

MANAGING YOUTH CORPS MEMBERS' TEACHING METHODOLOGY IN NIGERIA: ADDRESSING THE DEFICIENCY CONCERNS

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Abstract

Despite that majority of the Youth Corps Members (YCM) are being deployed yearly as teachers across Nigeria, certain stakeholders have called on the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) scheme to stop deploying non-education graduates to schools as teachers. This call was premised on the submission that the non-education graduates do not have the teaching methods required for imparting knowledge to students. It was established in the literature that there is no official collaboration between the NYSC scheme that deploys YCM and the Teachers' Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN) that regulates the teaching profession. Also in related literature, studies have shown the importance of short training as a way of making non-education professionals have basic knowledge of teaching methods. A model was designed in this study showing how collaboration between NYSC and TRCN can be explored to inculcate required teaching methods in the youth corps for better engagement of YCM as teachers. It was recommended among others that the Federal Ministry of Education should be concerned with the development of a short course manual on teaching methodology for the use of YCM.

Keywords: Deficiency concerns, managing youth corps members, Short training, Teaching methods.

Introduction

The National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) scheme is a laudable national integration programme that involves graduate youths' service to their fatherland. The NYSC scheme is about the deployment of Youth Corps Members (YCM) to places of primary assignment for one year. Year in and out, the larger population of the YCM are sent to schools as teachers. Youth Corps members engagement in schools as teachers are

premised on the assumption that they are knowledgeable enough as graduates and should be able to teach basic subjects at the ordinary level of education. However, the concern has been that many of them that are non-education graduates do not have the required teaching method needed to be a teacher. The executive secretary of the Teachers' Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN) Prof. Ajiboye stated that YCM that are non-education graduates should not be deployed to schools as teachers because they lack the required teaching methods (Punch, 2019). This call is not new, as a former Director of Operations of TRCN, Steve Nwokocha, informed the NYSC to stop deployment of non-education YCM because they lack basic knowledge of teaching, and contributes to the mass failure being witnessed in the country in recent years (Premium Times, 2012). As viable as these instructions sound, it seems not to take into consideration the shortage of teachers in schools across the country. It also seems not to have factored in the possibility of adding value to the YCM for the sake of teaching them basic teaching methods that will make them suitable as teachers.

The concerns across Nigeria that warrant the deployment of YCM as teachers and that which suggests their non-suitability as teachers are of two folds. On one hand, there is a deficiency in the required number of teachers needed for the schools, and on the other, the lack of teaching method by the YCM. Udosen and Ekuinam (2016) asserted that about ninety percent of youth corps members are usually deployed compulsorily without consideration to requisite professional training relevant to teaching methodology as should be applicable in primary and secondary schools for their one-year primary assignment.

Although, comprehensive data is not available to show the number of education graduates mobilized by NYSC yearly, however, recourse can be made to the graduation list of a first-generation university in Nigeria. In the year 2019, the University of Ibadan graduated 2,750 students at the first-degree level. Out of this population, 456 finished from the faculty of education (University of Ibadan, 2019). Assuming that all the graduates are of the required 30 years age limit that can serve in the NYSC, it suggests that just 16.58% of graduates for NYSC mobilisation have the basic teaching method to be employed as teachers in their places of primary assignment.

The importance of would-be teachers having the basic teaching methods suggests that there is a gap in the engagement of YCM as

teachers in the short run and ensuring that they have the basic teaching method required. This brings to mind the importance of short training and how it has been used by various organisations to make their employees have the basic knowledge of their functions.

There have been studies conducted to show the efficacy of short training on the teaching methodology of personnel that has not been through a faculty of education (John, Joy, Paul, Javed, Sasidharan and Menon, 2016; Elliott, Skeff and Stratos, 1999; Raiver, Morton, McCulloch, Heyes, yan, 1997). There are also instructional materials designed by countries and organisations to introduce teaching methods as a form of short training to prospective teachers (Makokha and Ongwae, 1997).

There is an adage which says that “do not throw the child away with the bathwater” this sort of fit into the narrative around not engaging the YCM as teachers because the non-education graduates among them do not have the requisite teaching methodology. The gap they help to fill in the shortage of teachers across Nigeria calls for a robust debate on this issue. This study looked through literature to present a position for policy review and a proposed management model for the YCM to have the basic teaching method required to contribute their quota.

Creation and Functioning of National Youth Service Corps

National Youth Service Corps was created on 22 May, 1973 as an avenue for the reconciliation, reconstruction and rebuilding of the nation after the civil war (NYSC, 2017). The scheme was created for the encouragement and expansion of relationships beyond hatred among the youths and the promotion of national integration in Nigeria. The core of the scheme is primarily to inculcate in Nigerian Youths the spirit of selfless service to the community and to emphasize the spirit of oneness and brotherhood of all Nigerians, irrespective of cultural or social background.

After receiving their call-up letters, the YCM reports to their assigned state camps where they are trained both physically and mentally for three weeks mostly by members of the Nigerian military. The mobilization is done in batches A, B, or C, suggesting that youth corps members have some time to prepare for the orientation camp.

The NYSC Mobilisation Department is made up of three divisions which are: Mobilisation, Deployment, and Evaluation and of relevance to the concern of this paper is the mobilisation department. The mobilisation department is saddled with responsibilities of preparing pre and post-mobilisation workshops, time-tables, and drawing-up of the schedule of the briefing of final year students/prospective corps members at their respective institutions. The pre-mobilisation workshop is done to commence the mobilisation process of the service year. At the workshop, the Corps Producing Institutions (CPIs) and other stakeholders interface with the Management of the NYSC on the mobilisation policies, appraise the previous mobilisation exercise and proffer solutions on the way forward (NYSC, 2017).

The pre-mobilisation workshop fits more into the narrative of this study since the focus which has to do with teaching methods of corps members for their suitability for teaching can be addressed and discussed at this level.

NYSC and TRCN Interface

The Corps Mobilisation Department of NYSC scheme is saddled with series of responsibilities. According to NYSC (2017), these include the following:

- i. Coordinating the mobilisation of eligible Nigerian graduates trained locally and abroad for national service.
- ii. Preparation of pre and post-mobilisation workshops.
- iii. Preparation of the mobilisation time-table.
- iv. Drawing-up of the schedule of the briefing of final year students/prospective corps members at their respective institutions.
- v. Processing cases of re-mobilised corps members.
- vi. Liaison with Corps Producing Institutions (CPIs).
- vii. Liaison with NUC, NBTE and JAMB.
- viii. Liaison with professional bodies like Medical and Dental Council of Nigeria (MDCN), Pharmacists Council of Nigeria (PCN), Radiographers Registration Board of Nigeria (RRBN), Medical Rehabilitation Therapist Registration Board of Nigeria, National Veterinary Council of Nigeria (NVCN) and Dental Technologists' Council of Nigeria.

It is obvious from the list of agencies that the mobilisation department of the NYSC scheme liaises with that a very important governmental agency is missing. This agency is the TRCN which is directly in-charge of teachers' certification which is all about teaching methodology. The posting policy of the NYSC covers four key areas. These include Education, Agriculture, Rural Health, and Infrastructure. It is on record that the majority of the YCM are posted as teachers to schools under the education sector. It is then an aberration that the mobilisation department of the NYSC scheme is not in liaison with TRCN.

The concern for ensuring that people involved with teaching students have the requisite teaching methodology brought the debate for quarrying the posting of youth corps as teachers. This portends that there will be a continuous discussion between the TRCN and the NYSC managements. Series of interviews have been granted by the Executive Secretary of TRCN Prof. Ajiboye on this issue showing that there is a concerted effort to proffer solutions to the problem of posting YCM without an education degree. The Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria and National Youth Service Corps have agreed on the modality for posting of corps members without education degrees to teach in schools, this was according to the Registrar, Teachers' Registration Council of Nigeria, Prof. Josiah Ajiboye (Punch, 2019). The registrar however acknowledges that stopping the NYSC from posting corps members to school will leave the gap of teachers' shortage open and that there is the need to fill the vacuum.

Teaching Methods and short training for youth corps members

Teaching methods vary as their importance in the application is helpful to the educational attainment of students. The main reason stakeholders are concerned about YCM serving as teachers is that majority of them are not education graduates and do not have knowledge of teaching methods. Teaching methods are of three variants, Student-Centered, Teacher-Centered, and Teacher-Student Interactive methods.

The Teacher-Centered teaching-learning method suggests that students merely get instructions from the teacher without categorical engagement with the subject being taught (Boud and Feletti, 1999). The Teacher-Centered Method is more theoretical, less practical, and does

not apply activity-based learning (Teo and Wong, 2000). Because the teacher controls the teaching-learning process, the teacher may try maximising the instruction and minimise the time and effort put into the process. This may result in the students losing interest in the teaching-learning process. Efforts at addressing a problem like this suggest that teaching should be done in a way that will ensure that students as the major focus are engaged actively (Zakaria, Chin and Daud, 2010).

Student-Centered Teaching and Learning Method have its focus on the interests, abilities, and needs of the students. This suggests that the teaching-learning process has the teacher as a coach, provoking the students to learn by encouraging them to teach themselves. This is in contrast with the traditional teacher-centered method. The student-centered approach is more prominent in recent times as it promotes interest, analytical research, critical thinking, and enjoyment among students (Hesson and Shad, 2007). According to Lindquist (1995), the student-centered teaching method is regarded as more effective because it does not concentrate the flow of knowledge from the teacher to the student.

Teacher-Student Interactive Method combines both teacher-centered and student-centered approaches. Research evidence on teaching approaches maintains that this teaching method is effective in improving students' academic performance (Damodharan and Rengarajan, 1999).

Depending on the method adopted by the regulatory body in charge of schooling at every stage of education, the teacher/school administrator is expected to comply. It is the responsibility of the teacher to know which teaching method is appropriate for what level of students and which subject/topic. It is a popular dictum that you cannot give what you do not have and as such, a youth corps member that is not an education graduate may not have the requisite teaching method.

This is not to say that a non-education graduate cannot be schooled in the act of teaching methodology, it is just a matter of being exposed to it. It is trite that organisations train their newly employed to acquire certain skills they lack for the efficiency of their performance on the job. Technically, YCM are Federal Governments' employee for the

period of their service year and if they so wish can train them to meet the specific job task expected of them.

Short Training for Teaching Methods: The Empirical Facts

At the workplace, the training presents a good opportunity to broaden the knowledge base of employees. Training can either be for a short or long period, depending on the objective for which such is targeted to achieve. Short training provides a lot of benefits and development to the individual and organisations and it makes the cost and time a worthy investment. The majority of the YCM are employee of the government and are seconded to schools as auxiliary teachers. Except for the education graduates, others do not have the required teaching methods and the concern of stakeholders is that they should not be teaching. This concern can be addressed and solved as empirical studies have suggested.

A study was conducted by Bland and Froberg (1982) where a group of family doctors was exposed to a faculty development programme in family medicine and the result showed improvement. In a study that was conducted by DeWitt, Goldberg and Roberts (1993) to know the impact of teaching skills in medical education seminars on participating doctors, it was discovered that participants' knowledge increased after the seminar.

Steinert, Mann, Centeno, Dolmans, Spencer, Gelula and Prideaux (2006) made a systematic review of faculty development initiatives for medical doctors and the review showed that the participants' attitudes improved due to the interventions and that there was increased motivation and eagerness for teaching.

John, Joy, Paul, Javed, Sasidharan and Menon (2016) conducted a study on the effectiveness of short training in teaching methodology for entry-level medical teachers. The participants reported that they had "learned a lot" and were of the view that "the training would help them to have better performances" when assigned teaching-learning tasks. John et al (2016) concluded that the eight-hour training in teaching methodology given to the entry-level medical doctors in their institute proved effective. The study opined further that all doctors who were called upon to participate in teaching-learning activities will do well with a brief course in teaching methodology before they start involving themselves in teaching. Their study however suggested that

the short training should only be a beginning of efforts to develop their knowledge, motivation to teach and practice and should continue throughout their career

Most of the studies reviewed were carried out on the application of teaching methods for the teaching-learning process by medical doctors. It is more relevant to this study because mostly, those opposed to the deployment of non-education graduates premised their objections on the fact that they do not have the required teaching methodology. The literature gathered here suggests that even medical doctors that were exposed to short training on teaching methodology showed its effectiveness.

Series of teaching methodology reading materials have been designed and made available online. These materials have been made for governments and organisations as a means of intervention for the sake of propagating the knowledge of teaching methodology. The materials have been simplified for short period pieces of training, aimed at making it usable for people that have not been through a faculty of education and those aiming to upgrade. For examples:

Makokha and Ongwae (1997) authored '14 days teaching methodology course trainers' handbook for German Development Service, Kenya (DED). This handbook is a training manual for teaching methodology trainers working with the DED In-service Training Programme for Youth Polytechnics in Kenya.

Handbook for teachers/trainers includes the methodological, didactical, and pedagogical options that can be used in creating Massive Online Open Course (MOOC) (European Personal Branding for Employment, 2016).

The fact that some organisations have made materials available for teaching methodology suggests that the Federal Government of Nigeria can come up with a teaching methodology material suitable for educating NYSC members in a short term. This will help to address the concern of YCM members that do not have the qualification to teach during their service year. The model that has been designed in this paper is a suggestion for ensuring a management procedure for making the NYSC members operational as teachers during their primary assignment.

A Model for Managing Youth Corps Teaching Methodology

The concept of management entails the coordination of different aspects of a process. The deployment of Youth Corps Members (YCM) as teachers is one part and ensuring that they have the required teaching methods to impart knowledge is another. Ensuring that there is a synergy between these two identified aspects of YCM deployment as teachers are important as shown in Figure 1. Ensuring this synergy requires a management procedure that will make the YCM have the required teaching method. This will bring about value-added for the attainment of the objectives of the NYSC scheme.

This model has been designed to align with the mobilisation structure of the NYSC scheme. Since the majority of YCM are deployed to schools as teachers, and their teaching method has become an issue, then the NYSC needs to collaborate with the TRCN. It is expected that the synergy between NYSC and TRCN brings about making of a 'short training' manual on teaching methodology for NYSC members use. The introduction of the manual should be done at the pre and post-mobilisation stages of the NYSC. At the pre-mobilisation stage, the teaching methodology manual should be introduced through an online medium. At the post-mobilisation stage, the teaching methodology should be consolidated during the orientation at the camps and further during their primary assignment. This process in the model is expected to inculcate the required teaching methods in the YCM at least for the period of their service year. It will also improve the teaching methods of graduates that read education courses.

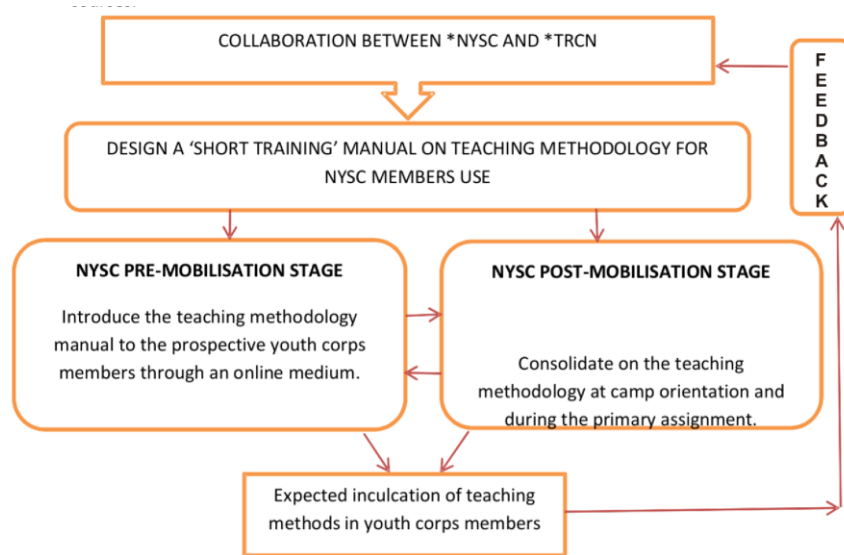


Figure 1: **Model for Managing Youth Corps Teaching Methodology**

* NYSC: National Youth Service Corps

*TRCN: Teachers' Registration Council of Nigeria

Source: Authors' concept, 2021

Conclusion

The majority of the YCM deployed yearly are engaged as teachers in schools with a small fraction of them having an education degree. Some stakeholders have advised that NYSC should stop the deployment of non-education graduates for lack of required teaching methods. However, there is a shortage of teachers across schools in Nigeria and the role played by the deployed YCM has helped in bridging the gap. Studies have shown that professionals that have not been previously exposed to teaching methodology greatly improved at teaching when they were introduced to short training in teaching methods. Although, most YCM end up as teachers due to high rate of unemployment, and there is no established collaboration between TRCN and NYSC. This study called for collaboration between NYSC and TRCN to ensure that the YCM are equipped with the basic knowledge of teaching methods.

Recommendations

Based on the position of this paper, the following recommendations are considered to be relevant:

- There should be an official collaboration between TRCN and NYSC at the mobilisation stage to ensure YCM are introduced to the basics of teaching methods.
- The Federal Ministry of Education should be concerned with the development of short course material on teaching methodology for the use of YCM.
- The YCM should be encouraged to consolidate the teaching methods training all through their primary assignment period.

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