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**Paulo Freire's Adult Education Philosophy as an Alternative for
Instructional Delivery in Universities in Nigeria**

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Abstract

This paper argues that Nigerian universities instructional delivery mechanism is faulty and cannot guarantee effective teaching and learning which will result to production of sound, informed, critical and productive graduates. The Nigerian university teachers through their approaches to teaching domesticate, repress and intimidate learners. This process grows and develops narrow consciousness and narrow minded individuals who cannot champion the course of addressing Nigerian problems and efforts towards national sustainable development. Thus, the need for searching alternative approach to teaching in order to reposition the system with a view to producing graduates who are skilled to move the country forward. Against this background, the paper calls for exploration of Paulo Freire's Adult Education Philosophy as an alternative for instructional delivery in universities in Nigeria. To this end, the paper examines the situational analyses of instructional delivery in universities in Nigeria. Also philosophy of Paulo Freire and its implications to teaching and learning in universities in Nigeria were discussed. The paper concludes that the quest for producing university graduates who will be able to confront Nigerian problems and promote sustainable national development will be realized if Nigerian university teachers move away from "banking" education and embrace problem-posing model of education through conscientization where learners and teachers are seen as co-partners in learning. The paper recommends among others that Faculty of Education in Nigerian universities should continue to pressurize their university senates to mandate all academic staff who do not have teaching qualification to undergo postgraduate course in education in order to acquire relevant teaching qualification with a view to understanding rudiments of teaching and learning where learners and teachers are co-partners in learning.

Introduction

University is the highest formal institution of learning where training of high level of manpower takes place. Universities are known as ivory towers and citadels of learning. University as a higher institution of learning is expected to train people with sense of sincerity, honesty, open-mindedness, critical thinking and consciousness. University Education according to the Nigeria National Policy on Education (2013) shall make optimum contribution to national development by intensifying and diversifying its programmes for the development of high level manpower within the context of the needs of the nation. In pursuance of this goal, universities are expected to provide services such as effective teaching, research and community services for the betterment of individuals and societal development. Primarily, teaching in the university among other services is expected to turn out graduates who will be able to impact positively the living conditions of themselves, their immediate communities and the larger society. Through effective teaching, research and community services the goal of higher education would be achieved. In fact, effective teaching instills the spirit of truth and reflective thinking in the minds of the learners.

Unfortunately, the quality of the products of some higher institutions in Nigerian universities leaves much to be desired. In fact, Mango (2010), citing Sunday Trust, Nigeria (2009) described many of the Nigeria graduates as half-baked and unemployable for their deficiencies. Describing the pathetic situation of Nigeria university graduates, Mango (2010) lamented that a graduate of education can neither protect his own educational rights nor can he protect the educational rights of his community; a graduate of political science can neither protect his political rights nor can he protect the political rights of his community; a graduate of a law is not only unjust but collaborator in the abuse and misuse of justice, a graduate of medical science is not only inhuman but suppresses public health; and a graduate of science is always a foreigner in his own environment talk less of conquering it to improve his living.

These situations put question marks on the quality of our university education in Nigeria. The quality of university education is often a reflection of the performance of university graduates in the labour markets, conduct of personal life and the quality of interaction the graduates have with the larger society which is also dependent on the quality of academic programmes, provision of instructional facilities, conducive learning environment and the way and manner instructions are delivered by the teachers of the various universities.

Over the years, educators such as Knowles (1980), Darkenwald and Merriam (1982), Biao (2005), Mango (2010) and Usamn (2015) have criticized how teaching is done pedagogically in the higher institutions of learning in developing countries including Nigeria. Nigerian university students are mature learners, treating them like a 'bank' where money is deposited and retrieved when needed which pedagogy as a method of instruction entails as most lecturers do via lecture will not promote true learning but domesticating learners as argued by Paulo Freire. Paulo Freire warned that, education can humanize, liberate and treat people as subjects of who control their destiny or domesticate and oppress and treat them as objects of manipulation. Putting it clearly in Nigerian context, Mango (2010) remarked that teaching in Nigeria academia is repressive in character, it indoctrinates, smothers creativity and imagination. It induces conformity and stultifies students into blind and docile conformity and obedience as potential public workers and should not question power authority even where it is wrong.

If the instructional delivery strategies used in our universities in Nigeria is believed to have contributed to the production of half-baked graduates, narrow consciousness minded persons, repressed characters, corrupt graduates among others then as argued by Mango (2010), there is the need to look inward for alternatives in order to salvage our future. It is against this backdrop that the paper calls for a paradigm shift in the instructional delivery in Nigeria universities by exploring Paulo Freire's Adult Education Philosophy as an alternative. To this end, the paper examines the instructional delivery scenario in Nigeria universities and its consequences on the quality of Nigeria graduates. The paper further examines Paulo's Freire ideology and explores its relevance to instructional delivery in Nigerian universities.

Situational Analyses of Instructional Delivery in Universities in Nigeria

Instructional delivery is a process in which teachers apply a repertoire of instructional strategies to communicate and interact with students around academic content, and to support student engagement. The process requires that the teacher effectively engages students in learning by using a variety of instructional strategies in order to meet individual learning needs (Arlington Public Schools, n.d). Teaching/learning is expected to be a two way affair where learners and teachers interact freely and learn from one another. The teaching/learning exercise becomes effective when there is a harmonious interaction between teachers and learners.

Teaching and learning being two faces of the same coin presuppose that teaching leads to learning. Many methods and strategies have been variously used in the

learning situation to achieve the desired objectives of classroom instruction. Mostly used in Nigeria tertiary institutions is the traditional mode of delivery which is the face to face mode (Onwuagboke, Singh & Fook, 2015). This mode of delivery has been variously viewed as not being able to meet the challenges of learning in a technology driven age. The student in this learning situation is passive (Anderson, 2013; Thiagarajan, 2005) as it is the job of the teacher to present the content. In this learning setting, what is promoted is shallow learning in the sense that assessment is usually based on memorization and regurgitation of facts (Onwuagboke, Singh & Fook, 2015).

In Nigerian universities as in other higher institutions of learning the teacher is being perceived as the sole repository of knowledge, knowledge oracles and sage of the stage delivering data, information and knowledge while learners minds are seen as empty vessels that needed to be filled (Ajayi, 2001) by the teacher. That is why teachers are fond of dictating to students throughout the lecture while students remain passive. However, a close observation of the manner in which lecturers carry out their instructional delivery in the universities today shows that we are far from achieving effective teaching and learning which can prepare the learners to champion the course of sustainable development. According to Adediran, Orukotan and Adeyanju (2015) teacher-centered learning which most of the higher institutions in Nigeria are known for will not prepare young people for full adults' lives in the complex and dynamic world. Of course it will not be able to promote the spirit of life-long education, broad mindedness, critical thinking and innovativeness in learners.

Expectedly, education according to Enu and Esu (2010), should afford the products of the system the ability to respond to social goals, economic realities and future life-challenges. It is universally accepted that students needs the chance to develop faith, self-expression and confidence in them. They also need the ability and skill to learn about themselves; the societal problem and about the wider communities in which they live. Unfortunately, the way and manner instructions are delivered to learners domesticatedly in our higher institutions of learning in Nigeria today has limited the chances of the products to be critical, productive and open mindedness.

The treatment of learners by teachers in Nigerian universities has further domesticated learners. Majority of Nigerian university students are adults who understand why they are learning. Unfortunately, they are being treated like primary and secondary school students by their teachers. Observation and experience of the writer as a university teacher showed that some teachers do not respect their students. Some teachers do not even recognize that students have to be respected. This is

because some teachers see themselves as “masters” and their learners as “slaves”. And master-slave relationship prevails. There is no doubt that where this kind of relationship exists effective learning cannot take place. In fact, where teachers do not see their learners as co-partners in learning there will be no meaningful interaction which can lead to effective learning. According to Freire (1996) respect and humility fosters a condition of trust and communication between teacher (who also learns) and learner (who also teaches). Education becomes a collective activity, a dialogue between participants rather than a 'top-down' one-way lecture from one person for the benefit of the other. In saying this Freire did not intend to create conditions where learner's knowledge, feelings and understanding should go unchallenged or for the teacher to step back as a mere facilitator (Freire, 1996).

It is sad to note that some teachers in Nigerian higher institution of learning are fond of creating fear in the minds of their learners and this attitude prevents many learners of having friendly rapport with their teachers. In this situation learners are not free to express their views and problems with their teachers. This attitude can aid turning out timid and coward graduates who will not be able deliver when opportunities are provided. The above scenarios portray instructional delivery of Nigerian universities what Freire (1988) called 'banking education'. Freire argued that the goal of 'banking education' is to demobilize the people within the existing establishment of power by conditioning them to accept the cultural, social, political status quo of the dominant culture. In the banking education model knowledge/education is seen as a gift given to the student by the teacher who considers the learner as marginal, ignorant and resource-less. Freire saw this as false generosity from the dominant group (oppressors) and a way of dominating and controlling the people (the oppressed) to improve or maintain their own interests (Freire, 1973). If our system of instruction is “banking” in nature as described above, then, there is need to look inward for alternative in order to train individuals who are, skilled, informed, productive, sound, competent and capable to contribute to national and sustainable development. Thus, attempt is made to advocate for exploring Paulo Freire Adult Education philosophy as an alternative to instructional delivery in Nigerian universities.

Paulo Freire's Adult Education Philosophy

Paulo Freire was a Brazilian radical adult educator and philosopher who lived between 1921 and 1997. Freire (1996) recognized two opposing groups in the society; an oppressor class that oppresses and an oppressed class that is oppressed. His particular concern is with the state of consciousness of the oppressed class. The

oppressed class is submerged, having accepted their status as they are oppressed. The historical movement of the oppressed class is to struggle against the oppressor and realize their humanity which the oppressor denies them. Freire (1996) outlines the relations which exist between oppressor and oppressed. For example: "Any situation in which 'A' objectively exploits 'B' or hinders his or her pursuit of self-affirmation as a responsible person is one of oppression". Furthermore, "One of the basic elements of the relationship between oppressor and oppressed is prescription. Every prescription represents the imposition of one individual's choice upon another, transforming the consciousness of the person prescribed into one that conforms with the prescriber's consciousness", (Yusuf, 2013).

Paulo Freire's philosophy is called conscientization which advocates that the purpose of education is to enable people perceive social, political and economic contradictions and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality. Freire left a significant mark on thinking about progressive practice. Freire was able to draw upon, and weave together, a number of strands of thinking about educational practice and liberation. He has made a number of important theoretical innovations that have had a considerable impact on the development of educational practice-and on informal education and popular education in particular (Emmy & Ahmed, 2013). Some of these innovations are examined below.

Problem-posing Education Model

Freire proposed a problem-posing model of education to challenge the banking education model. In problem-posing education the key is the relationship between student and teacher. In this approach to education the teacher-student teaches the student-teachers. This indeed recognizes a truth; it is never the case, in fact that the teacher always knows and the student never does. The problem-posing model explores problems or realities people find themselves in as something which can be transformed, (McLaren, 2000). In problem-posing education the teacher does not claim to either own or know the world; teacher and student approach the problem together. Learning can best be achieved through critical thinking and analysis of one's experiences and feelings which both teacher and learners possess. Freire writes: "Problem-posing education bases itself on creativity and stimulates true reflection and action upon reality, thereby responding to the vocation of persons as beings who are authentic only when engaged in inquiry and creative transformation" (Freire, 1988). The problem-posing education model is based on conscientization.

Conscientization

Conscientization is a process of developing a critical awareness of one's social reality through reflection and action. Action is fundamental because it is the process of changing the reality (Freire, 1988). This process enables people perceive social, political and economic contradictions and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality, (Maduka, 1998). Conscientization is the key process by which students develop a critical awareness of the world based on the concrete experience of their everyday lives. The development of critical awareness through conscientization alters power relations between students and teachers, the colonized and the colonizer, thereby transforming objects of knowledge into historical subjects, (Freire, 1997). The process of conscientization starts with presentation of a burning issue to the people to be discussed or presenting a film on an important issue that will generate discussion. The preliminary investigation will discover certain themes in the political and social life of the people. Freire refers to these as 'generative' themes. These themes become subjects of discussion by the learners with the help of the teacher.

Generative themes and Codifications

Conscientization process continues when the learners explore generative themes which are of interest to them. A generative theme is a cultural or political topic of great concern or importance to participants, from which discussion can be generated. These generative themes are then represented in the form of 'codifications' (either represented by a word or short phrase or a visual representation, a picture or photograph) (Emmy & Ahmed, 2013). Participants are able to step back from these visual representations of their ideas or history and decode or explore them critically by regarding them objectively rather than simply experiencing them. This makes it possible for the participants to intervene and initiate change in society.

Culture Circle

The process of conscientization continues with the aid of culture circle which is formed to create a platform for discussion of the generated themes with their codes. A culture circle according to Emmy and Ahmed (2013) is a group platform where learners used their own ways of speaking to articulate their shared understanding of how their world came to be like it was and how to act to change their future. In a culture circle which students and facilitator together discuss generative themes that have significance within the context of students' lives (Freire, 1988). These themes,

which are related to nature, culture, work, and relationships, are discovered through the cooperative research of educators and students. They express, in an open rather than propagandistic fashion, the principle contradictions that confront the students in their world. The learning circle is a non-hierarchical 'class' model where participants can discuss generative themes which have significance within the context of their lives. This involves creating a democratic space where every one's voice has equal weight. The conditions needed for this have to be actively created as it does not often occur naturally. This can mean challenging cultural, gender and other status related power relationships and stratifications (Emmy & Ahmed, 2013).

Praxis

Problem-posing model of education through conscientization recognizes the importance of learners creating, inventing and constructing views, opinions, and ideas as learning contents. This process is called praxis. True knowledge, Freire contended, emerges only through restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful, critical inquiry with other people about their relations to the world. Therefore, he advocated that instead of learners receiving, filling and storing deposits made by educators, learners should be allowed to develop praxis, an inventive way of life that encourages free, creative reflection and thoughtful action in order to change the world, even as the learners are transformed in the process (Emmy & Ahmed, 2013). Freire (1988) argued that for effective learning to take place the learners must assume from the beginning of learning the role of creative subjects. Learning according to Freire is not a matter of memorizing and repeating given syllables, words and phrases but rather, reflecting critically on the process of learning and on the profound significance of language.

Dialogue

Freire advocated for dialogue, constant communication, unlocks doors for prosperity and victory in any situation. When teachers and learners dialogue, there are always breakthroughs. Dialogic action challenges mediating social realities by posing them as problems that can be analyzed critically by those who have direct experience of them (Freire, 1997). Freire argues that dialogue is not just about deepening understanding, but is part of making a difference in the world. Dialogue becomes a form of collective praxis directly concerned with unveiling inequitable conditions obscured by the ruling classes. The process is important and can be seen as enhancing community and building social capital that leads to justice and human flourishing (Emmy & Ahmed, 2013). To enter into dialogue presupposes equality amongst participants. Each must trust the others; there must be mutual respect and love (care

and commitment). Each one must question what he or she knows and realizes that through dialogue existing thoughts will change and new knowledge will be created (Mayo, 1999). An educational programme built around dialogue is contrasted by Freire with one which seeks to impose its truth. One of the virtues of this dialogical approach is humility. "How can I dialogue if I always project ignorance onto others and never perceive my own?" And again; "How can I dialogue if I regard myself as a case apart from others- mere 'its' in whom I cannot recognize other 'is?'"

Implications of Paulo Freire's Adult Education Philosophy to Instructional Delivery in Universities in Nigeria

The following are the lessons Nigerian university teachers can learn from Freire's philosophy to improve their instructional delivery.

- i. It is high time Nigerian university teachers abandoned 'banking' form of learning where the learners are treated as empty vessels into which knowledge can be deposited (like deposits in a bank) by the teacher for problem-posing model of education where learners and teachers are seen as co-partners in learning. This requires that teachers create opportunities for cooperative learning where teachers together with students initiate issues and such issues are addressed together by the two parties. **Effective teaching in universities should be predominantly learners directed, interactive learning achievement oriented activities inside and outside the formal classroom situation in which the learner actively participates and makes a conscious and deliberate effort to induce and acquire significant learning under the teacher serving as a learning collaborator, director, a guide a-catalyst, a helper, etc.**
- ii. Nigerian university teachers should respect their students' views and opinions as learners experiences can serve as sources of learning. Opportunities should be given to students at all levels to express their feelings on issues raised during the lesson or oral examinations. A situation where thesis supervisors or panel members at post-graduate dissertation/thesis defence silence and intimidate students by telling them you don't argue with your teachers must stop if sound and courageous products should be produced. According to Freire, the teacher has authority but does not become an authoritarian. He intervenes in order to help the learner reflect on aspects of his/her cultural, social and gender constructs and help the learner to think critically.
- iii. **Conscientization process should be encouraged by teachers in their teaching activities. This process involves creating opportunities for learners to develop**

- critical awareness of their social, economic, political and cultural reality through reflection and action. Teachers can present a burning issue affecting lives of majority in the society and students are encouraged to reflect and suggest actions to be taken on them.
- iv. The learning philosophy of Freire encourages the use of audio-visual materials in teaching and learning. This idea should be sustained where audio-visual learning materials are currently used in our universities and where teachers have not been using them positive attitude should be developed towards utilization of relevant learning materials. The use of audio-visual promotes practical involvement and participation of learners in learning activities. It makes learning experiential and learnt contents are retained. Freire advocated for the use of film material in raising learners' consciousness on an important issue which affect their lives and the lives of the larger society.
 - v. There is need for the teachers to encourage students to create; invent and construct views, opinions, and ideas as learning contents. That is learners should be allowed to be part of their originators of their learning. This is made possible when questioning technique is explored by the teachers. In this approach, the teacher makes a statement and continues to ask questions about it until the learners have fully understood the topic of the discussion. The questions will be very searching and will challenge the students' assumptions. The questions do not need to come only from the teacher. The learners too should be able to ask questions which may be answered by the teacher or other members of the learning group.
 - vi. Teacher should explore dialogue as a learning mechanism. This will go a long way to establish friendly learning relationship between teachers and learners on one hand and learners among themselves on the other hand. This dialogical nature of the learning activities distinguishes them from the 'top-down' approaches which impose learning on the learners. This dialogical approach promotes humility and eagerness to learn from others.

Conclusion

The quest for producing university graduates who will be able to confront Nigerian problems and promote sustainable national development will be realized if Nigerian university teachers move away from "banking" education and embrace problem-posing model of education through conscientization where learners and teachers are seen as co-partners in learning. Therefore, university teachers should reposition their instructional delivery mechanism where their learners are helped to develop critical

thinking and become generators of sound, informed and positive knowledge for productive and sustainable national development.

Recommendations

The practicality of Paulo Freire Adult Education Philosophy in the instructional delivery in Nigerian universities lies on the following recommendations among others.

- i. Faculty of Education in Nigerian universities should continue to pressurize their university senates to mandate all academic staff who do not have teaching qualification to undergo postgraduate course in education in order to acquire relevant teaching qualification with a view to understanding rudiments of teaching and learning.
- ii. Seminars and workshops on innovative and learner-centered approaches to teaching should be organized on regular basis for university teachers by faculty of education in Nigerian universities so as to keep university teachers up-to-date in instructional delivery.
- iii. Adult Education should be made a compulsory course for undergraduate and postgraduate students in education so as to be conversant with adult psychology and mentality who may be their clients as teachers of higher education.
- iv. Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) should further intensify their efforts in pursuing the full implementation of FGN/ASUU 2009 Agreement. Implementation of this agreement will make it possible for the universities to acquire relevant infrastructure and facilities that can promote effective learning through problem-posing education model.

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