricultural science in our contemporary Nigeria.

REFERENCES


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