

## **PROBLEM OF CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTERS AND CLASSROOM LEARNING ENVIRONMENT IN A DEVELOPING COUNTRY.**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Nigeria is a developing country that share from the problem of the curriculum because of its similarity it has with those of the colonial system. It is felt that the child is being educated outside her/his culture rather than in the child's own environment. The paper touches on the tasks faced by the curriculum developers, problem of implementation and the role of university education in bringing about desired improvement.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Countries south of the Sahara have been influenced by the Colonial System of Education because it has always been the desire of foreign powers to impose her own culture on its colony. Nigeria, a former British colony is no exception. At the UNESCO meeting in 1962 a consensus was reached that secondary school education should be adapted to suite the needs and realities of the countries of Africa (Fafunwa,1980) Despite the proclamation, it is unfortunate to observe that in the twenty-first century, African education has experienced very minor changes in both the contents and structure of her curriculum. It is felt that the child is getting educated outside his/her environment and this may lead to the child's inability to gain sufficiently from her/his culture.

The learning environment of the child includes her/his immediate cultural environment that encompasses proficiency in the use of the local language, understanding of the folk

songs and expression of skill in dance and inability to value the overall community total way of life.

UNESCO (1977) puts it that Education is the birthright of every body. People therefore deserve the right to acquisition of knowledge, life skills, good health, provision of good portable water, etc, Unfortunately this is not so in the developing countries of the world. African states are still plagued by illiteracy and Nigeria with a population of over a hundred and twenty million people still has about 43% illiterates wallowing in poverty. It is known that education whether it is informal or non-formal is a deliberate and systematic attempt to effect changes in the behaviour of a targeted people. Such changes are observable in the skills acquired, attitudes exhibited, and competencies. As Agun (2003) explained a change in behaviour would occur only if the set pattern or behaviour to acquire and change expected is predetermined and that learning the expected facts and information needs presentation. Agun, (2003) states further that an enabling environment must be prepared and selected instructional materials that are found relevant to facilitate the expected change in behaviour must be provided. As observed, learning especially takes places everywhere and not only in a confined four-walls of school classroom.

### **objective**

The paper discusses the tasks of the curriculum developers, highlights the problem of implementation and classroom environment as it affects education in a developing country. Suggestions were provided on workable curriculum for the developing world. designed to be followed rigidly. An attempt is made to define the concept of curriculum.

## **CURRICULUM DEFINED**

In a broad perspective, the curriculum addresses the programme of studies, the list of courses and its description, course content, course outlines etc. It refers to the subjects that are taught by a school, college, higher institutions of learning etc. And it also describes the things that are studied in a particular subject. (Longman dictionary of contemporary English 2001) The curriculum is further describe as the overall learning programme in a school and it covers the time-tabled lessons, sports, social activities; all other facilities and structures that are put in place that helps in the total development of learners that attend it. Dada (1999) define curriculum as planned learning experiences provided by schools to assist the pupils in attaining the designated learning outcomes to the best of their ability. Put simply, curriculum as used in a wide sense cover the various educational activities through which the content is conveyed as well as materials used and methods employed (Ochs MTH)

## **CHILD PREPARATION FOR SCHOOL EDUCATION**

During the early years, the child learns the basic skills of living from parents; family members and neighbors. It is upon the experience that the child gains form the home environment that he/she eventually builds upon during the formal school age. It can be said that the child's habits, attitudes to life and ideas are already formed before he/she experiences the formal schooling. It is also expected that the child already has the control of his/her body physically, developed creative urges, and a language to express the self. The child has ideas about his/her environment and has made social contact with other people. The pre school learning prepares the child for the primary school curriculum. The

early years school learning is a continuity of the home experience, hence no rigid curriculum is required other than train the child for good health habit, sing nursery rhymes; make the child learn through creative responses and play with the child. The early years learning provides basis for the child drawings as psychologists could make meaning out of the child's expression to understand the child. However this activity is not on the schools curriculum. The Nigerian child rather than being taught in the local language of the people has to learn to communicate in English because it happens to be the lingua franca. To make any progress, the child is forced to learn the foreign language at the expense of the language of the local environment. Although the National Policy statement of Nigeria (2004) has a proviso that early learning should be done in the child's immediate language of her/his environment, this policy is being put aside in favour of the foreign English language as evidence has shown. The kindergarten KG schools prefer to use English to impress parents. The problem is that a large percentage of learners are being slowed down as they often fail to conceptualize meanings of words presented to them in the foreign language.

A carry over of the problem is mass failure and mass cheating in English language examinations as learners do not have the grasp of the foreign language. Since English is a compulsory prerequisite to getting admitted into tertiary institutions inability to pass at credit level has led to examination malpractice, as some students would want to pass at all costs. In the year 2000, 65% passed English, 2001; 82% passed, in 2002, about 74% passed, but in the year 2003, the pass level dropped to 60%. (Ojerinde,2004) From the problems highlighted, there is need for the problem to be addressed, being the concern of parents and the teacher/ learner, the curriculum developers have work to do.

## **TASKS OF CURRICULUM DEVELOPER.**

The curriculum planner usually comprises a pool of experts from different fields. Amongst them are economists, politicians, social scientists and specialist in education, and etc, The tasks of the curriculum developers are enormous and they include: translating aims into workable objectives; defining what subjects should be taught in school, determine the length of school year, and prescribe the age at which different subject could be learned etc. As would be observed, the curriculum is a very important factor to the successful development of any nation. This is so because it is the products of the school that will eventually constitute the manpower of a nation.

The questions that the curriculum planners and developers seek to answer in attempt to fulfil the criterion of relevance revolves around the purposes of education that schools intend to attain; the educational experiences to be provided such that purposes would be attained; the ways by which educational experiences would be effectively organized and how to determine their attainment. (Tyler, 1949 in Ajala, 2002) It is considered that the imported curriculum and their objectives reflected simply the imperialists intentions that are directed to the attainment of the of the 4RS – reading, writing, arithmetic and religion (Fafunwa, 1974, Babarinde, 2002) Provision of relevant answer to the above questions and planning to meet the goal is one of the tasks of the curriculum developers.

The curriculum seen or unseen plays a central role in the determination of what should be learned. Where the curriculum is haphazardly implemented, there is bound to be long time problems to put right. Where a faulty curriculum gets implemented, it very often will have negative effect on the socioeconomic and political climate of such a nation for a very long time. Agun (1996) commented that the problem of the developing countries

especially is the rush to implement projects. This may be a reason for the slow development of our education. The curriculum planners are not excluded from the rush.

Over the years, reports of educational reforms have been found to have negative effects on the curriculum implementers. One reason for this is the disregard for teachers. Teachers are always left out of the curriculum planning, whereas it is the teachers especially those at the lower levels of the educational system that would implement the curricula. Teachers very often need training/retraining for knowledge updating with the current changes. It is training and retraining that can make them to become effective implementers. Retraining has not always been given to teachers and as implementers they are often seen to be rigid to change. Since new changes without adequate training would make them not only inefficient teachers' it also affect their attitude to the implementation of new curriculum. This may be one of the reasons reason for not welcoming change (Gramdy 1997)

In the same vein, it is the implementers that can provide needed experience concerning the problems in the field that curriculum planner require. Since they are always left out, problems are compounded at the point of implementation.

The teachers are implementers of the curriculum in classrooms and sometimes provision of structured material are made available through them to learners so that she/he could go on self-learning. The curriculum planners saddle teachers with great responsibility for explaining the materials and structuring learning activities that they are ill prepare for.

The alarming rate at which people are becoming impoverished is a cause for concern. Whether it is HIV/AIDS infection or infant mortality or literacy, they all contribute to the

deplorable state of affairs in Africa. A way of bringing changes is through education that does not alienate the child from her/his cultural environment. Sound education is therefore considered as a measure to reduce poverty and this should be given in the child's own language.

It is disheartening to note that the curriculum planners do not really include such vital socio-cultural issues as HIV-AIDS control, mortality rates, literacy and personal developmental (survival) strategy as general school teaching subjects. This is a serious omission. Huge investment has been commissioned into Iron and Steel industries in Nigeria rather than education most of which has failed. The vexing problem that generates in Africa is the rush into the implementation of projects. What emerges from lack of patience especially in implementation of innovative programme is failure.

(Agun and Imogie, 1988)

Nigeria as far back as 1984 operates the 6 – 3 – 3 – 4 system of Education. The school going child spends six years at the elementary or primary school, three years in the junior and the last three years in the senior secondary school class. A learner who gains admission to tertiary institution offering degree programme spends another four years getting educated.

One problem that becomes glaring is that the first three years of education at the junior secondary school level as the planners put it is terminal for those who could not go further. Base on this assumption, plans were made to equip learners with basic skills that would empower dropouts. Equipment purchased for their training but without teachers to use the machines to teach deserving learners is a problem not only to curriculum developers but teachers and the students that form the core beneficiary are also affected

negatively. The investments thus made in expensive machines, equipment and materials become wasted as they rot away in workshops in several schools.

### **STAGES OF CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT**

Agun (2003) describe the four main stages involved in the development of a curriculum. They are curriculum determination, curriculum development/construction, curriculum implementation and curriculum evaluation. Generally, curriculum determination is based on goals that reflect the objectives of institutions. Where as the statement of goals is design to meet the needs of the society as influenced by the socio-politico-economic and culture of the people. The curriculum should normally take care of the need of the learner whose behaviour is being modified in order to meet the goals specified. The curriculum documents are produced at the curriculum development stage. The activity involves clear statement of objectives in terms of learners' behaviour. The objectives are also related to the goals of of a particular level of education.

### **CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT AND DEUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY**

Imogie (1988) on educational technology and curriculum development expressed the view that the main concern of the discipline in the general area of curriculum development tends to bring improvement in the quality of learning experiences and instruction. Stating further, the author put it that educational technology is also interested in the methods and strategies for planning, designing and developing a new curriculum. Also of interest to educational technology are the strategies involved in successful dissemination, diffusion and adoption/ adaptation of a new curriculum. The author presents the sub area of specialization of curriculum development as curriculum innovations, Programmed Learning, Instructional Design, Computer Education,



Educational Broadcasting, Audiovisual Services or Production of Instructional materials.

There is also Photography and Cinematography.

Considering the various needs of the professional teacher, educational technology focus for a long time has been directed at production of effective teachers.

The student teachers are trained to acquire the skill and adequate academic competency such that would make them function when they graduate. Some of the techniques involved in bringing about improvement included micro teaching simulation game interaction, analysis and computer programmed designs.

### **PROBLEM OF IMPLEMENTERS**

Education is the aggregate of all the process by means of which a person develops abilities, attitudes and other forms of positive behaviour and positive values in the society in which he/she lives. Education is also viewed as a transformation process during which the future of any society is shaped through the instruction of the citizens so that they may learn. It is the schools/institutions that serve as the hub of the whole transformation process. It is also the school that provides the opportunity for teacher to carry out his/her duties to learners.

The teachers' role is changing very rapidly from the old fountain to knowledge when he/she served as the leader, moralist and preacher of conformity to the new role as Manager, Administrator, Guidance and Counselor and a mediator to the numerous learners that surround him/her in the environment. The teacher is saddled with burden of instructing learner of various interests, age different aspirations and values. To function in his/her new position, the instruction that is provided for learners' consumption are planned and applied based on the knowledge and principles of instruction.

For the teacher to effectively perform his/her function as implementers of the curriculum, it is expected that he/she have competency in the processes involved in communication and learning the knowledge of contents and subject matter are essential to the success of the management of learners and classroom procedures. The ability to write instructional objective is of paramount importance. Aside the problems of the relative constant changes of the curriculum of studies that he/she does not have input, a sound knowledge of how to use instructional materials to successfully teach becomes very important. He/she is also expected to be competent in selecting resources base on criteria such that it meets the specific instructional objectives.

At the end of learning event, the need to evaluate the total teaching and learning has to be done. The teacher should evaluate the self, the learner and the total environment against the learner instructional objectives. How to effectively carry out the process is the problem of the implementers if no training has been given them.

### **CLASSROOM LEARNING ENVIRONMENT**

The eighteen-century curriculum gulf is very much around in classrooms in developing countries Instructional presentation, consideration of age and ability of children is still being used to determine what should and should not be taught to the child. Younger children are excluded from participation in scientific, artistic and literary explorations even when the children can happily engage in the activity. Streaming and segregation of pupils according to ability as presented by learners on a first contact have not been totally removed from schools practices (Boucher). It is felt that limiting learners' due to age and ability should be done with by implementers of the curriculum. For now, teachers have to manage the fifty to seventy five pairs of eyes as result of

knowledge and population explosion. Under this circumstance, effective communication with the learner in the classroom is expected to be difficult more so when the grasp of a foreign language is involved. The attention that learners' need will also be limited, learners may become unruly, exhibit inattention and loose interest in learning.

The duty of the teacher as facilitator of learning designer and Instructional implementers become difficult. Learner participation in the teaching learning process becomes passive because they misperceive concepts being taught in classroom most of the time in foreign language. The stated problems are left for the teacher to solve.

### **UNIVERSITY EDUCATION**

The fall in standard of Nigerian university education is a problem ascribed to the curriculum developers. The reason is not far fetched. Since the foundation of education in Nigeria is tailored towards the west, quality curriculum content has been far removed from African culture. This is one reason for the decline in standard of Nigeria education. (Richard Akinjide, 2001; Afe Babalola, 2000; Pai Obanya 1999; James Ajala; 1986; Babs Fafunwa, 1983) The problems of learners has been traced to the foundation that learner received at the kindergarten level where learners have been taught through irrelevant curriculum. Babarinde (2002) reports that Nigerian cultural values have suffered in the hands of western oriented formal education, the author advocates for inclusion in to the curriculum relevant indigenous values that would lead to integration.

The traditional function of university education is teaching. Scholars seclude the self from the society as they engaged in teaching students. Research was for pleasure with no relevance to mundane affairs (Audu and Biobaku 1976) Today, universities cannot

succeed without being in partnership with the community that gives it its existence. The 'ivory tower' concept in Nigeria especially means under development because government hardly meet the huge resources that are needed to successfully run and maintain the demand of her education at the university level. Nigeria paints the case study of problems of the developing countries of the world. Whereas illiteracy, diseases poverty are problems to be solved by universities, they are poorly funded.

While the developed world has opportunity for speculative research, the developing universities are yet to permeate the society that would provide the raw materials. The universities are charged with provision of solution and uplift the socio economy of Africa.

## **CONCLUSION**

The three major scientific attitudes of mind are curiosity, manipulative ability and freedom from restriction. The curriculum that are design with the above input in mind will not be far from achieving her set goal. The education level of people is reflected in their attitudes, knowledge and skills. Nursery education is geared towards exercises, it is therefore necessary to approach the curriculum development of the early learner with activities such as story telling of heroes, birds, use of folk songs and practical play activities should be utilize in motivating them to learn so that there will be a continuity of learning with language of the local environment as acquired from home.

Curriculum planners may have to ask questions such as Who do we teach? What we Shall teach? Who will do the teaching? These questions will provide a very strong basis for review of the curriculum. The child should however not be educated out of his environment in the early years. The Education should be geared to the needs of the

learner and times

The Early Greeks, Romans and Reformation periods focus attention on totality of the individual learner and his environment. Plato, Aristotle, Comenius, Pestrelozzi, Bramed Dewey and Sidney Hook and several other philosophers in their own way have found That learning should not only be child centred, his/her education should be within the child's culture.

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

It is of necessity to relate the curriculum to the needs of the child and the society. The child should also be taught using the immediate language of her/his environment.

Diversification of the curriculum studies will be essential in order to be able to make provision for the aptitude of all learners. The curriculum is also expected to take care of the intellectual, sociological, economic and physical needs of learners. The plan of the curriculum for higher levels of education should take care that the head, heart and hand are fully involved in the cause of learning. (Reactivity energy)

It was suggested that the curriculum of studies be design to accommodate subjects like agriculture, Fine Arts and Crafts, Trades, Home Economics Technical Drawing, Commercial Subjects and ICT relevance to all learners, adults and community members

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