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The Teacher as a Challenge to Himself: Focus On Hendricks Laws

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Abstract: The teacher's job is influenced by two main categories of forces- the internal forces, which he has control over and the external forces which are not within the domain of his control. The paper took a critical look at the internal forces from the point of view of the seven laws of the teacher as postulated by H G Hendricks. The ability of the teacher to comply with these laws poses great challenge to him. The paper is an exposition with ample illustrations on what the teacher must do, why he must do it and how he is to do it in order to overcome or minimize the challenge. Furthermore, the paper recognizes the influence of the external forces which, if not controlled, can inhibit the manifestation of his professionalism. Two of such inhibitors are identified as infrastructure/facilities and teachers' welfare. Recommendations were made on the popularization of Hendricks laws among teachers and control of external inhibitors through provision of adequate school infrastructure and welfare for teachers.

Keywords: Teacher; Challenge; Hendricks laws.

1. Introduction

All over the world, there are some impediments in the educative process. The degree of the impediments varies from country to country. Even the advanced nations of the world (such as the United States) are grappling with some issues in education such as short supply of quality science and mathematics teachers, poor performance in science and mathematics, poor attitude etc (Farley, 2006). Developing nations or what the World Bank (2010) categories as secondary emerging countries such as Malaysia, Argentina, Egypt, Nigeria etc are grappling with educational issues such as infrastructure, curriculum, pedagogy, motivation, skewed teacher-pupils ratio, teacher personality, delayed/denied wages and allowances, enrollment, access and equity (Okoye, 2002) etc. In Nigeria, the issue of enrollment, access and equity led to the policy of Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme in 1999 which the nation is still grappling with.

Scholars and researchers and opinionated commentaries have attempted to provide leeway on these issues but the more efforts are made, the more new issues arise. What perhaps have not attracted much attention are some vital rules the teacher must follow during the interactive session of teaching and learning- something so important that can make or mar the entire goal of education. This vital element in the educative process was identified by Hendricks (1987) when he proposed the seven laws of a teacher viz: The law of the teacher, the law of education, the law of activities, the law of communication, the law of the heart, the law of encouragement and the law of readiness. These seven laws are teacher-related and are focused towards testing the capacity and capability of the teacher to deliver. Through these laws, the teacher is always on his toes, challenging himself on his call to duty.

Educational practitioners seem not to be conversant with these laws and the critical role they play in teaching and learning and education as a whole. There is therefore the need to x-ray these laws with ample illustrations on their applicability. In the remaining sections of the paper, we look at the details of these laws with illustrations and implications for the teacher and school providers. Most of the illustrations are anchored on mathematics at secondary school level.

2. Hendricks Laws Explained (With Illustrations)

Below are the seven laws as proposed by Hendricks (1987) as presented by Samba (2011) and the messages they convey.

Law 1. The Law of the Teacher: If You Stop Growing Today, You Stop Teaching Tomorrow

This law is borne out of the philosophy that man is always asking “how can I be better”? A teacher should see himself as a learner, a student among students, ready to adapt to changes as they come. With this type of attitude, the teacher will rather have his students drink from a running stream than a stagnant pool. The teacher with this attitude is always fresh with knowledge, faithful, available and teachable (Samba, 2011). The behaviour to adopt to achieve this is constancy with reading books, attending workshops, seminars and conferences; knowing his students individually and wishing them well; being friendly, time conscious and yoking himself with like minds to avoid being polluted.

Samba (2011) suggests the following questions that a teacher must ask himself if he is to fulfill law one: What areas of growth in your life in the past year do you think are the most obvious to those you teach?

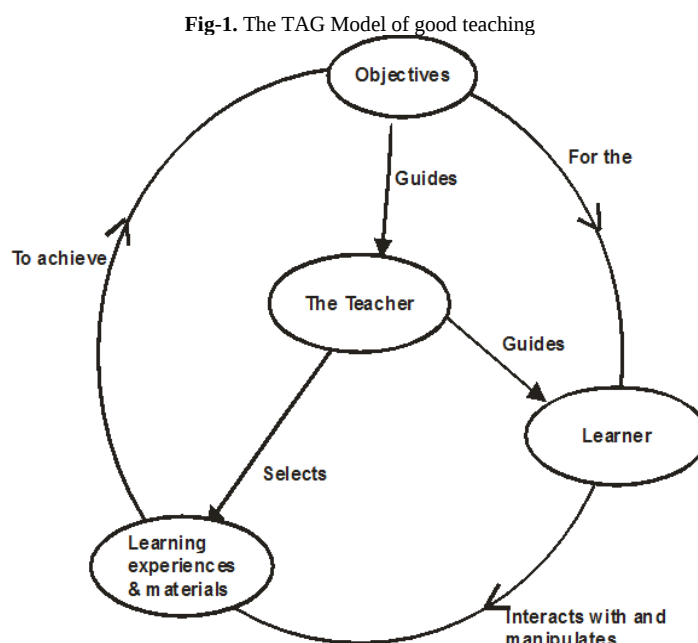
What would you say are the most important ways you have grown in your beliefs about attitude towards teaching?

For each of these marks of a good teacher—faithfulness, availability and teachability, evaluate by asking: what are my strengths? What are my weaknesses? In what ways should I change? (P. 49)

The message of law 1 is in agreement with the submission of Agashi (1997) when he made a case for the need for mathematics teachers to be constantly abreast with the literature of the great men and women of science that have brought the world out of dark ages and strive to emulate their life style through yoking themselves with like minds.

Law 2. The Law of Education: The Way People Learn Determines How You Teach

The pertinent question that conveys the message of this law is: does a teacher fail only because he is deficient in the mastery of subject matter? Understanding of subject matter, the psychology of the learner and right technique to adopt are essential parameters that determine the success or failure of a teacher. Teaching and learning now lay emphasis on constructivism- the movement that stresses the need for the learner to construct knowledge himself, with the teacher serving as a guide. The teacher should see himself as a motivator and stimulator and the student as an investigator and discoverer. The teacher should see himself as a football coach. He is in the field but does not play the game; he only directs the players how to manipulate the ball to score a goal. In the classroom, the goal is the objective of the lesson, the players are the learners and the ball can be likened to the learning materials which the learner interacts with and manipulates to achieve the objectives. Just as the coach gives specific instruction to individual player in a field, the teacher should discover learners that need special instruction. In summary, law 2 can be illustrated diagrammatically in the Teacher as Guide (TAG) model as shown below.



From the figure above, the teacher is seen as linkage between the objectives, learner and learning experiences. The objective of the lesson, contrary to the view of many teachers, is actually for the learner; it only guides the teacher. This is in agreement with the advance organizer model of instruction (Agashi, 2014; Ausubel, 1960).

Law 3. The Law of Activities: Maximum Learning Is Always a Result of Maximum Activities

This law is captured in the TAG model. Activities can only take place if the learner is given the enabling environment to interact with and manipulate the learning experiences and materials. We illustrate with the following:

1. Topic: Proof of the trigonometric identity $\sin^2 x + \cos^2 x = 1$

Activities: Guide the learner to choose any angles, say 30° , 45° , 60° and present results as in the table below

Table-1. Activities to show that $\sin^2 x + \cos^2 x = 1$

Angle x	Sinx	Cosx	$\sin^2 x$	$\cos^2 x$	$\sin^2 x + \cos^2 x$
30°	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{\sqrt{3}}{2}$	$\frac{1}{4}$	$\frac{3}{4}$	1
45°	$\frac{\sqrt{2}}{2}$	$\frac{\sqrt{2}}{2}$	$\frac{2}{4} = \frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{2}{4} = \frac{1}{2}$	1
60°	$\frac{\sqrt{3}}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{3}{4}$	$\frac{1}{4}$	1

By this activity, the teacher leaves the learner to discover themselves. This activity covers laws 2 and 3 simultaneously. No doubt, some may have difficulty; the teacher's role is to meander through the class to give individualized assistance and further guidance.

If the activity method is compared with the traditional method of proof, it is easy to notice that the latter is for the head only while the former is both the head and the entire body as the learner engages his computing devices- a scenario of a constructivist class.

2. Topic: The Formula for the Sum of Internal Angles of N-Sided Polygon

Activities:

- Ask the students to draw polygons with 5, 6, 7, 8 sides
- Ask them to divide each of the polygons into a number of triangles and record the number of triangles in each polygon
- Ask them to observe the pattern that emerges ie the relationship between the sides of the polygons and the number of triangles. The teacher may give hint such as: for 5-sided polygon, there are (5-2) triangles
- Ask the students to present their results as in the table below (from where the required formula emerges)

Table-2. Activities to find the formula for the sum of internal angles of polygon

Number of sides of polygon	Number of triangles	Number of triangles in terms of number of sides of polygon	Sum of angles of triangles = sum of internal angles of polygon
5	3	5-2	(5-2) 180°
6	4	6-2	(6-2) 180°
7	5	7-2	(7-2) 180°
8	6	8-2	(8-2) 180°
N		n-2	(n-2) 180°

Law 4. The Law of Communication: To Truly Impart Information Requires the Building Of Bridges

The emphasis of this law is on the question: "do the learners understand the language and instruction"? This calls for clarity of language and instruction. Once there is ambiguity in the language, information breaks down and learning can hardly take place. The duty of the teacher is to be as clear as possible in instruction and possibly use the mother tongue to communicate if he deems it necessary, especially for the elementary classes. Another question that this law addresses is "is this learning experience/material appropriate for this class"? this question is germane because Agashi (2003) discovered that junior secondary school students are grappling with tasks in geometry higher than their mental levels. Building of bridges in this sense requires careful selection of content/learning materials commensurate with the maturational level of learners.

Law 5. The Law of The Heart: Teaching That Imparts Is Not Head To Head, But Heart To Heart, Involving the Totality of Human Personality- One's Intellect, Emotion and Will

The chief emphasis of this law is on empathy based on the recognition of individual differences, appreciating the difficulty of the less gifted and creating time to help out even outside the classroom schedule. The phrase "you good for nothing student" or "you block headed idiot" or "stop wasting my time if you cant follow" or "why are you in this class"?, is not for a good teacher.

The good teacher should at the same time be conscious of the fact that much as he wants to carry along the less gifted, the highly gifted are in a hurry to move. Attending to the less gifted should not dominate the whole time for the lesson. This is where creating time for such category of learners outside the class becomes an appropriate measure.

Law 6. The Law of Encouragement: Teaching Tends To Be Most Effective When the Learner Is Properly Motivated

As a professional, the teacher must have been sufficiently or reasonably groomed in educational psychology which main emphasis is the behaviour of learners and the variables that stimulate maximum learning. Motivation is

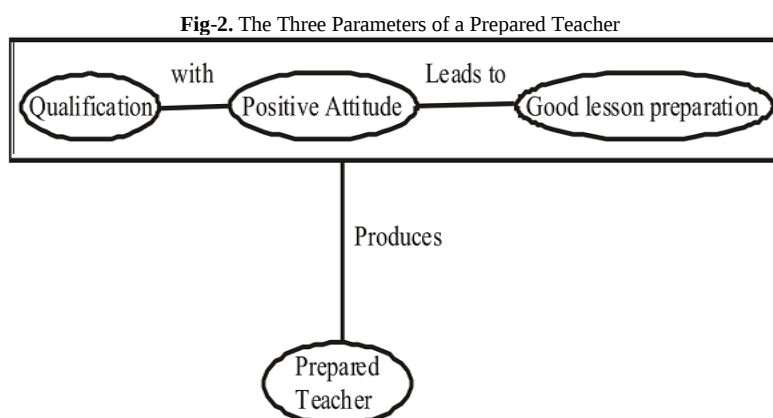
the word! The good teacher now has to apply the theories of motivation he learnt in various psychology courses to the classroom setting. It is now not a matter of the grades made in those courses; it is a matter of applicability. The degree of the giftedness of the learner is not important; what is very important here is the manageability such that the interest of all is secured.

Law 7. The Law of Readiness: The Teaching-Learning Process Will Be Most Effective When both Student and Teacher Are Adequately Prepared

When is a learner ready? We make recourse to educational psychology which teaches that readiness of a learner is a function of maturation. Of course, this is why there is graduation in classes just as there is graduation in curriculum. Ideally, a JSS 1 student is mentally not ready for a JSS 3 tasks and a JSS 3 student will normally find a JSS 1 tasks rather boring. But some studies (Agashi, 2003) have shown that JSS 1 students have geometric tasks that ought to be for JSS 3 in the mathematics curriculum. This kind of situation poses a challenge to the mathematics teacher in the area of sequencing of the tasks in the curriculum. Experience shows that restructuring of the curriculum or the scheme of work in terms of sequencing is one area of the profession where many teachers are found wanting.. The law of readiness compels the teacher to restructure the curriculum in tune with the maturational levels of learners. By doing this, the readiness of the learners may be guaranteed.

On the part of the teacher, when is he ready for the job? After undergoing a course of study and certificated, do we say the teacher is ready for the job? There is more to it. A teacher may have a PhD in his field but he is not ready for a teaching job. It has something to do with attitude. Ask a student in a college of education what he would like to do after school and you will be shocked to hear “I want to work in Oil Company or Bank”. Yet, this student, *abinitio*, is very well informed that he is being trained as a basic education teacher.

The manner the teaching profession is being relegated in terms of condition of service is greatly militating against the positive attitude for the job. The issue of attitude leads to readiness or lack of it in terms of lesson preparation. A teacher with the requisite qualification and positive attitude will adequately prepare to deliver. This cannot be said of a teacher with poor attitude. Adequate preparation includes appropriate choice of instructional strategy and materials. In summary the readiness or preparedness of a teacher involves the presence of and interaction between three vital parameters, namely qualification, positive attitude and adequate preparation as graphically illustrated below.



3. Hendricks Laws: Some Identified Inhibitors/Implications

Hendricks laws are all within the domain of the teacher and presuppose that other work variables which are external or not within the domain of the teacher are put in place. But in reality, this is not the case especially in our clime. Two of such variables which the authors consider as critical inhibitors of Hendricks laws in Nigeria are: infrastructure/facilities and condition of service.

We find ourselves in a situation where both the learner and teacher operate under degrading environment called schools with no building, no seats, no chalk board, and no instructional aids even in this era when ICT should be in vogue. There is no teacher, no matter how well prepared that can achieve much under such a setting. Compounding the issue of infrastructure is the hydra-headed menace of irregular or split payment of salary and allowances. In many states in Nigeria teachers are owed months of arrears of salaries. Work allowances have become great privileges. These are issues the teacher cannot take care of but can supply blood to the veins of Hendricks laws. No matter the extent the teacher strives to comply with these laws, these issues, if not addressed, are great instrument of destruction to the school system in Nigeria.

4. Conclusion

The teacher may be seen to be operating under two main forces- the internal and the external. The internal forces are summed up in Hendricks laws and the external forces are the operating environment. The major thrust of

the foregoing discourse has been on the internal forces on the teacher- what, why and how he should go about his professional calling. In doing this, ample illustrations have been provided as useful guide. The discourse, however, did not lose sight of the fact that the environment under which the teacher operates can serve as inhibitors to the full manifestation of his professionalism. A teacher is at his optimum under the complementary roles of these forces.

5. Recommendations

In view of the submission in the foregoing paragraphs, the following recommendations are suggested:

1. Popularization of the laws of Hendricks among teachers. There is the need to organize workshops, seminars and conferences (such as this by the Institute of Education, University of Nigeria) aimed at popularizing Hendricks laws among secondary school teachers. Ministries of education in conjunction with professional bodies such as MAN, STAN can collaborate in the organization of the popularization campaign. Each state can do this at zonal levels and in batches so as to benefit all teachers and to reduce overcrowding
2. All factors external to the teacher but which can impede his performance such as infrastructure/facilities, welfare etc should be given the desired and required priority by school providers. No matter how prepared a teacher is, these factors, if not appropriately addressed, can render the teacher ineffective and inefficient.

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