

## **Revitalizing Nigerian Education in the Post Covid-19 Pandemic Era**

**Abstract:** The COVID-19 pandemic unleashed a devastating blow on every sector of the lives of most nations of the world. Lives were, and have continued to be lost. Economies have been crippled and educational systems have suffered serious setback. This paper examines how the COVID-19 has impacted on the Nigerian Educational system and suggests ways of revitalizing the educational sector. It highlights the loss of study time, challenges of social distancing and other protocols, compromise of quality of education resulting from the rush by teachers to cover lost grounds, the undue exploitation of innocent students by unscrupulous teachers in various ways, inability of some state governments to pay the salaries of teachers resulting in strike actions by teachers, etc. Some positive results of COVID-19 pandemic include such innovative instructional approaches as online teaching and learning via different learning platforms such as WhatsApp, YouTube, Skype, Zoom and other social media platforms flexibility in the use of the classroom for teaching, more research-oriented teaching, etc. The paper recommends the revitalization of the school curriculum content to include the lessons implicit in the COVID-19 experiences, innovative approaches to teaching and learning which were being adopted while the pandemic ravaged the globe, among other things.

**Key Words:** Post COVID-19 pandemic, Education, Revitalizing education.

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### **Introduction**

The COVID-19 pandemic has taken its toll on most nations of the world and impacted adversely on the health, welfare, economy, education and overall development of the nations. However, our interest is in the area of education. We shall examine the topic “Revitalizing education in the post COVID-19 pandemic era.”

We shall, in the course of our discourse examine;

- The concept of education in the context of the topic,
- The impact of COVID-19 on the education sector,
- Strategies for revitalizing education in the post COVID-19.

### **The Concept of Education**

In the context of this discourse, we would examine the concept of education, not by defining it as a process or as a product; not as a product; not as formal, informal or non-formal engagement but rather with reference to the various levels of the educational system. In that context, we would think of the early childhood education, pre-primary and primary education, secondary education, including the programmes undertaken in it such as the curriculum, teaching and learning activities, instructional materials/resources; vocational and technical education, teacher education, adult education, special education for the physical, mentally and emotionally challenged as well as the gifted/exceptional children; tertiary education which includes the programmes of the universities (conventional and specialized) monotronics and polytechnics; open/ distant education at various levels of education for examples: curriculum matters - educational goals, content, instructional methodologies, teaching resources, assessment procedures, global issues related to access, gender, sustainability in education, peace education, global citizenship education, HIV aids education, funding of education, politics and sociology of education (FRN 2014).

Other issues that may be considered relevant in the concept of education may vary according to the orientation or perspective of the educationist. For example, one may be interested in learning how to learn, survival skills for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, life and career skills, global learning contents that derive from contemporary issues such as climate change education, terrorism and security education, Information and Communication Technology education (ICT), entrepreneurship education and so on. It is the peculiar challenges of any environment that determine the nature of the education given/ provided to the consumers. Children in the kindergarten and primary schools in Israel, for examples are taught to differentiate between sounds of war planes and rocket on the one hand and cargo planes on the other, and how to take cover for protection. This is due to the fact that the country is in a perpetual state of warfare with the Palestinians such that a climate of insecurity prevails most of the time of the children born there.

From the foregoing, it is easy to observe that the concept of education includes various levels of education, the content or subject matter taught at those levels, methods and materials use in teaching, emergent global contents that seek to address global / world-wide challenges, newer technologies and processes of imparting knowledge using Information and Communication Technology (ICT), ways of assessing how much

learning has taken place. It includes the flexibility in the classroom organization and strategies for discipline and organization / management (Mkpa, 2021).

### **Negative Impact of Covid-19 Pandemic on Nigerian Education**

The COVID-19 pandemic, the most traumatic global health challenge of the century has dealt a most devastating blow on the educational system of the entire world in general, and Nigeria in particular. Below are some negative effects on the Nigerian educational system.

- **Loss of Precious Study Time**

In Nigeria and in many other parts of the world, the pandemic resulted in the loss of useful study time. Almost one academic session was lost in Nigeria as institutions of learning from the primary to the tertiary levels were locked down. With the closure of schools, precious study time was lost. As we know, time lost can never be regained.

- **Rush to Cover Lost Grounds Compromises Quality**

When, after one year, schools reopened, most institutions did not want to lose the academic year. As a result, there were adjustments in the academic timetables such that semesters were shortened in order to regain lost grounds. Lecturers had to rush their lectures and examination timetables were fixed/scheduled even when very little/few topics had been covered/taught by lecturers from the course outlines. There were cases in which less than a quarter of the topics in the course outlines were covered and examinations were scheduled. Lecturers would normally try to be “nice” to the students by giving them “areas of concentration” from the few topics that were either taught or from where the student would be expected to go and read – up on their own and prepare their private notes in order to pass the examinations. The results was that very little would be learnt by the students even when they are scored “A” or “B”. The “A” scores are those who wrote the best out of in the few topics identified as “areas of concentration” which might just have covered four out of about fifteen topics listed in the course outline. The rest of the eleven topics would not be taught, and yet the course would be said to have been covered. Quality is obviously compromised.

- **Staff Salaries were not paid in some Institutions**

In many state-owned tertiary institutions, and at all levels of the educational system, (pre-primary through tertiary) staff salaries were either not paid at all during the lock-down, or drastically reduced/ slashed. This resulted from the fact that students/learners were not in school to pay school fees. As a result there was no money with which to pay the staff salaries. The hardship and misery which this situation inflicted on lecturers, teachers, instructors at various levels of education are better imagined than experienced. There were cases in which both husbands and wives were lectures/teachers in the same institution, and they were expected to pay school fees for their children and wards in schools. I know some tertiary institutions that are owing their staff as much as seven months salaries, and the lecturers are expected to be teaching when the lock-down was over and schools reopened.

- **Strike Actions in Institutions of learning**

Many staff unions in tertiary institutions, especially the state-owned ones, have embarked on strike actions to press home their demand for the payment of their unpaid salaries. Even the primary and secondary school teachers in those state owned institutions took part in the said strike actions as they demanded to be paid their salary arrears. Schools in Abia State are a case in point. I was expected to lead a team of resources persons to start a Teacher Professional Development Programme Organized by the Universal Basic Education Commission for Basic Education Teachers in Abia State in January 2021, but as a result of the strike action embarked on by the Basic Education teachers, the capacity building programme was delayed for about two months during which the Government and the Teachers’ Trade Unions negotiated a peace accord on the basis of which schools reopened.

The additional loss of learning/study time which resulted from the teachers’ strike action, further complicated the problem of loss of precious study/teaching time. It is easy to guess how little the children studied in the state owned schools. When this trend prevails in most parts of the country, we can easily understand why our quality of education in Nigeria is looked down upon by the developed countries.

- **Production of Half-Baked Graduates**

The above stated scenario implies that, and explains why we in Nigeria appear to produce half-backed school leavers. It has become a trend that short periods of inferior academic work alternates very frequently with longer periods of strike actions in Nigeria. The result is that our graduates are regarded elsewhere as inferior. They are often subjected to additional qualifying tests/assessments/examinations in order to prove their capacity in many foreign countries, especially in such specialized professional fields of study as medicine, law, engineering, etc.

- **Exploitation of Students by Lecturers**

It is an established fact that in some tertiary institutions, some unscrupulous staff exploit students in various ways ranging from sale of grades for money, sexual harassment, intimidation, to substitution of money for assignments and attendance to lecturers, etc (Mkpa 2020; 2019). The Covid-19 Pandemic is known to have offered those irresponsible tertiary level teachers the opportunity to exploit students who are not serious with their studies. Many students were certainly not doing any serious studies if any at all during the about one year of the Covid-19 period. As a result, they had forgotten much of their course contents during the lock-down. Many students engaged in several non-academic ventures when it appeared that the period of lock-down was getting protracted.

When, eventually schools reopened and most institutions published examination timetables which demanded that students should return and take examinations on courses they had not read up since nearly one year, there was panic among the students. The vicious lecturers, in most cases, cashed in on the unpreparedness of the students to make their usual unprofessional demands which amounted to exploitation and gross misconduct on the part of the teachers.

This behaviour should not be tolerated in any Nigerian university by any Vice-Chancellor who knows his/her job and wishes to live up to the expectations of the educational stakeholders. To muster the courage to confront the malaise calls for special grace and determination which are lacking among many institutional leaders. What strategies institutions should adopt to address these obnoxious practices should be the serious concern of institutional Senates and Academic Boards.

- **Social Distancing in Classrooms and Hostels**

One of the Covid-19 protocols is the keeping of social distancing in classrooms, hostels/halls of residence and elsewhere that students meet/converge. While the intention is to ensure the protection of students from contamination, there is no doubt that it imposes extra stress of space, energy, time etc on the institution and staff.

If strictly observed, the following are some of the implications:

- i) A lecture in which many students are involved may have to be delivered twice the number of times originally meant for the said lecture due to the spacing out by students. This may cause a delay in completing the programme.
- ii) More spacious accommodation/lecture halls would be required by institutions which may be unable to fund the construction of the facility.
- iii) More funds would be required to pay a lecturer who must teach a course twice or more times in an attempt to maintain social distancing.
- iv) The stress on lecturers repeating their teaching several times in an attempt to maintain social distancing is dangerous to the staffs' mental and physical health even if they are paid for the extra Job.
- v) To achieve social distancing in halls of residence could be an uphill task for many institutions especially in schools where hostel accommodation is already tight.
- vi) The maintainability of social distancing automatically reduces the number of individuals who may participate in ceremonies of schools, colleges and universities for example - matriculation and convocation ceremonies or public lectures.

- **Financial Implication of Other Covid-19 Protocols**

In addition to social distancing, Covid-19 regulations include, and demand on educational institutions, the provision of facilities for hand-washing with soap and running water, wearing of face masks, facilities for quarantine of persons suspected to be having the symptoms of the ailment among others.

One will easily agree that these requirements involve extra financial costs both on individuals/parents/educational stakeholders and the management of educational institutions. In many cases, Governments may not provide adequately for these facilities. In such cases, what do you do? How would Educational Institutions vacate facilities meant for other uses and convert them to serve as quarantine wards. In the alternative, how easy is it for schools to build such halls or medical centers and employ health workers for monitoring Covid-19 suspected patients. The Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) can be another issue for the institutions, in terms of their acquisition and effective utilization.

From the foregoing, we can observe that Covid-19 has not been friendly to the educational system. It has brought delay, in learners' academic programmes, economic/financial stress on educational stakeholders and governments, compromised the quality of educational offered to students, created crisis and strike actions leading to more loss of time for teaching and learning, produced inferior quality students and school leavers, and led to exploitation of students by irresponsible staff. The question arises as to whether there are any merits, or benefits associated with the Covid-19 pandemic in relation to the education sector. Some merits can be identified as follows:

### **Positive Effects of the Covid-19 on Education**

#### **i) More Students and Teachers Became More ICT Compliant**

One very vital result of Covid-19 Pandemic in the education sector is that it has cultivated a generation of hitherto “analogue” students and staff into “digital” individuals. As a result of the Covid-19 protocol of social distancing, the classrooms could no longer accommodate all the students that would ordinarily have clustered within one classroom. The directive against having people crowded together at a place made possible the use of technological approaches which both staff and students had to key into. The use of smart phones for on-line lectures became the norm. On-line lessons and zoom meetings have become common-place. Staff and students who were unfamiliar with the ICT are now helplessly learning to utilize the newer technologies. Through deliberate programmes of self-help, both staff and students are now learning to utilize the computers and smart-phones. This is a positive development that holds positive promise of improved digital approach to teaching, learning and research.

#### **ii) More Flexible Teaching / Learning Approaches**

The Covid-19 Pandemic has led to and facilitated the application of more flexible approaches to teaching and learning. The use of other approaches than the rigid formal classroom regime is another merit of the Covid-19 Pandemic. Virtual teaching, becomes an alternative to the physical presence of the learners and teachers in one classroom environment. This is healthier and more life-saving. Distance ceases to be a barrier to both teachers and learners as students are able to join the class no matter how far away they may be from the teacher or the formal classroom. Teachers on their part are glad to teach from the comfort of their homes or some other places of their interest as teaching/learning became ubiquitous. We must however note that sometimes connectivity may be hampered by factors beyond the control of teachers and students. When, and in an environment where availability of electricity is a serious challenge, this mode of teaching undoubtedly is-grossly handicapped.

#### **iii) More Realistic Assessment due to Social Distancing**

One of the Covid-19 protocols is social distancing which demands that people should stay at least two meters (about 6 feet) from one another. When this is applied in the teaching situation, we are sure that students work on their individual bases. They can work independently, think independently, and respond to the teacher’s questions on the basis of their individual abilities. We are surer as teachers, that any response from a student is a result of his or her personal effort. The same is even true of the assessment scenario. When the students sit two meters apart from each other, the possibility of examination malpractices is greatly reduced. This protocol may not be a very pleasant one for dull students who would depend on cheating to pass their examinations. When students sit two meters apart, invigilators are more able to monitor the class and detect any form of malpractices during examination.

#### **iv) Global Interaction in Education**

One important merit of COVID-19 is the educational opportunity it has offered for nations to interact amongst themselves such that people in a given country can learn from the goings on in different countries.

This cross fertilization of ideas has facilitated educational innovations in countries where such innovations would either not have taken place or been delayed. From other countries, it is possible to learn to innovate in such areas as protection of lives of learners and their teachers; creative ways of teaching and learning, enrichment of the curriculum, flexibility of the teaching/learning environment, resources that can be effectively utilized to facilitate effective instruction across distant lands, and in general, improved application of ICT in education.

#### **v) More Research-Oriented Teaching and Learning:**

An important result of the COVID-19 pandemic is the boost it has given to research-oriented teaching and learning. Due to the lock-down that restricted direct contact of students and teachers, many instructors not only resorted to online teaching, but also subjected learners to investigative learning such that tasks were assigned and students were expected to go online to discover for themselves vital information which the teacher could ordinarily have dished out to them. In many cases, the learning tasks challenged students to research into fields and curricular areas that enriched their knowledge and made them more informed students. Instead of the formal procedure of note-dictation of the teacher, students are now in a position to inform the teacher their findings from projects assigned to them to execute.

This is obviously a more productive, more result-oriented and more enriching approach to teaching and learning. This approach exposes students to independent study, builds confidence in them and makes them able

to lead others in discussions on topics that they investigated. These are competencies which rote learning or note-dictation approach would not equip learners with.

#### **vi) Solid Foundation for ICT Laid for Nigerian Children:**

Undoubtedly, many Nigerian children became better acquainted with the Information Communication Technology as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Some state governments procured and generously distributed laptops to children whose parents would otherwise not have been able to acquire them. This is a step in the right direction in an effort to equip our children with ICT competence. When such foundation is laid, it prognosticates success in future educational endeavors of the children, especially when such children are taught the robust potentials of the ICT facilities by reliable and knowledgeable teachers. Thus, it is not enough to dump laptops in schools. Expert teachers need to be deployed to teach the learners the full range of the uses and capabilities of the facility.

Then and only then would it make sense to supply the items to schools.

These points creates the need for specialized training to be arranged for instructors/teachers at the pre-primary/primary and even secondary school levels for the specific purpose of enriching the teachers with ALL that they need to guide the young learners appropriately. Digital compliance is the maxim for the present and future of any developing country.

#### **What to Revitalize**

It is pretty obvious that we would need to consolidate the gains of the COVID-19 pandemic. Those six benefits, merits, gains, advantages and positive effects of the pandemic mentioned above need to be strengthened while we discourage the negative consequences. Furthermore, the following areas are necessary for revitalization:

1. **The Curriculum of our Schools:** The COVID-19 pandemic has necessitated a more intensive study of infectious diseases in our schools. If the disease, as at April 2021, has claimed almost six hundred thousand lives in the United States and much more over the world, and the prediction is the emergence of other variants of it, the obvious conclusion is that the end is not going to be immediate. The need to intensify the study of both the COVID-19 and other similar infectious diseases becomes obvious. Our school curricula should therefore educate learners on its nature, origins, peculiar features, mode of spread, prevention protocols.
2. **Unity of Global Challenges:** The schools should teach the fact of unity of challenges that affect the globe. The story of the spread across all continents of the world should be taught so that people would learn that what happens in one part of the world can impact on all other parts of the globe. The implication, among other things are the need for caution in engineering the spread of diseases and concerted action in the control of the said disease. This fact becomes a principle that should condition the global psyche as events unfold. Thus, other challenges that may erupt in the future should be addressed using a similar template to the one adopted in grappling with COVID-19.
3. **Variant Mutants of COVID-19:** It will be interesting for our schools to investigate the variant mutants of the pandemic with a view to discovering what things are peculiar to each mutant. For example, we need to know the differences between the UK and the Nigerian variant and why the difference; how each one is treated, and the preventive strategy for each; the effectiveness of the vaccines on each variant and research findings about each one, e.g. conditions under which each one thrives and personality characteristics that are more vulnerable to each variant, etc. It will also be necessary to document the predictions about the future of each variant e.g. the likelihood of a resurgence or of its elimination.
4. **Thoughts about Death and Hereafter:** The rate of spread, the statistics of fatalities and the projections about the mortality rates in parts of the world should conjure a thought in the hearts of people that it could be any person's turn to die at anytime from the infection. This thought should in turn lead to an intensive study of the destiny of the human soul at death. People tend to think of death when they begin to grow old, but the available evidence from the COVID-19 pandemic confirms that persons of all ages are capable of dying of the infection. As a result, the concern about the destination of souls should belong to both the young and the old. We should, no matter what religion we belong to, create time to study our beliefs with a view to doing all in our power to ensure that we do not suffer in hell; As we know, both the Christian and Muslim religions believe that there is hell fire prepared for the unrighteous persons. Our school curriculum as well as other non-formal education sectors such as the homes, churches, mosques, and mass media should, more than ever before, intensity their teachings in order to help to more effectively transform the lives of humankind towards more responsible lifestyle and behavior.

**5. Research into Locally Produced Vaccines and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and African Traditional Medicines:**

Our educational and research institutes should be challenged to undertake intensive research into locally produced vaccines that suit our peculiar environment. We are witnesses to the trend that countries that produce the vaccines use them first on their own people in order to first save their lives before exporting to other parts of the world. Furthermore, we observe that vaccines tend to adapt to the environments where they are produced, especially with respect to conditions of preservation (temperature-wise). We in Africa should be able to produce our own locally made vaccines that can be preserved under our peculiar temperature and other conditions. Our school curricula ought to, at the tertiary level offer the needed knowledge that would lead to the production of the said vaccine so that we can take our own destiny in our own hands in the health sector.

Related to the above is the need for a conscious support to the development of African traditional medicines. It is often hypothesized that our local herbs and spices joined hands with the hot temperature of our environment to stave off the intensity of the COVID-19 pandemic in the African continent. Our schools should consciously investigate the efficacy of our traditional herbs, roots, spices, etc to empirically establish their efficacy both in the attack of COVID-19 and on other ailments that attack our people. Such findings are worthwhile fields to explore and revitalize in the botanical, pharmaceutical/medical sciences.

**6. Teaching and Learning Approaches:** The school curriculum document is highly ineffective in bringing about the desired learning unless it is transformed into the operating curriculum through the application of functional instructional approaches (Mkpa).

It would appear that the COVID-19 pandemic recorded a very substantial impact on the innovative strategies of teaching and learning, which strategies need to be consolidated. We had observed elsewhere that the concept of innovation is relative because what is an innovation in a given part of the world may not be so taken elsewhere, whereas the use of computers may be seen as an innovation in some developing parts of the world, the Western world would not share that view since it has been in use for many decades in those places. However, we shall present below, some more innovative approaches which COVID-19 has inspired us to consolidate.

- **Online Approaches:** COVID-19 pandemic has popularized online approaches to teaching and learning. Earlier before the pandemic, such approaches as distance learning, using social media like whatsapp, e-mail, facebook among others were gaining popularity as a result of adapting to digital teaching and learning and in some cases, they were proving to be as effective, if not more effective than the conventional instructional approach. The increasing emphasis on blended learning and application of technology in the online leading – learning process have facilitated the widespread use of whatsapp as a mobile-learning instructional tool (Fritschi & Wolf, 2012). Mobile-learning (m-learning) emphasizes that learning can take place wherever one finds oneself using wireless devices and in various formats (Pack, 2011; Izyan & Mohammed, 2016). There is evidence that tertiary level students have shown positive attitude towards the whatsapp as a learning tool (Aisha, 2014) and that the approach does facilitate the learning and retention of any learned material (Andriotis, 2017, Ashiyan & Salechi, 2016, Ayeni & Mkpa, 2019). However, at the hit of the pandemic, several online/virtual teaching and learning erupted such as Zoom, YouTube, Udemy etc.

While the COVID-19 pandemic raged federal and state governments in Nigeria encouraged educational institutions to utilize online facilities to promote teaching and learning as a strategy for minimizing the devastating effect of the scourge. In many tertiary institutions online learning platform such as whatsapp, Skype, YouTube and Zoom among others were profoundly used and these platforms did produce significant positive effects among learners and their teachers. We need to revitalize their use by consciously utilizing them in the post lock-down era so that their potentials could be fully tapped for the benefit of the staff and students.

Meetings and conferences were held using the Zoom application. This proved safer than the risk of direct personal contacts among people. In spite of the challenges posed by the network and students' access to the needed smart phones, laptops and data, we need to fully utilize the merits of the zoom facility and the likes. They are safer, cheaper and more convenient.

Tele-conferencing and conference calls are also approaches for the future that can facilitate academic interactions among learners, teachers, professionals and specialists. In tele-conferencing, someone in a given part of the world can participate and make contributions to a conference (which could be an academic, professional) taking place in places very distant from the participants.

In conference calls, a number of persons may be connected through the mobile phone for the purpose of sharing ideas on a variety of issues, subject matters, teacher's assignments, projects, etc, all these taking place in comfort of the participants' environments. Again, the merits of economy of resources, security and

stress-free interaction are obvious. We need to popularize the approach in order to make teaching and learning more flexible.

Learning packages can very effectively be delivered via digital technologies. Teachers and students must key into modernity in order to benefit maximally from the rich potentials of online engagements.

- **Flexibility of the Classroom Concept:** The concept of the classroom, in the traditional sense is the space provided in the formal school system where teachers and learners assemble for the purpose of curriculum implementation.

The COVID-19 pandemic has tended to modify, if not completely change that concept to include what Jung (2002) called Virtual Classroom. The idea is that we need to shift from that traditional rigid formality of a centralized assembly and sitting arrangement where all learners and teachers must be found if teaching and learning must take place. From our foregoing discussion, we can appreciate that teaching and learning can take place anywhere and anytime that both teachers and learners find convenient. This should be a trend that we need to revitalize as we move towards the future.

Even the structure of the current classrooms need to be revisited as we press for innovative transformation of our school system. We believe that the architectural designs and structures of future classrooms will provide for such facilities as media lounge – space for wireless internet, flat screen TV, book shelves, soft drink/tea/food and similar spaces where groups of learners can meet for carrying out creative projects or tasks. Chairs for sitting should be soft and comfortable.

This implies that the buildings should be constructed in line with modernity, providing security of all the valuable items of furniture and teaching-learning gadgets. The basic principle is that the learning environment should be radically different from today's stereotypical structure with unprotected facilities and predictable features (Mkpa, 2021).

- **Inquiry and Project-Based Learning:** The COVID-19 pandemic, among other things inspired personalized learning whereby teachers from their various distances during the lock-down assigned tasks to students in form of projects which they needed to execute via the inquiry and project approaches. Such projects did not limit student to any classrooms but challenged them to move out to the society to gain real-world experiences through which the benefits included the acquisition of useful technical skills (Hermington, Parker & Boarse, 2014). The merits of this approach to learning far outweigh the conventional practice whereby learners depend on the notes prepared by teachers and dictated to the class to copy. There is, in this traditional approach, no opportunity for the learner to gain an independent and functional experience that could be a reference point in his/her life outside the classroom. The real-world experience gained through guided inquiry, which the lock-down period necessitated, is a great asset to the learners. The approach enables the learner to become a better and more enriched student, in terms of acquisition of knowledge, research skills, and concomitant socio-psychological and emotional disposition needed for proper adjustment as a confident student (Azubike, 2015; Agboola and Onyemedede, 2007; Azeredo, Gomky & Siebet, 2009). The merits of the guided discovery need to be consolidated in our students as we revitalize the educational system.

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- **More Flexible and Credible Assessment of Learners:** The COVID-19 lockdown created a compelling need for social distancing in the classrooms. The task oriented assignments which teachers gave to learners, resulted in activities that were not limited to paper-pencil tests. On the contrary, projects were assigned to students who had to undertake the tasks which sometimes were reported as seminar papers, written reports which were submitted online and individual term papers. Since students could not assemble in one place to write the usual type of examinations, the project reports became very useful substitutes. In fact, they were better alternatives because many students executed the tasks on their own without any assistance from colleagues, who were in far away places. We could then vouch for the originality of responses by students.

Furthermore, in situations where students could assemble in one place to take examinations, the social distances guaranteed the absence of the usual examination malpractices that usually took place when students were in close proximity. Although dull students would not be happy with the social distancing policy, there is no doubt that it guarantees more credible assessment results. Such distances should be maintained and sustained even in the post COVID-19 pandemic era.

- **More ICT Compliant Teachers and Learners:** One of the most significant outcomes of COVID-19 pandemic is the cultivation of teachers and learners who have become more familiar with the digital culture.

Since the usual classroom interactions were either minimized or totally suspended, and yet learning had to be carried on using the digital approach, both teachers and students had no choice but to adjust to the trend.

Many teachers and students who could not operate the computers had to subject themselves to the tutorials that improved their competences. Today, the population of teachers and students who are able to perform some operations using the computer has increased, although we do not yet have the empirical data to give precise figures.

Various governments have supported schools in acquiring modern ICT facilities. Interactive boards and replacing blackboards in some higher educational institutions and rich private schools. Laptops are increasingly becoming available among both teachers and students. These are trends that need to be sustained.

## **Summary**

### **The Roles of Teachers, Government and Student**

#### **Teachers**

Teachers must reformat their psyche.

- Recognize the uniqueness of their “Calling”
- Consciously determine to strive for self improvement
- Accept that the destiny of the nation is in their hands
- Think and act more professionally than being trade-union minded
- Focus more on the affective learning outcomes
- Be more learner friendly than they are today.
- Develop self-assessment mechanism
- Strive to improve on professional skills
- Have self-esteem, self confidence
- Be better than yesterday.

#### **Government’s Role**

- Improve funding for education
- Establish standards for teachers performance
- Create standards for the quality of schools
- Create ICT/Digital compliant school systems
- Establish and sustain child-friendly school environment
- Maintain school boards management committees (functional)
- Provide and sustain security in our schools
- Make the curriculum more relevant
- Sustain teachers professional development programme
- Establish strategic evidence of progress of TDP
- Revive inspectorate and supervisory programme
- Emphasize the spiritual and moral programmes

#### **Student’s Role**

- Be disciplined
- Be ICT compliant
- Learn how to learn
- Develop 21<sup>st</sup> Skills
- Focus Entrepreneur skills
- Supposed to apply what they have learned in school in their day-to-day lives
- Should learn to understand, not memories, to pass examinations.
- But be able to apply their skills, ask questions, and understand the importance of education.
- Be active to participation in everyday learning
- Should practice good communication skills and apply hands-on learning.

## **Conclusion**

The COVID-19 pandemic did inflict, and is still inflicting deadly blows on almost all sectors of our daily lives in Nigeria and elsewhere. The educational sector has suffered untold setback in terms of the quality of education, loss of precious time, exploitation of students by unscrupulous teachers, pressure/stress on school facilities, unpaid salaries and wages to teachers, strike actions by staff unions, and more. Some merits however,



derived from the pandemic. More teachers and students have become ICT compliant; there is a trend towards greater application of social media in teaching and learning as we maintain the social distancing in schools/homes, several innovations especially in teaching and learning are becoming popular among others.

There is need to sustain the positive outcomes of the COVID-19 pandemic. To achieve this, government needs to invest more in the educational sector. When teachers are not paid, when needed teaching and learning facilities cannot be provided in our schools especially the ICT gadgets, when modern infrastructures cannot be built and secured in the schools, it becomes helpless to expect success in the bid to revitalize the education sector.

Teachers must be prepared to innovate. They should reformat their psyche and accept and adapt to changes in the curricula and teaching-learning approaches. They may not be digital natives but adaptation is possible through determined reorientation of the mindset. Students should be more prepared to embrace new and different instructional techniques and assessment procedures. All must be prepared to adjust and readjust to modern trends towards change.

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