

VIEWING TEACHING AS AN INHERENT MORAL ENTERPRISE AND A PANACEA FOR INDISCIPLINE IN SCHOOLS

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ABSTRACT

This paper focused on viewing teaching as an inherent moral enterprise and a panacea for indiscipline in schools. In the state of nature, men desired power and domination over others hence the emergence of social contract. The modern men cannot afford to renege on social contract. Every society including schools have articulated laws, norms, values, virtues, rules and regulations etc that guide the conduct of its members. In spite of the school rules and regulations, students and staff still indulge in acts of indiscipline such as stealing, lying, bullying, cultism, sexual harassment etc. It was found that teaching enterprise has been inculcating in learners the right types of attitudes. Teaching is always associated with giving worthwhile dispositions and skills such as honesty, fairness, truth-telling, justice, brotherliness, peace, safety, progress and other societally accepted virtues and values. The study concludes that schools as well as society at large would have been overtaken by indiscipline if not for the teaching enterprise that is inherently moral. Teachings have been enhancing social equilibrium and cohesiveness in schools and societies else the world would have been generally chaotic. Based on the findings, it was recommended among other things that teaching should be given a pride of place in societies; teachers should be adequately remunerated; teaching should emphasize respect for the worth and dignity of individuals; stress on the application of moral and spiritual values in interpersonal and human relations.

Keywords: Education, teaching, morality, indiscipline

INTRODUCTION

Education has become a relevant instrument for positive changes in society. Every concept of education, positive as well as normative must have a moral component, in that sense of moral in which it means a concern for the interest or welfare of persons other than the agent himself (Elechi, 2015). In furtherance of the above argument about education, Nyerere (as cited in Elechi 2015) posits that, the purpose of education is to transmit from generation to generation the accumulated wisdom, knowledge, skills, values and attitudes of the purpose... to

enable the young to live in and serve the society and to prepare them for their future membership of the society... it involves the active participation of the young in the maintenance and development of the society (p 93).

The above implies that education which is seen as an institution of the society has a major objective which is the preparation of the young for the future. It follows therefore that one of the important tasks of education is to assist children develop appropriate skills and dispositions to cope with the variety of moral choices they have to make in the complex world of today. Educationists and philosophers, over time believed that the main purpose of education is morality.

Teaching is a goal-oriented moral activity that leads to learning as well as important educational concept, especially to philosophers of education. According to Elekwa, Okai and Okanezi (2015:13), "teaching is a task word like searching or finding that aims at success. When the teacher teaches, he does aim at learning, but he may fail". For Igwe (2008:46) teaching is defined as "the organization of learning". Similarly, Elechi (2015: 95) opines that "education is recognized as a product of learning and learning comes about from teaching. Given that position, the morals embedded in one bear positive relationship with the other".

This means, in other words, that if the aim of teaching is to get people to learn, and by learning they are expected to be educated, there is the presumption that these three concepts (education, teaching and learning) are symbiotically related. Besides, Okoh (2003:73) supported the above contention when he said that "...at the end of the teaching exercise, education takes place. In other words, teaching brings about education."

In schools, acts of indiscipline exist just as crime is indispensable in the larger society. Indiscipline according to Ayorinde (2014:152) is "a collection of social problems none of which is an academic problem. It refers to all acts that violate social norms and values that are operational in a school system". Every society has norms and values that guide the conduct and behaviour of members. According to Abercrombie, Hill and Turner (2000:243) norms are "expectations about appropriate conduct which serve as common guidelines for social action." Closely related to norms in this regards are values.

Calhoun, Light and Keller (1997:93) define values as "deeply held criteria for judging what is good or bad, desirable or undesirable, beautiful or ugly". The above concepts, norm and values are central tenets in the school as an organization. School members (students and staff) from time to time violate the norms. Of course, the norms and values of the school are articulated in the form of rules and regulations. Indiscipline therefore is the violation of the school rules and regulations.

It becomes more worrisome when it is observed that indiscipline in schools such as examination malpractice, stealing, truancy, bullying, lying, arrogance etc. are still being perpetuated. The thrust of this paper therefore is to explain certain concepts such as education, teaching, morality and indiscipline; explicate the inherent moral nature of the teaching enterprise; the role of the teacher in the teaching enterprise; and teaching as moral enterprise and a panacea for indiscipline in schools.

The Concept of Education

Education as a concept is quite broad and cannot be easily pinned down to a single definition. Osokoya (1987:37) defines education as "a continuous process which the society establishes to assist its members to understand the heritage of the past and participate

productively in the future". Education in this case is the leading out and nourishing of in-born traits and potentials of an individual that enables him to face life's challenges as they unfold. The meaning of education is also dependent on individual perception and the issue at stake (Dickson, 1982).

Also, Schultz (as cited Dickson in 1982:14) opines that "education means to develop a person morally and mentally so that he is sensitive to individual and social choices and be able to act on them". Okoh (2003:13) provided three major ways of using the concept of education which include:

1. Education as a process
2. Education as a product
3. Education as a discipline

As a process, education refers to an activity of preserving, developing and transmitting the culture of a people from one generation to another. As a product, education means the overt and covert, implicit or explicit change that should necessarily result from education. Based on this position, education is expected to produce the educated man who is refined in thought and behaviour, equipped with the intellectual and moral endowment to develop his society.

Education as a discipline stands for a body of systematic and organized knowledge, primarily concerned with the development in the teacher habit of critical thinking which will be extended by him to the school children. Furthermore, education is seen as all those experiences of the individual through which knowledge is acquired, the intellect enlightened or the will strengthened (Okafor, 1981).

In addition, Fafunwa (as cited in Aminigo and Nwaokugha 2006:18) defined education as "the process by which a young child or adult develops the abilities and other behaviour forms which are positive or acceptable value to the society in which he lives." It is clear from the foregoing definitions that the main aim of education is to develop the child to understand himself and his environment in such a way that he will be able to contribute positively to the development of the society he finds himself.

To achieve this, Dickson (1982) warns that where education is so structured as to end in the acquisition of facts and figures, growth does not take place and the information acquired tends to pertain to such a superficial level of consciousness and makes the 'education' a danger to himself and society. On the other hand, Plato (as cited in Amaele 2010:29) defined education as "that training which is given by suitable habits to the first instinct of virtue in children when pleasure and pain are rightly implanted in rational souls".

As a moralist, Plato conceived education in terms of moral training. For Kosemani (2002) in the ancient societies of the past, education could be defined as the way people developed and brought to live as useful and peaceful citizens in and outside their immediate environments. The content of the education a citizen received changed gradually as the needs of the society began to change. For this reason, in modern society, education would border, in the view of Kosemani, on three areas which include:

- (1) Meeting society's needs
- (2) Being the means through which the young and old could be changed
- (3) Being the means through which needed social change could be introduced.

Furthermore, Okeke (2002:61) noted that “education aimed at arousing and developing the physical, intellectual and moral states of the young for his active participation in any society in which he finds himself.” While Rosseau (as cited in Amaele 2010), sees education as the development of the individual from within (educere), by interacting with the natural environment with the aim of fitting him properly into the society.

Rosseau’s definition above strengthened the etymological foundation of the word educere, which means “to lead out from within”. In the words of Peters, (as cited in Okoh 2003:17), education could be defined using three criteria as follows:

1. Education implies the transmission of what is worthwhile to those who are committed to it.
2. Education at least rules out some procedures of transmission on grounds that they lack willingness and volunteerism on the part of the learner.
3. Education must involve knowledge and understanding and some kind of cognitive perspectives which are not inert.

Akinpelu (as cited in Elechi 2015:57), posits that any process that could pass educational test must of necessity involve:

- i. A conscious effort to bring about a desirable change
- ii. The change must be intentional, deliberate and purposeful
- iii. The process must result to knowledge and understanding.
- iv. The method of transmission must be morally acceptable.

The definitions stated above, so far, point to the fact that education is a moral concept.

The Concept of Teaching

Teaching in the contemporary era, is seen as an all comers affair and is regarded as whatever any person does to transmit knowledge. Thus, training, indoctrination, drilling, propaganda, conditioning etc. are all regarded as teaching by the layman.

This is why Okoh (2003) opines that teaching differs from other ways of transmitting knowledge because it not only imparts knowledge but transmits knowledge and understanding.

He went further to state that teaching can refer to a profession, an enterprise and the art of teaching. As a profession, it refers to what we do for a living.

As an enterprise, it is a cluster of activities that have the teaching act itself as its centre. These activities according to Okoh, include preparing notes of lesson, marking of attendance register, maintaining discipline in the classroom etc. These activities are inseparably linked with teaching and teaching act itself.

Teaching as the art of teaching, presents the need to give some definitions of teaching. To this end, Okoh defined teaching as a conscious and deliberate effort by a mature or experienced person to impart information, knowledge, skills and so on to an immature or less experienced person with the intention that the latter will learn or come to believe what he is taught on good grounds. He equally advanced that teaching is a deliberate and intentional activity which results in education -Education in the sense that something worthwhile has been rationally transmitted to the learner in a morally acceptable manner.

On his Part, Amaele (2010) asked a question; what activities does a teacher carry out in the classroom that qualify for the name teaching? He added that teaching as a process of educating, entails processes which have an in-built intention of transmitting what is valuable. Hence, Amaele opines, there is a close link between education and teaching.

Smith and Ennis (1961) see teaching as ways of making something known to others, usually in the routine of the school. Teaching is a salient educational concept to philosophers of education. It involves quadric relationship between the teacher, subject matter (content), the student and intentions. The Centre for Teaching (as cited in Elekwa, Okai and Okanezi 2014) describes teaching as a complex multifaceted activity often requiring instruments to juggle multiple tasks and goals simultaneously and flexibly.

Moreso, Udoh (1996) has defined teaching as an attempt to change the behaviour of an individual and aid in the acquisition of skills, abilities, habits and physical competencies, necessary for the functional living in a dynamic environment. While Obiefuna, Okoro and Iwuamadi (2010) define teaching as the interaction of a student and a teacher over a subject. In a formal school system, teaching is a combination of structured processes and procedures for imparting knowledge, skills and attitudes to learners.

The foregoing discussion indicates that teaching is an intentional activity involving the transmission of worthwhile knowledge, skills etc to the learner in a moral manner. Therefore, any act of a teacher that transmits to the learner what is not worthwhile and in a manner not morally acceptable is not teaching.

Morality as a Concept

Morality is a concept which refers to the extent to which something; an action is right or wrong. According to the Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary (1995), morality refers to the principles concerning right and wrong or good and bad behaviour.

It is a particular system of moral principle. To that extent, Aristotle, (as cited in Ofurum 2012:7) puts it that “happiness is the standard of morality”. This implies that man in all his actions should aim at promoting happiness. Ofurum went further to cite the hedonists who opine that pleasure are the moral standard. To them, nature has given man pleasure and pain and that man should aim at pleasure and not pain.

Those actions that produce pleasure are good actions while those that produce pain are bad actions. For the stoics, as Ofurum notes it, the moral standard is right reason. That man lives a moral life if he lives according to reason. The utilitarian on the other hand, believe that moral standard is based on utility, which they refer to actions that promote the greatest amount of good among the greatest number of people.

To them whatever produces pain is evil. It is said that moral standard is duty-duty for the sake of duty. This means in other words, that the best actions from this moral view point are those performed purely out of a sense of duty in reference to the moral law. The above shows that teaching activity which entails the teacher relating with pupils/students must have traits that by all standards will be regarded as morally acceptable, anything else is not teaching (Ofurum, 2012).

Morality is an aspect of social life that is basically the work of an individual in line with the ethics of conduct established collectively through the effort of the society. It is a controversial and diverse term and this diversity has made it impossible for people to come to a compromise on certain moral issues.

It is in the light of this fact that Amaele (2000:72) advanced that “... it is imperative to uphold that morality deals with human behaviour to his fellow human being. Such behaviour

may be acceptable or unacceptable within society. To substantiate his argument, Schofield was cited in Amaele (2000) as stating that:

There is also a suggestion of social criteria because when we talk about moral behaviour being acceptable and immoral behaviour being unacceptable, we think of the acceptance or non-acceptance by society. Society has established standards or norms against which to measure different modes of behaviour to determine their acceptability or otherwise (p 234).

Amaele argued further that two things stand out glaringly about the concept of morality. The first is that human actions are voluntary and responsible. The second is that there are standards by which such conducts can be measured. He then defined morality as principles that guide human behaviour, which stipulates that good must be done and evil must be avoided.

The Concept of Indiscipline

Societies have their standard of behaviour acceptable and peculiar to them. Members of society therefore heed or ensure that their actions or attitudes do not undermine or go below such standard. If any member of the society behaves contrary to the prescribed standard, it is regarded as aberrant behaviour. Indiscipline according to Ayorinde (2014:152) refers to “all acts that violate social norms and values that are operational in a school system”. Explaining further Ayorinde (2014) posits thus: More specifically, in sociology of education the term indiscipline is a school register.

It is a situation-specific word that is appropriate as reference to violation of school rules and regulations, either in or outside school premises...As a term, indiscipline covers all forms of actions and inactions of school members (staff and students) that violate school rules and regulations directly and societal laws indirectly (p 152).

Indiscipline is a collection of social problems devoid of an academic problem. All forms of misbehavior are regarded as indiscipline in school. Sometimes indiscipline is carried out by an individual student or staff. This is called a lone act of indiscipline. Conversely, it is a collective act of indiscipline when a group of students or staff come together to act as a group to violate either school rules or societal laws.

Indiscipline whether a lone act or collective act attracts penalty. Such penalty may be flogging, grass cutting, suspension from school, demotion or expulsion.

The Inherent Moral Nature of the Teaching Enterprise

Teaching as put forward by Okoh (2003:71) is “an intentional activity or goal-oriented activity in which a teacher is fostering or seeking to foster in a learner (who has voluntarily subjected himself/herself to the teacher) worthwhile dispositions/skills by pedagogical methods that are not morally objectionable”.

Directing or influencing these worthwhile dispositions is the teacher. The age long view of successful transfer of knowledge is seen to be inadequate. From the days of Plato down to the modern world of Hirst and Peters, this view of teaching has gained ground (Elechi, 2015). Giving credence to the above, Iheoma (as cited in Elechi 2015) asserts as follows: Our position is that such conception is inadequate because it ignores the moral dimension of teaching epistemologically simplistic in its conception of causality and in its view of teaching as a natural phenomenon as well as vainly seeks to develop an empirical theory which will control teaching practices (p 45).

The foregoing views by Okoh, Elechi and Iheoma, attest to the fact that teaching by nature has a moral component that ensures the achievement of its objectives. As has been said earlier, the driver of the teaching enterprise is the teacher who ensures the transfer of knowledge, skills, values etc. to the learner in a worthwhile or morally acceptable manner. The question then is who is a teacher? In the layman's sense, every adult member of the society is a teacher.

He presumes that parents' instructions or advice is teaching. He also presumes that the cultural transmission from generation to generation especially during the pre-western education (pre-colonial) era was done through teaching, hence for the lay man those adults that facilitated it were regarded as teachers.

Presently, there is another level of ignorance of who a teacher is. This has to do with the erroneous belief that anybody can teach provided he has an academic qualification. This level of ignorance concerns where auxiliary teachers are brought in. Gbamanja (as cited in Elekwa, Okai and Okanezi 2014: 17-18) describe auxiliary teachers aptly as: those persons teaching without any teaching qualification.

This group includes those teaching with or without GCE and university graduate teachers teaching in tertiary institutions but do not possess any teaching qualification. These may even be specialists in specific subjects, but the truth is that though they are qualified, they are not trained teachers.

In contrast to the above, Elekwa et al, are of the view that a teacher is a person who has the registerable professional qualification which enables him to be appointed to impart knowledge in at least one recognizable education institution in the country. For Elechi (2015:96) "a teacher then is a professional who earns his or her professional status."

He added that "he translates knowledge, skills, attitudes and values with certain professional principles." That at every stage of the role of the teacher, there is the imperativeness of morality. Moreso, teaching is a human activity undertaken with regard to other human beings. In that respect, it concerns itself with what is fair, right and just. The relationship of the teacher with his students is at all times and in all ways a moral matter.

Teaching as an Inherent Moral Enterprise and a Panacea for Indiscipline in Schools

Men saw the need to have mutual understanding of moral values which would regulate human transactions and avoid indiscipline and chaos. It is on this premise that interpersonal relationships emphasize honesty, truth-telling, fairness, justice, brotherliness etc as well as values that make for social equilibrium.

The above mentioned moral values have become accepted lifestyle (culture) of most human societies. Culture is the totality of ways of life of a people. Since one of the characteristics of culture is that it is not inherited but learnt, it becomes clear that teaching is not only an inherent moral enterprise but also a panacea for indiscipline. Every curriculum must be based on the culture of the given society.

Teaching therefore transmits the basic ideals of the society. No wonder Okoh (2003:71) posits that teaching is "an intentional activity or goal-oriented activity in which a teacher is fostering or seeking to foster in a learner (who has voluntarily subjected himself/herself to the teacher) worthwhile dispositions/skills by pedagogical methods that are not morally objectionable".

Apart from the above, classroom where teaching and learning takes place is the learners' social environment. It is also during teaching that learners are exposed to hidden curriculum. The child is taught a good measure of morals that make them dissociate from acts of indiscipline in the school.

The foregoing is lent credence by Masqud (as cited in Aminigo n.d: 12) who suggests that "the child's social environment leads him to develop his own structural moral system that reflects the social demands of the society in varying degrees depending upon his level of moral maturity".

Teaching upholds moral values such as peace safety and progress. No teacher would encourage acrimony. Teachers discourage fighting, quarrel, use of abusive words, stealing, lying, truancy, arrogance, examination malpractice, drug abuse, sex offenses, cultism, indecent dressing, injustice, etc. By so doing, teaching is an antidote to acts of indiscipline. A typical example of teaching as an inherent moral enterprise and a panacea for indiscipline is the beatitude.

Furthermore, teaching equips people with the necessary skills to put their moral decisions into practice. Emphasis is laid on the taxonomy of education which is the development of the cognitive domain, affective domain and the psychomotor domain. Teachers encourage learners to bear one another's burden, cause them to imbibe the spirit of sharing, respect the views and feelings of other people etc.

Lastly, teaching as an inherent moral enterprise and panacea for indiscipline in schools is made more obvious in the national policy on education. According to the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2014) the quality of instruction at all levels of education shall be oriented towards inculcating the following values:

- a. Respect for the worth and dignity of the individual;
- b. Faith in man's ability to make rational decisions;
- c. Moral and spiritual principles in interpersonal and human relations;
- d. Shared responsibility for the common good of the society;... (p4).

The Role of the Teacher in the Teaching Enterprise

Role, according to Hargreaves in Egbezor (2002) refers to prescriptions about the behaviour of a person occupying a given position or a set of guidelines which direct the behaviour of the role incumbent or the actor. Role is a concept derived from the literature where the actors in a drama are made to act in certain prescribed ways in order to transmit the message of the drama to the audience efficiently and effectively.

In addition, Atemie and Okaba (as cited in Elekwa, Okai and Okanezi 2014), see a role as the activity performed or a specific task or function of an actor in a social system at any specific time period.

In view of the above, Elekwa et al, quoted Okujagu (1990) who said that the role of the teacher in the classroom is a multi-faceted one. In the classroom, the teacher has two basic sets of roles to fulfill. The first set includes the functions of instructions, socialization and evaluation. The second set is concerned with "facilitating roles" such as motivating pupils, maintaining control, and generally creating a conducive environment for learning to take place. Furthermore, Egbezor (2002), narrowed the role of the teacher to the following:

- (a) Representative of society: inculcates moral precepts;

- (b) Judge: gives marks and ratings;
- (c) Resource: possesses knowledge and skill
- (d) Helper: provides guidance on pupils difficulties
- (e) Referee; Settles disputes among pupils;
- (f) Detective: discovers rule breakers;
- (g) Object of identification: Possess traits which pupils may imitate;
- (h) Supporter: helps pupils to develop confidence in themselves

Egbezor went further to cite Meighan (1986) who opined that the role of the teacher includes encouraging pupils group involvement, allegiance and responsibility; enabling pupils, where necessary, to recognize that their allegiance to societal goals and values comes before personal or family's concerns.

It is clear from the foregoing that teachers make the greatest impact on the children through classroom instructions and play leading role in character modification of the children. Their role therefore affects not only the lives of the children but also affect the community in which the school is located.

Similarly, Elechi (2015), in describing teachers as role models, observes thus: it has been generally recognized that the morality of the teacher may have a considerable impact on the morality of the students.

The teacher is a model for the students' moral development because nearly everything he does in contact with students is of moral significance. It is the teacher's example that gives particular and concrete meaning to values as honesty, fair play, tolerance, consideration for others etc. (p 102).

CONCLUSION

In schools acts of indiscipline is being carried out by either students or staff. The fact that schools have rules and regulations that are only serving for standard of acceptable behaviour or otherwise is understandable.

Teaching is actually enhancing social equilibrium and cohesiveness in schools through the inculcation of right types of values. Thus without teaching with its inherent moral attributes, both schools and the larger society would have been in shambles – because indiscipline which is a collection of social problems would be the order of the day.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It has been established that teaching is intrinsically a moral activity. It is imperative therefore that in order to achieve worthwhile learning, the following should be done:

- i. Teachers should endeavour to show respect for the dignity of the pupils/students they teach.
- ii. Teachers should demonstrate in their actions a high level of integrity.
- iii. They should apply moral principles in their life and all their dealings within and outside the classroom.
- iv. They should be capable of making rational moral judgments
- v. They should be just and fair in their dealings with pupils/students
- vi. They should be capable of settling conflicts between pupils/students amicably
- vii. They should stress on the application of moral and spiritual values in interpersonal and human relations.

viii. Teachers should be adequately remunerated

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