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TEACHERS WITH PASSION: TEACHING IN A DISTRESSED EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

by

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Abstract

Passion is great enthusiasm, very strong emotion, a willingness to sacrifice. Men and women with passion outpace themselves as they go beyond mere talent, to leave their impact on society. Nigerian education needs teachers with passion – men and women with fire in their bones, impatient for lasting and enduring results. Such extra-ordinary pedagogues are people who will give themselves as ministers and missionaries in the temple of education.

Keywords: Teacher, Student, Education, Misconduct, Passion, National Policy on Education, Code of Ethics.

I. INTRODUCTION

Ugo is the first son in a family of five. His father who struggles with some disability, runs a small-time tailor's ramshackle shed at the town's local market. Ugo had a firm resolve to make something out of his life. He was determined to study and attain professional scholarship at the highest levels, and if possible, usher in a measure of prosperity for his family. His passion for diligent study soon became legendary. In the morning he was in school; and in the afternoon, he was a part-time wheel-barrow pusher, just to make some money on the side. As he contemplated studying accountancy at the university level, a well-meaning family friend advised him against that: "Accounting is too technical and too competitive. You may not make it".

Ugo took that as a challenge. His familiar reading spot was under a mango tree by his father's rented accommodation. Like clockwork, he started his night studies every night after supper, and only switched off his lantern at 5.00 am the following morning, after reading all through the night. He would then grab a few hours of sleep before hurrying out to hustle at the market and the school. This was a routine he followed with religious regularity. Ugo took the JAMB (Joint Admission and Matriculation Examinations) and scored 311 out of 400 in the public admissions examination. This earned him admission into a Federal University to read Accountancy. Today, he holds graduate and professional qualifications in Accountancy, and runs a blue chip company in Port Harcourt as a Managing Director. His parents and siblings today live in comparable prosperity. Ugo remains an example in the power of passion, purpose and perseverance in the life of a man.

There is yet another case study. Ikem is a product of the good old days when Nigerian education had good standards, enviable quality and remarkable character. Groomed and brought up in mission schools, he learnt quite early in life, the benefit of Discipline: being severe with self, gentle with others, honest with all - not free to do what others may do, but free to do what others cannot do. He excelled in his West African School Certificate Examinations, with a clear Division I, and in time proceeded to the University where he graduated with top honours. Ikem found primary employment on graduation, with the Central Bank of Nigeria. However, he was uncomfortable outside the classroom. From as early as he could remember, he had always wanted to teach. In spite of attractive offers from banks and oil companies, Ikem preferred to take up teaching appointment in the days when teachers at all levels earned just peanuts. As the saying went then, the take-home-pay of teachers could not take them home. But Ikem was not bothered. He took special delight in introducing himself as an accountant by training, and a teacher by calling.

Ikem got absorbed in teaching and in barely 30 years of classroom work, has produced a host of seasoned experts and professionals in his discipline. He puts a portion of his life into every lesson he taught, and he strove to be the best he could be for his students. He sought to teach, not just with his head, but also his heart and life. He never saw his students as easy sources of financial enrichment. If anything, he made personal sacrifices in money, material and effort to uplift his students. Teaching as a professor at the highest level, he has had the privilege of producing no less than 7 professors, some of whom still look up to him as their teacher. When he chose to commit himself to a professional body, he became a defining force, a rallying point for excellence and good ethical conduct. Indeed, almost all the position papers of his professional body - their bylines, sound bites and popular axioms - are his creations, extracted in the main from his writings. Today, there is hardly any establishment, any State capital, any major Nigerian town, where he does not run into his former students who remember him with fond memories. Again, another case of the power of passion, purpose and perseverance in a man's life.

So what carries people to the top? What makes them take risks, go the extra mile, and do whatever it takes to achieve their goals? The answer is simple: *Passion!* Passion is simply defined as great enthusiasm, very strong emotion. The root

word from Latin, '*passio*' means *to suffer*. In other words, it takes great enthusiasm and a measure of sacrifice, to exhibit passion in a matter. Passion is more important than a plan. It creates fire. It provides fuel. It can transform someone from average to excellent. What we accomplish in life is based less on what we want and more on how much we want it. The secret to *willpower* is what has been called *want-power*. People who want something enough usually find the willpower to achieve it (Maxwell, 2007).

A passionate person with limited talent will outperform a passive person who possesses greater talent; because passionate persons act with boundless enthusiasm, and they just keep on going! The presence of passion guarantees both focus and perseverance in the lives of talented persons and professionals. It means succeeding because you are determined to, not destined to. It recognises that life is not a long race, but many short ones in succession. It means stopping not because you're tired, but because the task is done. Passion does not demand more than we can give; it actually demands all that we have.

Passion is akin to purpose - it provides the reason for existing, the most powerful thing in your life that gets you noticed. Purpose is what you are created to succeed at, your attention-grabber. Further more, passion makes it possible to concentrate on the priority of life. It enables a person to focus on results and on the right kind of individuals. The world is full of dampeners, wet blankets who will stop at nothing to extinguish the fire in our bones. Indeed, as Maxwell (2007) observed, there are five types of people in our work systems:

- *Refreshers* who inspire your dreams and energize your talents;
- *Refiners* who sharpen your ideas and clarify your visions;
- *Reflectors* who mirror your energy, neither adding nor subtracting from it;
- *Reducers* who try to reduce your vision and efforts to their comfort level; and,
- *Rejecters* who deny your talent, hinder your efforts, and impede your vision.

Passion motivates us to locate men and women who share our burning desire for change, excellence and efficiency. In this paper, we shall periscope the role of passionate teacher in redeeming our educational system in these times.

II OUR DISTRESSED EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

Nigeria's educational system has been described as one in "*a surreal state having encountered arrested development*", one in which standards are "*dwindling and*

dismal” and “*educational values and academic performance*” are on a slippery slope. Way back in the 1970s, the quality of Nigerian education was a thing of pride for the black race, and a standard for the rest of the African continent. We were then, the envy of many a developed or developing nation. This writer well remembers the furore generated by a back-page publication in one of Nigeria’s weeklies in the 1970s, which equated an American first degree to a sixth form certificate in Nigeria. Three decades of *diligent mismanagement* and less than expert tinkering by military and non-military hands have reduced Nigerian education to a mere shadow of its glorious past. Public figures have often indulged themselves at different times in the academic debate of whether or not the standard of education has fallen in Nigeria today. We call it mere debate because every teacher in Nigeria today, knows fully well that educational standards have plummeted - perhaps to their lowest since the 1950s.

There is no doubt whatsoever that we have lost grounds as “*Africa’s number one human resource centre even by global standards*” (Bamisaiye, 2010). And the sad story is that things are getting progressively worse, not better. Indeed, statistics from National Examinations Council (NECO) confirmed that in 2010, only a dismal 1.8% or 4,223 out of the 234,682 candidates who sat for the examinations passed with the five credits, including English and Mathematics required for admission into tertiary institutions. Between 2000 and 2004 some 76.63 per cent of the students who sat for the West African School Certificate examinations failed to obtain the mandatory 5 credits, including Maths and Englis. By 2009, that dismal number had fallen further to a 98 per cent failure rate (Obaze, 2010).

Funding for education as a public policy component in Nigeria has been treated with near malign neglect. Comparatively, Nigeria trails many developing countries in the budgetary amount it allocates to education – a paltry 6% -- as compared to Singapore’s 37%, South Africa’s 35%, and 29% allocated respectively by Botswana and Ghana. Nigeria’s allocation falls 20% short of the 26% per cent recommended by UNESCO. As Obaze (2010) observes:

As a nation, Nigeria covets greatness and we aspire to play in the big league. Frequently, we are miffed when not given the opportunity or recognition we feel we deserve. The truth, however, is that as a nation, we have neglected our educational needs and allowed the infrastructure to rot, which is partly responsible for growing brain drain and a preponderance of Nigeria’s intellectual wealth residing outside the country. Our national

lack of commitment to education is broad and varied; from the paltry pay of teachers and professors, to poor maintenance of academic infrastructure and the disappearance of vocational schools, with the attendant disappearance of a skilled middle-class work force.... And without functional secondary and tertiary schools, Nigeria is producing a slew of functionally uneducated university graduates. If this trend continues, in the years ahead, we will have very limited homegrown graduates, who can indeed lead, govern and run the nation.

The *National Policy on Education* sought to inculcate in the Nigerian child, national consciousness and national unity, and the right type of values and attitudes for the survival of the individual; the training of the mind, and the acquisition of appropriate skills, abilities and competencies, both mental and physical. It defines the aims of education to include the development of the intellectual capacities of individuals to understand and appreciate the environment; the acquisition of intellectual and physical skills which will help the individuals to develop into useful members of the community; the acquisition of broad and objective view of the local and external environment. This underlying philosophy will be achieved through:

- i) *teaching* - the imparting of knowledge;
- ii) *research* - the pursuit of knowledge;
- iii) *dissemination* - contribution to national and international dialogue and criticism;
- iv) *service orientation* in community service and professional training of the national high-level and intermediate manpower needs (Uduigwomen & Ozumba, 2004).

The *Communique of the National Summit on Higher Education* (2002), clearly articulate the Vision and Mission of education in Nigeria:

We envision a system of ...education in Nigeria where the curriculum is relevant and responsive to the needs of the Nigerian society. In implementing the curriculum, the institutions maintain stable academic calendars; facilities are adequate in quantity and quality; staff are committed and well motivated; the environment assures safety of life and property and is conducive to teaching and learning; new entrants are well prepared and adequately motivated to learn; and the products are adequately prepared for a fulfilled life and for positive contribution to

society.

The NEEDS document recognizes the critical importance of universities and tertiary institutions for high quality manpower development, especially in the context of an increasingly technologically driven world economy. It lays out the following strategies for educational reform:

- a) Strict adherence to the provisions of the University Autonomy Act;
- b) Diversification of funding, including the attraction of private sector funding, and more appropriate pricing of facilities and services (like hostel accommodation);
- c) Updating and restructuring the curricula to meet the demands of the national economy;
- d) Ensuring effective monitoring of the public and private universities to assure strict adherence to standards;
- e) Developing innovative approaches to ensure continuing re-tooling and capacity-building of lecturers in order to operate at the cutting edge of their disciplines;
- f) Moving increasingly towards decentralized and competitive wage bargaining system, thereby promoting performance-based reward system;
- g) Mass mobilization and value re-orientation among students to emphasize hard work, discipline and selfless service.

In 2008, the Federal Ministry of Education introduced what it called the *Road Map* to educational reform. The Road Map was based on a four-point strategy:

- a) Ensuring *Access and Equity* to education for all Nigerians. Such a strategy, it was hoped, would in time eliminate the issue of educationally disadvantaged status for some segments of the Nigerian populace. This would guarantee all Nigerian children free and unfettered access to education;
- b) Guarantee the highest possible *Standards and Quality* for Nigerian education in line with international best practices;
- c) Provision of *Technical and Vocational Education* across the educational system. This will ensure that students acquire skills on graduation that will make them employers of labour, not just employees. It would then be normal for the Nigerian graduate to be re-tooled, re-skilled and re-equipped to leave school not just with a good CV, but a good Business Plan;

- d) Harness public and private sector options to guarantee efficient *Funding and Resource Utilisation*.

Excellent goals, desirable targets! However, in implementation, the Policy formulations have only produced a Nigerian child who is largely morally bankrupt, intellectually inept, and a terror to both parents and society. Thank God that there are numerous exceptions to this unflattering and ignoble depiction. The “*right type of values and attitudes...*” has not yet become the heritage of our youths. Rather, cultism and gangsterism on Campuses, armed robbery and examination malpractices, have become common place, and in some cases, the teachers themselves live in fear of the children under their care.

The legacy of government in the running of academic institutions has been a mixed bag of the good, the bad and the ugly. Government intervention made education in Nigeria to be mass oriented rather than elitist. Fees were reduced to a point that all and sundry could foot the bill. The institutions were launched on a solid footing with extensive government expenditure on infrastructure and facilities. However, as time went on, it became obvious that there was not enough pie to go round. The sudden expansion in student enrolment called into serious question, government ability to continue to fund education. Welfarist posturing that offered free education at all levels, free medical services, and free everything, suddenly realized that the funds were not available to deliver.

With government participation in education, came some ignoble developments:

- Inconsistent policies and poorly articulated plans intruded upon the system; and often, the battle was between politics and plain common sense;
- Boards and councils of the higher institutions were filled with political jobbers, rather than true and tried academic administrators;
- Funds allegedly allocated to some of the institutions, leaked out of the system, through the thieving hands of political contractors. Thus, on paper the institutions are well funded; yet government patronage had positioned men of doubtful integrity, who siphoned these funds out to other ends;
- Government intervention in the day-to-day administration of these institutions, often displaced academic and professional considerations with other mundane contemplations. The high point of this abuse was when a military general was posted as an administrator to a university, to preside

over academics placed under him as assistants.

- Over-ambitious expansion in student population, without a commensurate increase in facilities. Every regime sought to immortalize its name by establishing its own institutions. Scant attention was paid to the carrying capacity of these institutions, and their level of funding. At times, these institutions were ridiculously sited at locations that hardly made any economic sense - very likely, the home town of the State Chief Executive.
- A direct consequence of the bludgeoning population, was the development of what has come to be called a *trinity of evil* in our educational institutions - cultism, certificate forgery, and examination malpractice. The spiral effect has been a drastic fall in standards, reaching their nadir in recent times;
- Thanks to the strong arm tactics of the military regimes and their civilian successors, the system boasts of dispirited and disenchanted staff, whose commitment to the task of educating the young, has only a second or third place position in their minds. The spin-off effects include regular strike actions by teaching and non-teaching staff, disruption in school calendar, and sharp decline in the quality and quantity of academic research.

In a recent study, Umeh (2001) attempted to document incidents of misconduct among University lecturers:

1. *Academic Misconduct Committed During Lectures:*
 - ▶ Persistent lateness to scheduled lectures or unauthorised or arbitrary cancellation or postponement of scheduled lectures.
 - ▶ Getting angry and abusive when students ask intelligent questions you cannot handle immediately.
 - ▶ Abusing, insulting and threatening students with a fail grade if they refuse to comply with your demands.
 - ▶ Refusing to give lectures until one month to the examination and you embark on the so-called "*block teaching*", disrupting other lectures in the process.
 - ▶ Making the purchase of your "*course book*" compulsory and walking all students who refuse to buy out of your lecture.
 - ▶ Refusing to give in-course assessment yet returning grades for in-course assessment after being "*sorted*" by the students.
 - ▶ Giving in-course assessment but refusing to mark the submitted assignment, and awarding marks in proportion to the amount of money

paid.

- ▶ Collecting money from students in order to give in-course assessment or to re-sit a failed in-course assessment.
- ▶ Demanding money from students before accepting their take-home assignments.

2. *Academic Misconduct During Examinations:*

- ▶ Lateness to scheduled examinations or refusal to invigilate a scheduled examination assigned to you.
- ▶ Unauthorised change in the time and venue of a scheduled examination.
- ▶ Refusing to ensure that all the students sign the examination attendance register at the appropriate times.
- ▶ Using unauthorised persons (students, relations, friends etc.) to invigilate examinations or carry examination answer booklets to and from the examination venues.
- ▶ Tearing students' answer booklets in the examination hall for whatever reason.
- ▶ Refusing to forward cases of examination malpractice to the appropriate committee either because you do not want to get involved or because you want to be "*settled*" by the students.
- ▶ Refusing to conduct examinations according to laid-down rules and regulations.
- ▶ Conducting an illegal examination, i.e. an examination not authorised, and not scheduled by the appropriate organ of the institution.

3. *Academic Misconduct During Processing of Results:*

- ▶ Marking and submitting the results piecemeal as students "*settle*" you.
- ▶ Awarding marks without marking the scripts.
- ▶ Using unauthorised persons (students, friends, relations, etc.) to mark scripts and compile the results.
- ▶ Publishing results after compilation, before approval by the appropriate organs of the institution.
- ▶ Accepting answer scripts not written in the examination hall in exchange for money.
- ▶ Not returning grades for those students who refuse to buy your "*course book*" and declaring their answer scripts missing.
- ▶ Delegating computation of degree results to a junior academic, e.g. graduate assistant.

- ▶ Despatching results (which are secret documents) to the appropriate destination without sealing them in an envelope.
4. *General Academic Misconduct by Lecturers:*
- ▶ Plagiarizing other people's work and presenting such to your students as a "*course book*" for them to buy.
 - ▶ Being on the pay roll of secret cults in order to pass cult members whether or not they sit for the examination of your course.
 - ▶ Asking students to launch your new car or flat in return for a percentage of examination marks.
 - ▶ Asking students to contribute money for the funeral of your parents or for your rent, for extra marks in the examination.
 - ▶ Accepting gifts (money, material) from students as inducements in order to award undeserved grades or change grades on approved results.
 - ▶ Assigning full-fledged courses to graduate assistants to teach, even final year courses!
 - ▶ Arguing violently or fighting with a colleague before the students over use of a venue for either an examination or a lecture.
 - ▶ Refusing to attend departmental or faculty board meetings.

Nze (1999) also identified certain pathologies which undermine the effectiveness of our teaching and research efforts. These include reliance on out-dated lecture notes written decades ago to teach students, without any effort on the part of the lecturer to update these notes; initiating and pursuing research projects that are at best fraudulent impositions on the psyche of the academic community; and absence of correct relationship between the university researcher and civil society.

So how does the teacher execute his brief with unrelenting passion, focus, and perseverance? We must now proceed in search of the teacher with passion.

III CHALLENGE TO PASSIONATE TEACHING

The challenge of being a passionate teacher in a distressed educational environment, calls for a measure of overhaul of the environmental characteristics of the system. The real search is for a new mind-set in the meaning of *education* and its implementation. Education is derived from the root word, "*educare*", which means to draw out, to lead out, and to form or train. In other words, the task of the

educator is *to draw out* that which is already embedded in the pupil. Plato defined education as the *initial acquisition of virtue by the child when the feelings of pleasure and affection, pain and hatred that well up in his soul, are channelled in the right courses, even before he can understand the reason why*. Thus, education can be defined as the task of guiding the total growth and development of young people so that they will be competent, well adjusted and sociable citizens of their community (Uduigwomen & Ozumba, 2004).

The challenge is how to develop *forward-looking options* for all students, with a view to raising individuals who can *work collaboratively with others, think critically and creatively, and solve complex problems*. Students - their strengths and talents, their characteristics, and their needs for instructional services that are stimulating and satisfying - must be the focal point of the next generation of educational programming. The foundation of a programme for talent development, must rest on a tripod:

- A contemporary, inclusive programming model that ensures *appropriate, challenging and developmental learning experiences* for high-ability students, and for differentiating instruction, recognising strengths, talents and interests, and nurturing potential among all students;
- Attention to differentiation of instruction that is *responsive to personal creativity characteristics, learning style, and problem-solving style*;
- Deliberate instruction in *production thinking and change management*.

This will enhance, enrich and strengthen the fabric of 21st century practice in educational development. The accompanying themes include:

- *Differentiating basic instruction*;
- *Accelerating access to teachers, mentors and materials for advanced learning opportunities*;
- *Appropriate enrichment that explores new and varied topics, to develop thinking and research skills*;
- *Fostering of effective, independent, self-directed learning*;
- *Personal growth and social development*; and
- *Career exploration and learning how to deal with rapid change and uncertainty of the future* (Treffinger et al, 2010).

Every educational system should impact the life of the student on at least three distinct levels:

- ▶ Helping the student *develop* self-knowledge;
- ▶ Enabling him *identify* his potential and facilitate his achievement of optimal development;
- ▶ *Equipping* him for adult life and civic responsibility (Sharma & Okon; cited by Onanuga, 1983).

Young people need to be helped to learn enough about their abilities and interests, the educational choices and opportunities open to them, and about the world of work, so that they may make informed and sound, rather than ill-founded and haphazard decisions about their own future.

A wise man once said that the end of all education is moral character. If indeed education must play its pivotal role in society, the teacher must play a critical and indispensable part in that direction. It has been noted that teachers are the foundation of quality in the schools; it is upon their number, their quality and their efficiency and effectiveness that the future of organised education depends. If indeed education unlocks the door of modernization, it is the teacher who holds the key to the door (Ukeje, 1983). The quality of staff and the teaching methods, play a critical role in the maintenance of value-driven educational systems. Teachers as sculptors of character, as custodians of the values and norms of society, should qualify as tools for the transformation and reshaping of the school and society.

Teachers must transmit to new generations the cultural heritage of a society - the knowledge, skills, customs, and attitudes acquired over the years. They must also try to develop in their students the ability to adjust to a rapidly changing world. Every teacher has an impact on his classes as a person and as a teacher. Everyone remembers certain teachers for their personal characteristics - the sense of humour, the tyrannical disposition, the human understanding or lack of it, the dramatic ability, the warmth, the choice of clothes, the strictness in discipline. Other teachers are remembered for their mastery of the subject or lack of it, their precise plans of action or confused directions, their enthusiasm for teaching or obvious lack of interest, their fair demands for high standards or no standards at all, their stimulating teaching methods or boring habits. There are also different teacher types - *the kindly interested adult, the business-like director of instruction, the lively forceful teacher, and the master of subject matter*. Each has a distinct style of teaching, and each brings to his charge, the challenge of moulding the character

of his students according to his convictions.

Teachers are called upon, on occasion, to provide after-school help to students who have either fallen behind in their class work, or who ask for special help to enable them cope with the demands of their courses, or who are not just working up to their capacity. Such tutorial sessions become an informal class with the teacher going over work already covered in the regular class period. Tutorial is not just a lecture method; it is a coaching approach to learning. A coach is part of a team; he is not above and beyond the team. He learns with his men. He does not just tell them what to do, he shows them how to do it. He believes in his team and draws out the best from them. He leads; he does not drive. Above all, he has great visions and hopes for his team.

The task of the tutor is to “*bridge the gap between theory and practice in education*” and to aid the growth of the student’s educational horizons, so that he is helped to see his work in perspective and understand the significance of its elements (Farrant, 1980). The tutor can be cast in the mould of a *manager* organizing his students so as to accomplish set objectives; as a *resource person* providing his students with information and able to guide them to other fruitful sources; and as a *motivator* stimulating and arousing the interest of his students so that they soon generate their own motivation.

The successful teacher is one who knows thoroughly what he is teaching and those whom he is teaching and has the ability to link the two through a mastery of communication. The mark of the brilliant teacher is not that he makes his teaching simple, but that he makes it *SEEM* simple to the student. A lesson is not taught until it has been learned, and it cannot be learned until it is understood. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the teacher to provide mental food that his pupils can digest, and to explain problems in the clearest and simplest terms.

Another area that the professional service of the teacher is needed, is in the area of guidance and counselling. Historically, three evolving views of counselling have been identified:

- First, as practical advisory service given in a professional capacity to a person who needs help on personal problems. Thus, the counsellor is seen as a specialist who makes prescriptions and recommendations regarding a client’s choices on the basis of an assessment of their aptitudes and

interests;

- ▶ Second, as a process of helping an individual discover and develop his educational, vocational and psychological potentials and thereby to achieve an optimal level of personal satisfaction and social usefulness. Here, the task of the counsellor is to orient the individual towards those opportunities afforded by his environment that can best guarantee the fulfilment of his personal needs and aspirations;
- ▶ Third, as helping the individuals to manage their own affairs, involving the discussion of the individual's problems and the provision of advice by a comparative stranger, whether professionally trained or not.

The *trait-factor theory in counselling* sees the exercise as a highly personalized and individualized assistance to someone in his effort, cognitively to discover his capabilities and the opportunities which exist in school and in vocations. *Behavioural counselling* focuses on the behaviour of the client, with minimal stress on the counsellor. *Developmental counselling* zeroes in on the process of changing behaviour, not just creating insight. However perceived, the counselling process must aim at helping the individual to move toward self-determination and personal freedom.

Every society has values and norms that can be critical in the formulation of curriculum of studies for its schools and in the pedagogy of its school system. The traditional African educational system has some features that can be worked into our curricula today. These features revolve around some basic principles:

- The African child is allowed to grow up with unlimited access to the stimulating world of African music and dance. He does not require much teaching; he observes and falls in line. This becomes a cultural vehicle that teaches the child quite early in life, the beauty of physical activity, teamwork, and group solidarity;
- Traditional African education places greater emphasis on character development. Everyone - parents, teachers, fellow pupils, and community at large - teaches the child to be sociable, honest, courageous, humble, persevering and of good character at all times;
- The educational system caters for abstract reasoning and intellectual training. The proverbs and riddles constitute a formidable intellectual exercise and are used for developing the child's reasoning power and skill in decision making;

- The child is made to appreciate his role as a member of a community which includes children, parents, grand-parents, uncles and aunts, brothers and sisters. Thus, he learns community participation and involvement;
- A lot of importance is attached to vocational training and proper job orientation. In the traditional society, the training runs on the apprenticeship system and is a highly significant way of educating millions of African youth and adults;
- Traditional education is an important vehicle for the perpetuation of society's culture, enabling the child to grow into the cultural heritage of his people (Musaazi, 1986).

Onu (2007) in her paper on multiple intelligences, defined intelligence as the ability to solve problems or fashion products that are of consequence in a particular cultural setting. That is, as long as one can solve a problem that besets him in his culture and produce things that are of value to their culture, he is intelligent. She identifies eight intelligences (from the work of *Gardner, 1999*):

- i) *Verbal/Linguistic Intelligence* responsible for the production of language;
- ii) *Logical/Mathematical Intelligence* often associated with scientific or deductive reasoning;
- iii) *Visual/Spatial Intelligence* which deals with the visual arts navigating the formation of image and picture in one's mind;
- iv) *Bodily/Kinetic Intelligence* which describes the ability to express emotions or ideas using body language;
- v) *Musical/Rhythmic Intelligence* which includes the ability to recognise and use rhythmic and tonal patterns and sounds from the environment;
- vi) *Interpersonal Intelligence* which involves the ability to work in groups as well as the ability to communicate verbally and non-verbally with others;
- vii) *Intra-Personal Intelligence* involving the understanding of oneself, feelings and emotions;
- viii) *Naturalist Intelligence* which is directly related to the recognition and appreciation of the natural world around us.

The implication for the teaching and learning process appears obvious. Only as we design curricula to accommodate the different preferences and biases of our students, will we succeed in the task of effective teaching. Every child is intelligent. What is needed is for each child to be helped to identify which of the

eight intelligences he is endowed with and develop it to the fullest.

Taking a global perspective to our educational challenges, it is pertinent to ponder some issues:

- When the Second World War ended in 1945, Japan a notable world superpower in those days, was left in ruins. The nation's industrial infrastructure, the morale of her people, and the social structures of past generations, smouldered in the ashes of war. In the 1950s, the nation became a by-word for inefficiency and poor craftsmanship. Her industrial products were a joke, her economic prowess less than third rate. Today, barely fifty years later, Japan is the foremost technological and industrial wonder of the developed world. Her management principles, her professional practices, her technological processes and her sense of purpose and direction, have become objects of study for the rest of the world. What is their secret? The Japanese never design structures that are not aimed at solving practical problems on the ground. They have systems that produce results - simple, down-to-earth systems rooted in their cultural and social practices, which address practical problems of the polity. There is much that the Nigerian educational system could learn from the Japanese example.

- American education is highly productive and practical. Their systems are designed to produce cars that work, rockets that go to the moon, and technologies that span centuries and continents. Embedded in their system is a curious and diligent search for creative and innovative answers to questions that boggle the mind. Every phenomenon that has the potential to impact on the wider society, is a subject of study and analysis. Curriculum content therefore becomes fairly flexible, subject to change as the need demands, very dynamic and always growing. Perhaps, again Nigerian education can learn a thing or two from this mind-set.

- What values informed the German educational system, enabling them to rise time after time from the throes of defeat after two world wars to still retain a membership of the top eight economies in the world today? What system of curriculum study and pedagogy enabled Europe to rise from the devastations of war to stand at the head of political and economic governance in the world today? In Singapore, the national motto is: "*Excellence*". A worker who produces a product that does not work loses his job. What system of education is behind this national mind-set? What is

the secret of the Asian Tigers - Korea, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore - that enabled them move from the fringes of economic relevance to the centre-stage of world economy?

We could go on and on, but suffice it to say that there are lessons to focus on as we set about the task of retooling our schools, through passionate teaching and curriculum development to produce the right calibre of graduates that will drive the engine of growth in the economy.

In conclusion, it should be worthwhile to get every teacher to subscribe to what Nze (1999) described as *Code of Ethics for Academic Staff*:

PREAMBLE

Believing in the worth and dignity of each human being, and recognizing the supreme importance of the pursuit of truth, devotion to excellence and the nurture of democratic principles, I hereby solemnly undertake to uphold the following Code of Ethics in the service of my University, as an academic staff:

A. Commitment to the Student

1. I will strive at all times to do the right things to pursue excellence in seeking knowledge and imparting same to my students;
2. I will always strive to maintain a closeness to students, and ever seek to find and employ efficient and creative ways of teaching my students, and supporting them to achieve high levels of academic performance;
3. I shall not unreasonably deny students access to varying points of view;
4. I shall not use professional relationships with students for private advantage.

B. Research

5. I shall unceasingly search for the truth through research and propagate ideas through scholarly methods of objective observation, logical thought and argument in the service of the academic community and society at large;
6. I shall expose academic corruption in research wherever discovered.

C. Community Service

7. I shall to the best of my ability find solutions to societal problems in my area of competence, and participate when asked to do so in any collective University endeavour to find solutions to social, economic and political problems of the nation.

D. Commitment to the Profession

8. I shall always guard University autonomy and academic freedom as the basis of the organization, structure, and management of the University;
9. I shall not in an application for a professional position deliberately make a false claim;
10. I shall not misrepresent my professional qualifications;
11. I shall not assist entry into the profession of a person known to be unqualified in respect of character, education, or other relevant attribute;
12. I shall always make contributions at the Departmental, Faculty and Senate levels that lead to the formulation of good and just policies for the growth and development of the University, and which serve the "*greatest good of the greatest number*".

E. **General**

I shall strive at all times to work in cooperative partnership with the administration in shaping the affairs of the University;

I pledge to uphold these principles ever conscious that the public position I hold as a University teacher is a public trust and that service to my fellow man through the University is a profession of the highest order.

It is only as teachers become what they should be, will the entire educational system be what it ought to be.

IV CONCLUSION

Jesus Christ remains the best example of Teaching with Passion!. His lessons were taught out of deep compassion and love. The best lesson He ever taught was His own Life. Even more than that, His lessons cost Him a great deal; He paid with His own Blood. He inherited a bunch of men who were most difficult to teach and instruct. They could be quite stiff-necked on occasion; He once called them "*faithless and perverse generation*". They failed to catch His vision of the Faith and the Cross, to the extent that He had to rebuke Peter, the leader of the Twelve: "*Get thee behind Me, Satan*". Virtues and godly standards did not even come easily to them; they often argued about personal greatness and selfish ends. Yet at the end the day, He turned them into excellent specimens of manhood, reference point for people in every generation, in character, godly conduct and productive labour. Jesus Christ is your Number 1 Passionate Teacher.

If we are going to discharge our brief in this dispensation, we must be true Christian teachers above else. Thus, the teacher must:

- Have a definite encounter with the Lord Jesus Christ. He should be a man with conviction, who knows what he believes, and why he believes. He has drunk the living water Jesus gives, and has now become a distributor of heaven's life-giving water (Jn. 4:10, 14). He is not just a living soul, but a life-giving spirit (1Cor. 15:45-49).
- See himself as God's apostle to the schools - God's own missionary redeeming young souls and equipping them for heaven. Thus, his primary assignment is the raising of candidates for heaven.
- Minister to his students beyond the call of duty. He reaches out to them in their personal and life-challenging problems. All he does is give God an opportunity to reach the students through him, and fit them for heaven.
- Be ever ready with a word, a smile, a listening ear, and an accommodating attitude to his students.
- Never be indifferent to the lifestyle of his students. He will learn to be happy with them, mourn with them, and seek as much as possible to be part of their lives.
- Expect his reward for this service, not from the government or any public agency, but from God. Since he looks up for his reward, it is not easy to frustrate him or drive him to despair.

Heaven is publishing a vacancy today, for a man or woman who will stand up and be counted. Who will be the teacher with passion in this day and age, shining as stars in a dark and dreary environment? Who? May God bless you as you step forward!!!

Benjamin Chuka Osioma
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