

## **SCHOOL CURRICULUM: ROLE OF TEACHERS AS IMPLEMENTERS.**

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### ***Abstract***

*Effort has been made in this paper to critically look at the teacher in relation to what happen in school. The quality of education in any system and at any level is dependent on the quality of the curriculum. A curriculum is planned, developed, and implemented according to the needs and goals of the society. Ugwu (2008) views a curriculum as containing all the experiences/activities (co-curricular activities) provided under the auspices of school to bring about a change in the learner in the desired direction. The overall aim of implementing a curriculum is to bring about scientific literacy, inculcate desirable attitude and culture in the learners within a nation. The teacher is therefore responsible for effective delivery of planned instructions and conduction of continuous assessments of learners to determine the progress, success, and achievements in school, thereby implementing the curriculum. She uses different teaching strategies and teaching materials to deliver the lessons. This paper recommends that government should conduct seminars and workshops for teachers, to educate and refresh their knowledge on curriculum processes, changes and how to implement them.*

### **Introduction**

Curriculum is a vital instrument with which the school educates the young and adults in the society. Ajewole, Nzewi and Aganga (2009) quoting Odunusi (1999) stressed that the quality of education in any system and at any level is dependent on the quality of the curriculum. According to them, a curriculum is planned, developed, and implemented according to the needs and goals of the nation or society. Curriculum as a concept has different meanings for different educationists. Some people look at the term curriculum as the totality of what teacher and pupils do at school while others have other different views. According to Oforah (2009), the curriculum is the mechanism through which the educational system inculcates into the learner, the knowledge, skills, and attitudes, which the society has prescribed. This is where culture

and curriculum meet since the culture of a group is an integral part of what is imbibed by the learner through the curriculum. Curriculum consists of purposes, contents, teaching methods, instructional materials, and evaluation of educational programmes. All programmes are planned so that the students will subsequently attain certain educational ends and objectives. Curriculum changes overtime and it is a continuous process (Akanbi, 2000). Indeed, educationists have tried to define the curriculum based on their own perception of education. Curriculum is the content, the process of learning and inculcation of educational values. Planning and developing the curriculum should be a continuous process and evaluated constantly. Osuwa (2005) believed that curriculum must face changes as a result of the demands of cultural revival, economic,

socio-political changes, commerce-industrial, explosion of knowledge and rapid technological advancement of the world. School curricula prescribe a nation's educational standards for all level of the educational systems and are used to train the manpower of the nation. Hence, in Nigeria there are curricula for pre-primary, Universal Basic Education (UBE), secondary, tertiary, teacher education, etc. According to Wokocha (2007), the school or school system exists because of the curriculum. Therefore, considering the crucial functions of the curriculum at any level of the educational system, its effective implementation is essential in order to bring about meaningful, fruitful and productive learning among learners with the aim of producing them as reliable manpower to drive other economic sectors of the nation Ibifiri (2012). Effective implementation of a curriculum can be viewed as a panacea to tasks and global challenges facing the educational system in particular and the nation in general. An effective and dynamic curriculum that serves its students and supports its teaching faculty must be continually reviewed to determine its quality and how students perform with it (Adikwu, Ogunkunle and Mbelede, 2008).

#### **Organizations of curriculum**

There are another group of curriculum theorists who perceive the curriculum from different dimensions and depending on their focus. These scholars prefer to refer to these as organizations of curriculum, which include:

##### **The core curriculum**

The core curriculum could be seen as the skills and knowledge generally accepted as fundamental or basic to the education of all children and youths (Lee, 1991). A major problem here is deciding on how much to

include in the core curriculum package. Another problem is that what is relevant and essential today and needs to be integrated into the school core curriculum may not be relevant in ten years time.

##### **Subject-centred curriculum**

This is the oldest pattern of curriculum organization. Here the curriculum is structured into compartments of organized knowledge. The scope of the subject-centred curriculum is determined by the range of subject considered worth of inclusion in the school time table. It is unique in that it accepts the subjects as existing in a hierarchy or order of importance. Mkpa (1997:233) opined that the value or degree of importance accorded to each subject depends very much on a nation's value system, or socio-economic priorities. It is advantageous because teachers find it easy to teach the subject-centred curriculum and they do this in a way they themselves were taught.

##### **Activity centred curriculum or experience-based curriculum.**

This is known as the experience-based curriculum. Its main characteristics are its interest in child growth through visible active experience. The content of this type of curriculum is selected with the learner's felt needs and interests in mind (Yunusa, 2000). The major task of the teacher working with this curriculum is to identify the learners' interest and assist them in the selection of most significant ones for study.

##### **Child-Centred Curriculum.**

This type of curriculum is based on the assumptions that a worthwhile curriculum is sorely constructed by reference to the needs, wants and interests of individual child. The problems created immediately by this assumption include:

- What are the child's real needs?

- How are these needs determined?

### **Hidden curriculum**

It refers to unofficial prescribed learning from various sources in and outside the school, which affects the total learning experiences of the child with the context of the school. Ugwu (2008) viewed it as all the experiences activities (co-curricular) provided under the auspices of school to bring about a change in the learner in the desired direction.

### **Characteristics of a good curriculum.**

According to Yunusa (2000), a good curriculum must have three basic characteristics:

- (a) It must have objectives based on the needs of the child, subject, and society.
- (b) It must be flexible to meet the changing needs of the child, subject and society and
- (c) it must be evaluated constantly

The characteristics of a good curriculum, according to Gana (1996) are;

- objectives
- functionality
- flexibility
- relevance and
- evaluation.
- ✓ **Statement of objectives:** Without doubt, statement of objective is an important part of a good curriculum. In stating an objective, the learners' needs, level of development and interests should be considered. The society, the peoples occupation, their religion, norms and values should be considered.
- ✓ **Functionality:** A good curriculum must be workable, practicable, and feasible. The curriculum must be stated in clear and understandable terms. It should be acceptable to the

parties concerned and be able to succeed (given the human and economic resources available).

- ✓ **Flexibility:** A good curriculum must be capable of adapting to the needs of learners and the society. Since no society is static, it must be able to change as the society changes.
- ✓ **Relevance:** A curriculum should emphasize those aspects that will be of benefit to the learners and the society; that is, it must address the needs of the learner and the society.
- ✓ **Evaluation:** The curriculum should be subject to evaluation; therefore, it is important for the objectives to be stated in such a way that they can be evaluated.

### **Curriculum planning and development**

The conceptual problems of curriculum development are part of definition complexities or ambiguities that beset the instrument known as curriculum. Ezeife (1992) and Denga (1991) used curriculum development and curriculum planning interchangeably to describe the process of building up curriculum design. Mkpa (1987) stated that curriculum planning and constitution is the decision making process in which the emphasis is to determine the nature, organization or orientation, of curriculum design. From the foregoing, one easily sees that even though the two terms are at times used interchangeably in curriculum literature, curriculum planning is more embracing and broader concept than curriculum development. According to Ofarah (2009), the main objective of curriculum planning and development is to fashion out a programme of

education for a society, which will foster worthwhile ideas and values of the society, in addition to enabling the society to progressively attain its social, economic, political goals and other needs and goals. These other needs and goals include meeting the educational needs of children of the society by assisting and guiding them to acquire relevant aspects of its culture and general life style.

### **Teacher's role in curriculum development.**

It is a common knowledge that teaching is an exclusive job of a teacher. Even the teachers themselves don't dispute this. But it should be known that the teachers task go beyond the task of designing and directing the learning of children in a classroom setting. She has other important tasks that contribute very much realizing the goal of education. One of these tasks is her fair participation in curriculum planning and development. She has to fully involve in all phases of curriculum planning and development. The teacher will be responsible to a greater extent for the educational experience which result from a planned curriculum, hence her involvement in planning processes. It is the efforts of the teacher that curriculum which has been designed in a society depends on for success in terms of leading to the appropriate ends of education in the society. This emphasizes that the teacher who determines what actually is to be learned and largely controls the learning experiences that go on in the classroom. The teachers plans instruction for the students on daily basis as well as over a

long period of time. She uses a variety of teaching methods and strategies to deliver the services needed by the learners. Ibifiri (2012) suggested that learning materials are very crucial in developing knowledge, skills and attitudes in the learners, and such materials should be developed from the local environment and used appropriately in the delivering of meaningful lessons to the learners. Apart from planning within the classroom, many activities can be planned to take place outside the classroom. The activities belong to co-curricular activities. They are activities approved by the school and adjudged as potentially rich in contributing to the learners overall development. Sports and games, clubs and societies, excursions and fieldwork contribute much to the physical, emotional and psychological adjustment of the learners. The participation of the teacher in planning these activities introduces good quality in them, enriches the activities and make them more worthwhile Mkpa (1997). The learners come into the classroom with variety of problems that impair learning. These problems range from psychological, social, health to academic. It is the teacher who diagnoses these problems with the hope of solving them through research findings. The information obtained from her diagnoses will be utilized in planning instruction.

### **Curriculum implementation**

Curriculum implementation is a phase in the curriculum process. It is the practical or instructional phase of the process. It is largely the classroom effort of the staff and the students of a school

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in putting into operation the planned curriculum. In other words, it is the task of translating the curriculum document or concepts into operating curriculum by the combined efforts of the students, teachers, government, and the society (Mkpa, 1997). Nnadi (2010) viewed curriculum implementation as the real and practical application of theory into practice in such a way that the overt outcome is noticed through the performance of learners in the classroom. The teacher strives to adopt the appropriate teaching methods backed by suitable materials to guide students learning. The student in turn will be actively involved in the interaction process with learning activities. The implementation stage is so important that if it is bypassed, all efforts expended in the planning process will be useless. Also, without proper implementation, evaluation will not be carried out and guiding the students learning will be difficult. The success and failure of the implementation agenda rests squarely on the teacher, for she brings the learners on a face to face encounter with all the activities. Offoma (1994) advised that teachers should plan their lessons well and adopt appropriate teaching models so as to set up appropriate learning opportunities for learners. According to her, one of the popular teaching models is that developed by Robert Glaser in 1962. This model consists of instructional procedures and performance assessment. The model is fully adopted in Nigeria schools.

### **Teacher's task in curriculum implementation**

Encyclopedia Britannica Library (2011) described a teacher as one who teaches or whose occupation is to instruct. The professional teacher is expected to give useful instruction to his/her learners so as to educate them properly for the benefit of their nation or society. It has been said in various ways that the teacher is a facilitator, manager and organizer of learning activities. She goes about these through various strategies. These include, counselling the learner, use of instructional materials, classroom management, evaluating instructional programmes, etc. Guidance and counselling is an essential aspect of the teachers task. The school population has more of teenagers who needed a lot of guidance to understand themselves and cope with the academic work in the school and other pressures outside the school. They need to be advised on good study habit, dangers of unhealthy association with peers of the opposite sex, especially in the area of numerous killer diseases, respect for elders and wise use of time. By this, the teacher implements the hidden curriculum. Instructional materials are very essential for curriculum implementation. It is the duty of the teacher to produce and utilize them, even if improvised. They aid their teaching task in the classroom especially concretizing abstract ideas and concepts. They enhance learning and save her from too much talking. The students must be encouraged to participate effectively in the production and use of materials. An environment conducive to learning makes teaching to

be successful. A resourceful teacher should be capable of managing the class very well. The class is usually made up of various individuals – high achievers and low achievers, extroverts and introverts (Adikwu, Ogunkunle and Mbelede, 2008). With good class management, the interest of every learner is accommodated and discipline is maintained. The fast and slow learners must not be allowed to suffer undue advantages and disadvantages. Substantiating on the duties of a teacher, Ikeobi (2010) opined that a teacher is the one who organizes the interactions between the subject and the objects – the learner and the learning materials. According to him, the teacher assists the learner as he/she negotiates meaning of an object, idea, event or concept, ensuring that equipments and materials are properly used by the learner to achieve the expected objective or purpose.

According to him, negotiating and constructing (or reconstructing) are best achieved or facilitated through concrete experiences derived from subject-object interaction by the teacher in the society. Good instructional programmes should lead to the attainment of well-defined objectives. At the end of the teaching, evaluation (formative or summative) is made to determine to what extent the objectives have been attained. The teacher has to evaluate properly to reveal the extent the implemented curriculum has been understood. The evaluation must be comprehensive in scope as to effectively measure a wide range of possible learning objectives in cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains (Abugu, 2009).

### **Curriculum evaluation**

Evaluation is essential in the provision of information for the sake of facilitating decision making at various stages of curriculum development. It implies the selection of criteria and the collection of data analysis. According to Abugu (2009), curriculum evaluation may be seen as a systematic process of determining the extent to which curriculum activities are achieved by schools. Evaluation is very decisive so that the curriculum achieves its objectives. With evaluation, amendments or major changes can be done in time, when there is need by making corrections. It determines how well the procedures have achieved the set objectives.

### **Types of evaluation**

Osuwa (2005) pointed out, that there are two types of evaluation procedures; namely, formative and summative evaluations. Formative evaluation is usually undertaken during the process of curriculum development. The results from this type of evaluation are used as feedback into the system so as to improve the curriculum or programme that is being designed. According to him summative evaluation is the evaluation of the whole curriculum after it has been fully developed. It measures the effectiveness of total curriculum. The student performance, the quality of teacher and processes and strategies used by the teacher are evaluated to give a final judgment on the usefulness of the programme. It takes the form of quizzes, texts, term paper report, personal observation of students' class contribution, projects and annual examination (Abugu, 2009).

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