

Continuing Professional Development in the Service of the Nation: The Case of Nigeria

Akpovire Oduaran

*School for Teacher Education and Training, North-West University, Mafikeng Campus,
Private Bag X2046, Mmabatho 2735, South Africa
E-mail: Akpovire.Oduaran@nwu.ac.za*

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ABSTRACT In this research, the researcher sought to examine the contribution that continuing professional development makes to national development. Particular reference is made to teachers' continuing professional development as one of the most dominant social services that has enhanced the development of Nigeria in the last thirty years. Theories and policies related to continuing professional development as well as the international and national dimensions that have been dominant in the field are briefly explored. A comparison in the application of teachers' continuing professional development to national development is then made with South Africa with the hope that some lessons would be learnt, and on the basis of which we might make some recommendations for further growth in Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

National development is palpably and partly predicated on a judicious, relevant and sustained investment in continuing professional development as a cognate sector of the education system in most African countries, especially, Nigeria and South Africa (Clandinin et al. 2007; South African Council for Educators 2008; Schulman 2010; Oduaran 2014). That is what the case is and has been in the developed nations of the world. That is one major reason why a discourse on thirty years of social services in Nigeria should be incomplete without an exploration of the contribution the education system has made and continues to make to social development in Africa's most populous nation. For Nigeria has realized that its immediate and long-term economic growth should be circumscribed by glibly applying across-the-board cuts in budgetary discretionary spending to education, especially, continuing professional development. This is so because continuing professional development (hereinafter referred to as CPD) which has become a major aspect of the education system is core to national development (Govender 2015; Shagrir 2015, 2012, 2011; Murray 2010). This is probably one major reason why countries from Germany to South Korea to China are known to be making huge investments in education and training, research and development, science, technology and infrastructure. And there is immense value in intercultural historical

learning as intended in this discourse (Nordgren and Johansson 2014).

Evidence provided in the literature suggested that CPD is one major driver of economic growth that no nation would want to trivialize if it really wishes to be globally competitive. In many nations, CPD is needed for progressing into the mainstream of the "technological revolution" that has become the envy of nations seeking to move up in the prosperity ladder. In any case and for all intents and purposes, national development requires the discovery, cultivation and application of national wisdom and this is what developed nations are constantly engaged in as they seek to retain their positions in the global economy. Nigeria cannot do anything less than that if the nation must grow at a rapid rate. Nigeria needs to take the necessary cue. This is what this research seeks to put into perspective with particular reference to CPD by exploring the nation's efforts in this sector. An attempt has been made in this paper to relate what is happening in CPD in Nigeria to what is prevailing in that same sector in South Africa. South Africa is the only African country, south of the Sahara that has been counted among the modern merging economies with Brazil, Russia, India and China remaining the initial foundation members of the erstwhile prestigious group of potentially powerful economies in the world today. To achieve this purpose, the researcher sought to address national wisdom and the Nigerian nation, CPD meaning and theories, inter-

national dimensions, and CPD for teachers in Nigeria versus South Africa. Additionally, addressed are contending and contemporary issues, and the existing and emergent roles of stakeholders (for instance, civil society/NGOs/CBOs/Professional Associations, etc.). Based on the foregoing, conclusion, recommendations and the way forward are provided.

National Wisdom and the Nigerian Nation

Recently, Fareed Zakaria (2011), the Time Magazine columnist, brought to the fore the important lessons that history still offers in national economic growth as he engaged with the assessment of the standing of the United States in an era of recession. Using the 2010 Legatum Prosperity Index that applied 89 measures of wealth and well-being to assess any country's performances in promoting prosperity in the eight areas that included economy, entrepreneurship and opportunity, governance, education, health, safety and security, personal freedom and social capital, Zakaria's (2011) observations should get the attention of economic historians. Quoting the 2010 edition of the index, Zakaria (2011) observed that the United States ranked 6th in higher education enrolment, 11th in spending on research and development, 27th in life expectancy, and 27th in years of secondary school per worker, among other measures. The point Zakaria (2011) tried to make was that the US was probably on the path of decline, and that it required a degree of national wisdom to engage in this kind of assessment.

National wisdom is partly guided by national history, and both Britain and Germany have learnt some of that history. Quoting from the Mancur Olson's book titled 'The Rise and Decline of Nations', Zakaria (2011) recalled how Britain, after World War II (1939-1945), slipped into deep stagnation while on the other hand, Germany, that lost the war, grew more powerful year after year. The decline of Britain was even more somber to think about as it was actually the creator of the Industrial Revolution and the world's original economic superpower (Zakaria 2011).

The lessons of history that Nigeria and, indeed, other African nations may need to learn as they make investment in education and other sectors is that success could hurt and failure greatly motivated nations into striving to grow.

The lessons from the account given by Zakaria (2011) should point out clearly to us that while success hurt Britain, failure helped Germany. That was the case because the initial growth Britain boasted about probably pushed her into becoming apparently more comfortable, complacent and rigid, and its economic and political arrangements became more elaborate and costly, and focused on distribution rather than growth. Labour unions, the welfare state, protectionist policies and massive borrowing all shielded Britain from international competition (Zakaria 2011). Besides, defeat had forced Germany to question everything it had ever done and to wisely engage in rebuilding from scratch.

Objectives of the Study

What all this should mean for Nigeria is that whatever measure of success it could claim to have recorded from making some major strides in CPD should never attract scholars, policy makers and socio-economic and political practitioners into becoming complacent. For we can learn from Britain that complacency, rigidity, absolute welfarism (attractive and judicious as that may look) as well as protectionism can actually drive the nation into stagnation and lack of competitiveness. Besides, if an assessment of Nigeria's Continuing Professional Teachers Development (hereinafter, CPTD) initiatives have not added up to much, that should signal to scholars, policy makers, and socio-economic and political pundits the need to engage in setting modern education edifice, rejection and revision of antiquated educational arrangements and institutions like Germany did. Moving in such a direction should help the nation in developing educationists, educators, policy makers and all other major stakeholders who should be willing to acquire the new frame of mind. This is one major requirement for making a globally competitive CPD designed to position the nation among the globally competitive nations in economic, social and political development.

Conceptual Framework

The concept of continuing professional development, generally, embraced reflective activity designed to improve an individual's attributes, knowledge, understanding and skills in such a way that it enhances professional prac-

tice. Many scholars believed that the term “continuing professional development” was first used by Richard Gardner, who took charge of professional development for the building professions at York University in the mid-1970s; and, it was adopted because it did not differentiate between learning from courses and learning ‘on the job’ (Gray 2005). Since then, the term has been used to refer to all lifelong learning career development programs designed to help different professionals acquire relevant skills and knowledge for the improvement of their performance.

The design and implementation of CPD is based on the basic assumption that normally every professional should aim for continuous improvement in their different professional skills and knowledge that go beyond the basic training initially needed to execute the job (Gray 2005). Previously, the term “in-service training” or INSET had been used but had to be changed since it placed more emphasis on delivery instead of outcomes. Now, with the shift away from INSET to CPD, the individual rather than the employer or provider has become the main focus. For it is the individual who should be responsible for his or her lifelong learning both in terms of career development and lifelong and life-wide development as a social being.

Research in CPD has advanced over the years, and it is now possible to identify a major theoretical framework that is anchored on the Gestalt theory. It would be recalled that the Gestalt theory was one of the main theories originated by the three German theorists, namely: Max Wertheimer, Kurt Koffka and Wolfgang Kohler in 1912. In summary, Gestalt theorists questioned the mechanistic perspectives of the stimulus-response explanation of the learning process and, instead, proposed a holistic approach in which the “whole” is upheld to be greater than the sum of its parts (<http://nicefun.net/learning-theory-of-gestalt-vt-2659.html>). Further, the phenomenological or perceptual organization of experiences, using the cognitive processes, is deemed as much better than seeing things in parts. Such has been the popularity of the Gestalt Theory of learning that it has been expanded in scope by the Law of Similarity and Proximity, the Law of Continuity and Closure, the Law of Simplicity, the Law of Figure and Ground and the Law of Pragnanz, the last of which calls attention to a tendency that

makes every psychological event simple, concise, symmetrical, harmonious and complete. That had been the guiding principle applied to CPD in many instances (Sahakian 1976).

CPD has gained immensely from the Gestalt principles of the need to group, re-group and restructure the whole problem, or idea in order to solve it. So then, the parts of the problem encountered in learning should not be isolated but perceived as a whole in order to enable the learner to get a new and deeper structural view of a situation, thus, reducing to the barest minimum the amount of energy to be exerted in thinking or problem solving related to the acquisition of new knowledge and skills in the professions. Further, it is the assumption that seems to dominate CPD in many nations.

The second theoretical framework that seems to have guided CPD is the constructivist and self-actualization theory (Maslow 1970). According to Dearnley and Dixon (2012), Biggs (2004), Dearnley (2006) and Dearnley and Matthew (2007), professionals who are learners pass through recognizable stages that range from that of silence (a stage at which the individual has no self belief and relied on external authority for truth and meaning) to that of the constructivist (which is a point at which the individual is central to all knowledge construction and it combines objective evidence and personal experience when contextualizing). This theory has posited that self-actualized persons value their culture, are flexible in their attitudes and possess a high degree of awareness. It does mean that CPD programs would do well to factor such awareness into their methodologies.

The third and final theory that applies to CPD in this context is the learning environment theory. In his survey of radiographers, Dixon (2007) argued that there is a process of change that was dynamic and interactive with the environment in which people learn. In this case, actively modifying the environment in which people learn in terms of services around them and accommodation of other learners’ opinions, ideas and positions could create the “new functional equilibrium” that enhances learning (Dearnley and Dixon 2012; Clarence-Fincham and Naidoo 2014). These have been some of the dominant learning theories that seemed to have influenced the design and implementation of CPD programs all over the world.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

International Dimensions and State of Delivery and Management

CPD programs for teachers have become a global phenomenon, and the policies, principles and practices differ to a large extent from one nation to another. Although, it may not be possible to explore fully all cases available in the literature, it is probably helpful to discuss a few that should help to illustrate the position taken in this research. Doing so should help us in engaging in useful benchmarking.

The OECD provides a good report on teachers' CPD (Scheerens 2010). Scheerens (2010) has synthesized a research team analysis of teachers' CPD based on the OECD's Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS). The report explored the context, processes and impacts of the program, and concluded that it was intense and useful, although, some of the demands and development needs on the part of the teachers were not met as a result of which specific policies and models for development were recommended.

The review of scholarly works in CPD for teachers has revealed that most of the studies on the subject have dealt with (but not limited to) the development of teachers, principals, schools, and school systems). In particular, scholars have been interested in ways in which teachers/learners learn and develop throughout their professional career, organizational, historical, situational, and policy contexts in which CPD occurs, the kind of knowledge that shapes professional identity and new developments and trends in the field (Gray 2005; Schulman 2010; Oduaran 2014). However, other scholars have been studying such issues as mentoring, teachers' knowledge, teacher values and beliefs, collegial relationships, professional learning communities, leadership development, school culture, best practices, models and improving conditions for practitioners' learning, among others (Gray 2005; EERA 2012).

It should be noted that in the OECD countries, CPD took the forms of whole-school training days, the induction process, mentoring and assessment of individual teachers, peer observation, collaborative planning and evaluation, and self-evaluation (Gray 2005). Outside a particular school, the teachers usually developed

useful networks by visiting other schools, attending conferences, undertaking joint training exercises with other schools, joining teacher networks, and engaging with specialist subject associations. These forms are further enriched by participation in short courses run by commercial and not-for-profit providers, enrolment in higher degrees, studying online, secondments, sabbaticals and exchanges and examining processes involving becoming external examiners (Burchell et al. 2002; General Teaching Council 2003; Gray 2005).

The analysis of learning styles that are commonly applied in international CPD has been undertaken by Grace (2001). That analysis revealed the use of trial and error, perceptual organization, behavioural modeling, mediation and reflection, among others. Grace (2001), further, undertook an exploration of the learning cycle suggested by Kolb (1984) and the management of the learning cycle as proposed by Honey and Mumford (1992). This exploration has yielded more understanding of favourable and unfavourable activities that are applicable to professionals who may be classified either as activists or reflectors or theorists or pragmatists. In the propositions made by Grace (2001) it is notable that activists learn best from new experiences and activities, exercises where they become involved, role play, business games, short-term tasks, excitements and drama, and formats they are "thrown in at the deep end" and that they are less likely to learn from lectures, reading, observing, theoretical sessions, activities involving the analysis of data, activities where they are told what to do and repeat activities like in repeating a skill. Besides, Grace (2001) quoted Honey and Mumford as having proposed that reflectors are known to learn best from activities where they can observe other people first and given time to think over things, discuss ideas with others, watch videos and other similar audiovisual aids and when given time to prepare. In the view of Grace (2001) and Gray (2005), reflectors are less likely learn from role play, situations where they are pressurized for time, activities where they are told what to do and where they are expected to make short cuts for the sake of expediency. Equally well, theorists are known to learn best from situations in which they are think things through, complex situations such as business games that last a long time, situations where purpose is clearly stated, models

and theories, situations which are interesting even if not relevant (Grace 2001; Van Zwanenberg et al. 2010). It is also said that theorists are less likely to learn from shallow, unclear situations, unstructured situations with no clear point, being asked to make decisions without a policy, situations with emotional overtones and being rushed into exercises without the relevance being explained (Grace 2001; Van Zwanenberg et al. 2010). As for pragmatists, Grace (2001) and Gray (2005) suggested that they learn best from exercises that are linked to the job they are doing, practical, relevant activities, situations where implementation is important, drawing up action plans to use back at work and opportunity to learn from a coach; on the other hand, they are less likely to learn activities with no clear relevance to their job, no clear guidelines on how to do things, situations where people seem to lack a goal, or where they are no specified rewards for completed exercise and situations where the trainer is perceived to be “out of touch” with their work (Grace 2001).

With the suggestions of Grace (2001), it might be possible to benchmark the most effective learning styles for different professionals who enroll in CPD programs. What this means is that CPD programs should be better enriched by the incorporation copiously favourable activities and rid of unfavourable activities. Even so, it is possible that there are other extraneous factors like finance and the workers readiness to learn that could be equally primary considerations in CPD program designs. Nigeria’s CPD seem to have reflected or incorporated some of the positions and methodologies that are available globally as we should soon demonstrate.

CPD for Teachers in Nigeria

The Nigerian National Policy on Education (hereinafter, NPE 1977 revised in 1981, 1998, 2005) provided the framework for the implementation of CPD for teachers. The NPE was built within the overall philosophy and objectives of the nation, and these objectives as spelt out in the Second National Development Plan, had embraced the building of a free and democratic society; a just and egalitarian society; a united, strong and self-reliant nation; a great and dynamic economy; and a land of bright and full opportunities for all citizens (Federal Republic of Nigeria 2005). There has been strong nation-

al conviction that “no nation can rise above the quality of its education system” (Federal Republic of Nigeria 2005). With that focus the NPE has incorporated a Section 5 that addresses CPD for all professionals whom the Government expected to acquire the latest professional techniques; and to that end, the Industrial Training Fund (ITF), a Federal Government agency, has been mandated to contribute significantly to the financing of practical training courses, especially, for engineers and technicians. There has also been a requirement that the teachers equally get exposed to relevant industrial practical experience. Once the Federal Government set the tone for CPD, many professions in Nigeria have keyed into the process by coming up with useful initiatives some of which are highlighted herewith to illustrate the point. Unfortunately, there has been no nation-wide evaluation of these initiatives. Even at that, it might be rewarding to examine some of them.

It must be noted, in the first place, that different professional bodies in Nigeria have paid close attention to CPD. To illustrate the point, it is observed that the Medical and Dental Council of Nigeria (hereinafter MDCN) required that its members should update knowledge and skills in their areas of specializations on a continuous basis. According to the MDCN, the mandatory CPD is aimed at addressing the deficit in Nigeria’s medical education. Indeed, the MDCN strictly directed that from January 2011, CPD/Continuous Medical Education should become compulsory and that from January 2012, every doctor in practice in Nigeria would be required to show evidence of at least 20 CPD credit units collected in the preceding year before his/her annual practicing licenses could be renewed (<http://www.nigeriahealthwatch.com/2011106>). The MDCN has done well in enacting this requirement knowing that medical knowledge and practice is continuously changing. In fact, the MDCN has developed its guidelines on CPD in 2007, and this is what every standard profession in the world does.

Apart from the MDCN, other professional bodies in Nigeria have since evolved standard CPD programs for their members. For instance, the Nigeria Institute of Surveys (NIS), taking cognizance of the advances in computers, digital technology, satellite positioning and imaging as well as fast changing geographic information systems has since instituted a Mandato-

ry CPD (MCPD) program for its members (Nwilo and Adebisi 2012). Nwilo and Adebisi (2012) have regretted the reluctance of many surveyors to take advantage of this MCPD for surveyors out of sheer conservatism but expressed hope that this attitude might change in due course as the overall goal of the MCPD is made more explicit to members.

Along that same line, the Institute of Chartered Chemists of Nigeria (ICCN), established by Decree 91 of 1993 has instituted a mandatory CPD for its members and it is pursuing it with vigor (Institute of Chartered Chemist of Nigeria 2004). Apart from these bodies mentioned here, there are numerous others that cannot be cited having limitation of space. However, CPD for the teachers in Nigeria is seemingly coming of age, and this is where the focus in this discussion lies.

Emerging out of commonplace treatment with content and ignominy, teachers in Nigeria have begun to have some sense of respect and recognition with the establishment by Decree (now Act) 31 of 1993 of the Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria (hereinafter known as the TRCN). The TRCN became operational only in June 2000 when the first Registrar/Chief Executive was appointed by the President and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of Nigeria. Further, between 2000 and 2005, the TRCN began to institutionalize itself with some degree of success (Akpanobong 2011). Among other programs and activities, the TRCN was given the responsibility of executing a Mandatory Continuing Professional Education (MCPE) to ensure that teachers keep abreast of recent developments in the theory and practice of the profession. To achieve that goal, the TRCN has been tasked with responsibility for consulting with other major stakeholders to ensure that it regulates the teaching profession in Nigeria with the intention of providing for the nation effective and relevant education under the aegis of qualified and upskilled teachers. However, the search of the literature has not yielded information as to what extent that goal is being achieved by the TRCN.

The evidences are available in the literature that seemed suggesting that the pre-entry development of teachers in Nigeria has undergone a lot of transformation. However, the most relevant to us is the information that seems to suggest that some sub-sectors in the teaching pro-

fession in Nigeria have embraced the idea of structured CPD, and it is to one of these sub-sectors we can now turn attention.

The Federal Government of Nigeria seems to have placed immense emphasis on the need to upgrade the skills of English Language teachers in Nigeria. Indeed, there is a nationally acknowledged CPD Project that is jointly managed by the National Teachers' Institute Kaduna and the British Council by virtue of whose participation a dedicated core of top UK professional course writers help in developing core modules that are used in the upskilling of teachers. The project features a CPD that offers a one year certificate course for trainers of English Language teachers, and it is accessed on computer through a CD-ROM. It has been reported that this course that has been arranged in three blocks with five hourly modules in each block was first piloted in one state between 2005 and 2006, after which it was rolled out to cover 33 states and the Federal Capital Territory (Hayes 2014). The report on this project has also indicated that so far about 380 teacher trainers have been trained, 40 during the pilot and 340 at the rollout stage, and it is expected that about 2000 teachers, altogether, would be trained with the additional hope that the CPD project for English Language teachers may, eventually be upgraded to a Certificate in the Teaching of English as a Second Language.

The hopes concerning the development of this project are very high as the Federal Government of Nigeria, the Federal Ministry of Education, State Education Authorities and the National Teachers' Institute, Kaduna are cooperating very well to ensure its success on a much broader scale. It is refreshing to know that a number of studies have already been conducted that examined different aspects of the project. For instance, Ayoola (2010) has reported the intervention of the British Council in updating the skills of the teacher-trainers through computer-based CPD. This particular project is said to have exposed Nigerian English teachers and teacher-trainers to current methodologies and approaches to teaching English as a Second Language to Nigerian school children. In seeking to achieve the goals of this special CPD project, Nigerian teachers of English have been trained through the use of e-learning schemes such as 'LearnEnglish' Podcast. The project has also helped in strengthening cultural ties between Britain and Nigeria, thus, contributing in no small

measure to the building of trust between the two countries.

In seeking to consolidate the gains that have been made in the continuous professional development of teachers of English, the National Teachers' Institute, Kaduna has been a front runner in ensuring that Nigeria benefits from contemporary efforts that are being made globally to improve the quality of English teacher-training, and this should also enhance the quality of English language teaching. Further, with a much broader scope, the efforts being made in this sub-sector could impact on business communication, elaborate social networking, and effective diplomacy among English-speaking countries.

This discussion is not about institutional development that relates to CPD but in the context of CPD for the teachers in Nigeria, the National Teachers' Institute (hereinafter, NTI) Kaduna deserves some attention. This is so because we cannot be discussing achievements made in the implementation of CPD for the teachers over the last thirty years without paying even scant attention to the institutions that have made this possible.

It would be recalled that the NTI, Kaduna was established by Act No. 7 of the Federal Government of Nigeria in 1978. The NTI was established as a single mode distance education institution to provide dedicated in-service education for teachers, and in doing so, it provides courses of instruction leading to the development, upgrading and certification of teachers as specified in the relevant syllabus using Distance Education techniques (National Teachers Institute Kaduna 2010)

The National Teachers Institute Kaduna has been mandated to provide courses of instruction leading to the upgrade, development and certification of Nigerian teachers as specified in the relevant syllabuses using the distant learning systems; and, to meet the requirements of that mandate it has set as its vision the enhancement of the professional skills of serving teachers for high quality education delivery at primary and secondary levels with the view to uplift the standard of the education system in the country (Fapohunda 2014). It is even more rewarding to note that in pursuance of that vision, the NTI has been upgrading teachers' knowledge and skills in curriculum implementation as it strives to instill in them the major vir-

tues of dedication, loyalty, commitment, discipline and resourcefulness. Perhaps, these are some of the motivations that Nigerian teachers need most in socio-economic and political work environments that are almost bereft of global minimum standards for motivating teachers at whatever level possible.

It is instructive to note that the NTI has moved from preparing the teachers for the award of the Teachers' Grade Two Certificate (TC 11 by DLS) between 1982 and 2006 through awarding the Nigerian Certificate in Education (1990- to date), Pivotal Teacher Training Program (2000-2003), the Postgraduate Diploma in Education (in affiliation with the Usumanu Dan Fodiyo University, Sokoto, from 2005 to date), the Advanced Diploma in Education (In School Supervision and Inspection, Early Childhood Education and Guidance and Counselling, from 2005 to date) to the implementation of the Special Teacher Upgrading Program (STUP) (from 2007 to date). The NTI takes pride in having retrained over 40,000 teachers under the Millennium Development Goals Project between 2006 and 2009 and in collaboration with the Federal Ministry of Education/Universal Basic Education Commission and the States Ministries of Education, over 100,000 teachers are known to have been retrained more recently (National Teachers Institute, Kaduna 2010). Much of the programs of the NTI are done by distance learning mode, and this compares favourably with what is happening in South Africa as we shall see when we discuss this subject much further in this paper. The NTI is said to have inaugurated in February, 2009, the NTI Teachers' Radio 102.1 FM that provides professional support to teachers in the classroom. In a significant way, therefore, it could be said that the NTI has been a major success story in providing teachers opportunities to upgrade themselves and improve their knowledge and skills without abandoning their classrooms or their families and without compelling employers of teachers to find or engage replacement teachers as the case could be when teachers have to leave their posts in pursuit of full-time study, especially, in these trying economic times.

In addition to these innovative efforts by the NTI and other institutions that are not in the mainstream of teacher development, it is to be noted that many public and private universities in Nigeria have either Centres for Continuing

Education and Workplace Training or Universities Departments of Adult Education or Continuing Education, by whichever nomenclature they wish to be known. These have come up with long vacation teacher development programs for serving teachers, and we do not have the liberty to explore this application in much further details.

Be that as it may, the evaluation of teacher training, in general, and CPD in particular by different researchers have indicated that national objectives of teacher education that had emphasized the development of highly motivated, conscientious and efficient teachers who are also creative, and committed to the teaching profession have not been met in the last thirty years (Okebukola 2002; Isyaku 2002; Ukeje 2002; Jegede 2002; Afemikhe 2004; Olakulehin 2002). The Nigerian Higher Education system has also been plagued by one crisis or the other as University teachers are regularly drawing attention to the appalling state of the provisions using the medium of strikes and work-to-rule, especially, in the public universities. This is a matter that could compromise teacher quality and the effectiveness of the system in the years ahead. Even so, Nigeria has realized the need to apply the ICTs in its efforts to continuously upgrade the skills of its teachers, especially as the Open and Distance Learning System may not be subjected to the negative effects of incessant strikes that have become commonplace.

The application of the ICTs is notable for many reasons. For informatics in education that encompasses the design, realization, evaluation, use and maintenance of the information processing systems, including hardware, software, organizational and human aspects has provided part solution to the challenge of CPD for the teachers on a much larger scale than had been the case. In Nigeria, informatics in education had meant that teachers wanting to upgrade themselves can now rely on a broad range of technological equipment like computers, mobile telephones, MP3/MP4/WMA storage devices, file transfer protocols, listservs, satellites, world wide web etc. (Olakulehin 2007: 136). Now, CPD for the teachers in Nigeria could benefit from the use of video, CD ROMs, floppy disks, etc, even though these valuable technological devices have been compromised by inadequate infrastructures, the apparent lack of information and information illiteracy, ICTs phobia on the part of

many teachers which is commonly known as technophobia and poor or lack of internet connectivity among a host of other challenges. Even if ICTs were to be made available for the purposes of CPD for teachers, there has been a serious concern over the issue of quality control, and this is the issue to which Ibeire Ken-Maduako (2011) has been drawing attention in a most recent discussion. In comparison with South Africa, Nigeria may be said to be still at the threshold of fully developing its potential in the application of CPD for its professionals as we might soon observe.

Apart from the NTI, there are many Nigerian Universities that are very much active in the professional development of teachers by way of using the approach of long vacation programs. In this approach, many serving teachers are enrolled by the universities for the purpose of upgrading the knowledge and skills of serving teachers who are awarded recognized first degrees in education and/plus a teaching subject area or in a professional area of specialization like adult education, guidance and counseling, educational management, and library science. For instance, whilst the University of Ibadan has an elaborate external degree program that has been running for years, the University of Benin has been upfront in getting serving teachers to be engaged in the upgrading of their knowledge and skills during the long vacations.

CPD for Teachers: Nigeria versus South Africa

Outwardly, some might argue that there is no basis for comparison as such. For South Africa had long been exposing its professionals to CPD long before Nigeria started applying modern technologies to achieving the same goals. Let us provide a summary discussion of this position, and thereafter, one can make some deductions as to whether the position adopted here is true or circumspect.

Like Nigeria, the provision of CPD in South Africa is guided by Government policy that is meticulously applied across board by different professions. In South Africa, there are some specific success stories in the design and implementation of CPD for professionals, and a case in point is the program that has been designed for implementation by the Health Professions Council of South Africa (hereinafter, the HPC-

SA). The philosophy behind the enacting of the CPD for the health professions is that it is believed that such a program should help health-care professionals acquire new and updated levels of knowledge, skills and ethical attitudes that could benefit the professional practice of medicine and other health professions. The HPCSA, therefore, expected all healthcare professionals registered in South Africa under the auspices of the Council to mandatorily complete a series of accredited CPD activities every year with effect from 1 January, 2007 (Health Professional Council South Africa no date). Indeed, the HPCSA has directed that in terms of Section 26 of the Health Professions Act 1974 (Act No. 56 of 1974), compliance with certain specified conditions of CPD must be a prerequisite for continued registration, and the Council has the prerogative of prescribing from time to time the said perquisites (Health Professional Council of South Africa no date). This practice and expectations tally very well with that of the Medical and Dental Council of Nigeria (MDCN) that has equally designed and emphasized almost the same set of criteria for participation and the accreditation of relevant service providers as well as sanctions for non-compliance.

Perhaps, almost unlike Nigeria, South Africa has elaborate and very clear guidelines for the effective implementation of Continuing Professional Teacher Development (hereinafter, CPTD). For CPTD is provided for in the National Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa. This has to be the case because post-apartheid South Africa recognized the urgent need for teacher development as the right step towards accelerating the development of those who had been historically disadvantaged by the operations of the moribund political system. The readiness of the democratically elected administration that came into force in 1994 to ensure that all the “wrongs” that had been introduced into education during the apartheid regime were corrected had motivated increased enrolment in teacher education program. In fact, Paterson and Arends (2007) reported that between 1995 and 2004, enrolment in teacher education faculties or departments in universities and technikons increased from 70, 587 to 112, 068 or by 41, 479, representing 59 per cent increase. Even though Initial Professional Education programs had been popular over the years, it is to be noted that older and serving teachers

have preferred the CPTD as the best option for improving themselves.

Like Nigeria, CPTD in South Africa has benefited immensely from the use of multimedia. And at the forefront of the strides that have been made is Africa’s foremost Open and Distance Learning (ODL) institution, the University of South Africa (UNISA). Further, the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) and the NTI are perhaps bracing up to provide as much elaborate services for CPTD for Nigerian teachers almost as in South Africa. However, unlike Nigeria, the infrastructure for the use of the Internet and Interconnectivity in South Africa is very much developed, and all the available resources for open and distance learning are profoundly supported by much more development facilities for synchronous and asynchronous learning over distance. This is one major area of difference in the use of the CPD.

Very much like Nigeria, CPTD in South Africa has been the subject of regular research as there are dedicated researchers who are very much upfront in research related to CPTD and, indeed, ODL. Although, we cannot highlight all the studies that have been directed at the improvement of the provisions, it might be useful to examine just a few of them. There have been relevant studies that seek to explore teachers’ perception of continuing professional development directed at them. Lessing and de Witt (2007) have studied how the teachers value CPD, and concluded that teachers do value very carefully designed and implemented CPD programs for the teachers as a means of improving their knowledge and practice of teaching in South African schools. On the other hand, the studies by Steyn (2011) and Masomi et al. (2014) have placed emphasis on the need for CPTD programs to meet the differentiated individual needs of the teachers, teachers’ commitment, effective school leadership, the particular school environment, and feedback on teachers’ development. The study by Steyn (2011) pointed out that respondents indicated that CPTD was crucial and valuable, and that such goals could be further enhanced by incorporating the opinions of teachers, principals and members of the School Management Team (SMT) in designing the programs. The study by Ono and Ferreira (2010) reiterated the fact that there ought to be balance between educational reforms and CPTD which remains the best means of improving

professional practice all over the world (Supovitz and Turner 2000). The study by Ono and Ferreira (2010) was limited to the Mpumalanga Secondary Science Initiative (1999-2006), and its recommendations might also be limited in a way but it has made the point that there was need to try out an alternative model based on the Japanese experience in developing science teaching in its schools. From the foregoing, it would be clear that, although, South Africa may be far ahead of Nigeria in applying research and development to CPD for teachers, both countries still have some issues to resolve in seeking to offer much more effective and elaborate programs.

Issues That Need to Be Resolved

It is rewarding that CPTD is recognized as a viable route for improving the knowledge and skills based of professionals in Nigeria. The first issue that, perhaps, needs immediate attention is that of ensuring that the nation has a much more visible and separate policy to improve the practice of CPTD. Subsuming CPTD in the national policy on education might be expedient but it does not seem to have generated sufficient attention in terms of policy support that should have guaranteed a more systematic funding formula, monitoring and evaluation as well as meeting international benchmarks in the area.

Internationally, the author noted that studies have proved that a good CPD should contain key features like planning where is expected that each activity is part of a coherent long-term plan that gives the participants opportunities to apply what they have learned, and evaluate the effect on their practice, and develop their practice; and a CPD vision specifying planned effective activities and improved practices and that the vision is shared by those undertaking the development and by people learning or supporting it; participants involvement that enables them to develop skills, knowledge and understanding that are practicable, relevant and applicable to their current role or career aspiration for instance, in curriculum or subject content, teaching and learning strategies and the use of technology. It is also important that any good CPD should feature clearly who the service providers are with the expectation that the program is facilitated by people with the necessary experience, expertise and skills. Scholars in the literature are agreed that a good CPD program should

feature clear evidence based on the best available evidence about teaching and learning and that such evidence should be derived from research and inspection (A fuller narration of these components and expectations are provided in TDA: What does good CPD look like? (Training and Development Agency for Schools 2007).

Although, these expectations have been more or less global in outlook, they should provide the basic minimum standards one should find in the offerings in Nigeria as well as in other African countries that seek to apply CPTD in much more effective ways. In this respect, all the stakeholders need to be brought on board to ensure more widespread gains derivable from sticking to basic minimum standards.

Role of Stakeholders

CPTD in Nigeria has benefitted from the participation of different stakeholders. Unfortunately, what seems to be reproduced in the literature as far as teacher development is concerned has been the efforts made either by Government or parastatals. That could be the case because the teacher development is a major preoccupation of Government. Even at that, it is to be noted that different missionaries and even private investors in the field should and could have some interests in how CPTD is designed and implemented. Much more than that, parents and guardians should also be interested in how well CPTD is running in Nigeria. But it is something of interest that the public universities in Nigeria and, in particular, the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) have expectedly developed research interest in how well CPTD is being implemented. This is in addition to the involvement of staff in the different University Departments of Adult and Continuing Education in research and practice in CPTD in the nation.

A possible development in this field of social service is that experience is revealing that public-private partnership would become more expedient as the demand for properly trained and experienced teachers may be on the rise as private providers of education become more visible and involved in Nigeria's education system.

CONCLUSION

CPTD has occupied some policy position in Nigeria ostensibly because it is deemed as urgent and necessary as a means of improving

classroom practices and professional ethics. Although, the analysis undertaken in this area had been focused on the teachers of English, other disciplines in the school system are clearly involved in applying the same strategy. The efforts made by Nigeria in applying CPTD have been laudable as the NTI and other Government agencies have continually paid good attention to this application. The discussion has not brought out very clearly what each public university is doing to enhance the application of CPTD, but it is noteworthy that research has not been lacking as a way of supporting what is provided.

RECOMMENDATIONS

When compared with South Africa, it could be said that Nigeria would probably need to double its efforts in CPD. Nigeria needs to pay attention to the application of the multimedia system and the development of a clear and relevant national policy guiding the design and implementation of CPTD that is carefully monitored. There is also need to enforce the accumulation of CPTD credits as a condition for the registration of the teachers in Nigeria, something that is still a far cry from the reality.

One major impediment to the implementation of CPTD in Nigeria is the odious crisis confronting the education system. The researchers have far too many work-to-rules or teachers' strike. Such experiences are bound to negate whatever gains that might have been made from the implementation of CPTD. When you add to that negative situation the fact that the enforcement of constant updating of teaching knowledge and skills is still probably at the infancy stage in Nigeria, it would be clear that we have many reasons to worry about how well we can compete internationally in the provision of CPTD. This calls for more commitment to policy implementation, monitoring, funding and "real" provision of enabling environment. That is one of the ways we can best secure the future of the nation whose development can never rise above the quality of its teachers.

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