

RESTRUCTURING THE WORKFORCE EDUCATION CURRICULA FOR MITIGATING EMERGING GLOBAL CHALLENGES

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Abstract

No academic institution can exist without a functional curriculum. Curriculum is an indispensable instrument of instruction and learning with specific goals, contents, plan, strategies, measurements and resources showing the sequential flow of information and academic activities. However, various global challenges hampers the implementation of Education curriculum. Using the method of critical analysis, the researcher discovers that global challenges comprises of the Corona virus outbreak, environmental degradation, population explosion etc. Again, there is poor incapacitation in successful implementation of curriculum due to certain challenges. Therefore there is need to restructure the workforce education curriculum components to alleviate the global challenges.

Keywords: Curriculum, Education, Global challenges.

Introduction

Education is the instrument for societal transformation of the people. It is one of the most important tool for development and advancement in the society. It is also a vehicle for transferring values, entire, knowledge and experience that make for proper moulding and adjustment of an individual to his dynamic environment. All these cannot be achieved without the help of laudable objectives through the use of the curriculum.

The curriculum contains the aspirations, goals, objectives of an Education system. It is a kind of guide that navigates the teaching and learning of an academic institution. There is an emergence of an unprecedented Corona virus pandemic that disrupts the global activities as well as population explosion, environment degradation, HIV/AIDS, Drug Abuse, unemployment and different insurgencies. Therefore, It is prerequisite to restructure the curriculum components to mitigate these global challenges.

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The Definition of Curriculum

Many definitions have been proposed for the curriculum. Curriculum is a course of study to embrace the total spectrum of content, resources, materials and method of teaching through which the purposes of education are achieved (Wasagu, 2000).

Brubacher (1969) referred to curriculum as the ground which pupils and teachers cover in order to reach the goal of education. In other words, it can be regarded as a total experience with which the school deals with educating young people. That is all the experiences both curricular and extra-curricular which children pass through to become an educated person. Wheeler (1969) defined it as the planned experiences offered to the learner under the guidance of the school.

Fafumera (1974) saw it as the whole of the educative process, that is, the total environment in which education takes place. In other words, the total environment in which education takes place; that is, the child, and the teacher the subject, the content, the method, the physical and psychological environment. Hass (1980) defined curriculum as all the experiences that individual learners have in a programme of education whose purpose is to achieve broad goals and related specific objectives which is planned in terms of a frame work of theory and research or past or present professional practice. As a process, curriculum can be seen as the development of educational experience and activities which will achieve for the pupils and all members of society some predetermined objectives.

A school cannot exist without a curriculum. Since teachers use the set curricula to assess students, they ensure that whatever is prepared for the learners will enable them to be articulate and fully comprehend what is being taught. Curriculum in education is simply defined as the academic content taught in schools and learning institutions. A curriculum is also defined as the courses and programs offered in schools. Finally, Curriculum sometimes changes depending on global events or the status quo.

Components in Curriculum

According to Susilo (2008) there are some components in new Curriculum. They are the objectives, teaching materials, teaching learning process, and assessment and evaluation.

a. The Objective

The simple definition given from Buba P.B & Adama M.M (2010), the term “objectives” refers to what the teacher want the students able to do as the result of learning outcomes

b. Teaching Material

One measure which is used to make the process of teaching and learning effective is related to selecting and using of materials. Thus, the teacher should provide the students’ preferable text aligned with the curriculum.

c. Teaching and Learning Process

It is undeniable that teachers are often seen as the agent largely responsible for students’ success in teaching and learning process as what argued by Cooper (1990). A professional English teacher is a teacher who can maintain a high level of students’ involvement and whose students can reach the goal of teaching learning process.

d. Assessment and Evaluation

The last component of curriculum is assessment and evaluation. The importance of evaluation is supported by Nunan (1992) states that no curriculum model would be complete without an evaluation component.

Importance of Curriculum

The type of curriculum used could have a positive or negative effect on the students and society at large. It is vital that all internal and external factors are considered before the ideal curriculum is set. The following are reasons why the curriculum is important:

- It helps teachers and instructors deliver quality content that is properly arranged. With a set curriculum, one is sure that the education the children receive is of value and will positively impact the learner.
- It aids in the economy of the state: Curriculum development offers possible solutions to complexities and problems facing a nation. Political, economic, social, and socio-economic issues can all be solved by the answers provided by the curricula.
- The curriculum encourages innovation: This especially happens in universities, colleges, and institutions of higher learning. Colleges which have curricular courses which are relevant in global markets attract foreign students who help in innovation and problem-solving.
- Administrators, teachers, and students are able to follow a detailed structure, which helps them to easily tackle their tasks and successfully complete the course. The curriculum prepares students for the next chapter in life; whether higher education or a job. They are also able to sharpen their crafts and improve on their skills.
- It helps in the recognition and preservation of the nation’s identity. A country which wants to be identified as the tourism hub in the region will restructure their curricular to achieve that.

- It determines educational direction including the decision of the type of society people want to live and serve in. It determines the principles and procedures which will help educators in selecting and arranging instructional programmes. It concerns itself with the application of the chosen principles and determines what changes have been brought about.

Challenges of Curriculum Restructuring in Nigerian Education System

According to N.E.R.D.C (1999) some of the teething curriculum issues in Nigerian educational system include the following:

- The issue of reference of the curriculum to the goals, aspirations and needs of the society have remained largely unresolved.
- Curriculum content is continually expanding and becoming overloaded as a result of additions and integration of new materials.
- The interests and needs of learners and of the society at large are changing with times forcing the curriculum also to adopt changes.
- Curriculum review, revision and adaptation are lagging behind and need to be considered as priorities.
- Integration and infusion of global issues and concerns such as HIV/AIDS, environmental degradation, drug abuse and population explosion, into the curriculum continue to pose serious challenges to curriculum developers, as well as to school textbook writers and publishers in Nigeria.
- Large class sizes and overcrowded school time tables pose serious problems to curriculum implementation in Nigeria.
- The possibilities of learning without teachers loom higher in our educational system today.
- The quantity and quality of teachers produced over years have fallen short of national expectations and needs.
- Curriculum assessment and evaluation are bedevilled by massive examination malpractices and fraud, aided by such domestic trauma as drug abuse and cultism in our schools.
- Teachers are faced with an ever-growing variety of subject matter contents, skills techniques, machinery and equipments, information and communication technology (ICT), for which the teachers are ill-prepared.
- Government, education administrators and Teachers require help to successfully mediate the new curricula, the new attitude towards learning the new technologies. (Nggada, A. J., 2006).

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Solutions to Problems of Curriculum Restructuring

The following recommendations are made:

- The government should provide equipment, workshop machines, and other resources needed for effective implementation of educational curricular in schools.
- Schools should de-emphasize theoretical teaching and embrace practical method of teaching for skill acquisition, self-reliance and general development of the society.
- Government at all levels should aim at creating an enabling environment to facilitate teaching and learning.

- The government and other agencies should join hands to restructure the curriculum to accommodate prevailing global challenges. For example, there is incessant unemployment in Nigeria. The curriculum should provide programs on self employment.
- On the issue of Corona virus outbreak, the government should introduce online programs and provide technologies and platforms to enhance it's study. There should be implementation of online courses into the curriculum. Online resources, the internet as well as variety communication tools should be provided.
- Nigerian society must ensure that the language of the curricula is easy for interpretation and implementation by teachers. The curricula should be relevant and reflect the dynamism of the larger society.
- The Nigerian society must be prepared for better funding of education to guarantee adequate infrastructure, school materials, supply of equipments to the laboratories and workshops
- Government at all levels should ensure that adequate and qualified subject teachers are recruited and posted to schools.

Steps to Curriculum change in Education

The procedure for redesigning the existing curriculum is made up of five stages which includes:

- **Stage I:** It begins with the existing system i.e., the existing educational system, curriculum or societal conditions in the light of prevailing situations. Such a review will then lead to the next stage being problem identification, whereby the curriculum planner identifies problems inherent in the existing system, curriculum or society. The problems to be identified should be those, which pertain to the curriculum or those problems which the revised educational system should be able to solve. The third step is the formation of the curriculum development term for the purpose of drawing up the curriculum.
- **Stage II:** The curriculum development term determines the global. These are the very broad purpose of the curriculum which are broken down into simpler purpose, yields the specific objectives pertaining to the various school subjects.
- **Stage III:** This stage involves the determination of criteria for content selection and organization. The criteria already examined are applied at this stage in selection and organization of content. The instructional materials comes up next. Based on already established criteria. The textbooks or reading materials are developed and other teaching, learning resources associated with the attainment of the various instructional objectives are prepared. Lastly, teachers who should implement the instructional materials are given appropriate orientation to acquaint them with the demands of the instructional material.

The People Involved in Curriculum Restructuring in Nigeria

- **Federal Government:** The ministry of Education is one in charge of education affairs and administration. They are the ones responsible curriculum planning on national level.
- **Teachers:** In Nigeria, teachers are made to implement the curriculum and are not much involved in the development process. However teachers should participate fully in curriculum development process which will give them confidence in the implementation process and also they know their students better and they know the weakness of their students. According to Brown and et al (1982) the curriculum can be a great success or a dismal failure depending on teachers. They are the person who alone can make the curriculum design achieve what it

was design to achieve. If they are dedicated, hard-working and imaginative they can enliven what would other wise be dull and lifeless.

- **Students:** They should be included in curriculum restructuring so that their interest could be included and protected. The learner is the central focus in curriculum planning and implementation; both the subject and object without whom the curriculum does not exist.
- **Parents:** In Nigeria where many people or parents are illiterate not much is got from this group in curriculum planning, restructuring and implementation.
- **Employers of Labour:** Ministries, banks and other private manufacturing companies, the needs should be considered in planning the curriculum so that the required professionals are not lacking in the society.
- **Trade Union/Pressure Groups:** Trade unions like Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) Academic Staff of Polytechnics (AUUP), College of Education Academic Staff Union (COESU) and Nigeria Union of Teachers (NUT) who will be directly involved in the implementation need to be involved.
- **National Organizations:** In Nigeria national bodies like the Federal Ministry of Education, Joint Administration and Matriculation Board (JAMB) the West African Examination Council (WAEC), National Examination Council Organization (NECO) National Universities Commission (NUC), Universities, Colleges of Education, Polytechnics etc. all help to draw up National Policies on Education syllabi and examinations for use within the country because most examinations in Nigeria are of Federal nature.

Nigerian Education System

Since the introduction of the Senior School Certificate in 1989, the Nigerian primary and secondary education system consists of 6 years of primary education for children, 3 years of junior secondary education and 3 years of senior secondary education and 4 years of University Education. This is called a 6-3-3-4 system.

Primary and secondary education

Primary Education: Primary education lasts 6 years and culminates in the First School Leaving Certificate.

Junior and Senior Secondary Education

After 3 years of Junior Secondary School, the Basic Education Certificate (previously known as the Junior School Certificate) is awarded. It is issued by the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) and State Governments. After 3 years of Senior Secondary Education the (West African) Senior School Certificate is awarded. Since 1989 the Senior School Certificate has been issued by the West African Examinations Council (WAEC), and since 1999 by the National Examinations Council (NECO) as well to grant access to higher education.⁹⁵

Higher education

Higher Institution comprises of universities, Polytechnics, Institutions of technology, Colleges of Education and Professional Institutions. It is usually 4 years and more depending on the course of study.

The Global challenges

The Corona Virus pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic, also known as the coronavirus pandemic, is an ongoing global pandemic of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). The novel virus was first identified in the Chinese city of Wuhan in December 2019; a lockdown in Wuhan and other cities in surrounding Hubei failed to contain the outbreak, and it quickly spread to other parts of mainland China and around the world. COVID-19 symptoms range from none to life-threatening. Severe illness is more likely in elderly patients and those with certain underlying medical conditions. Transmission of COVID-19 occurs when people breathe in air contaminated by droplets and small airborne particles. The risk of breathing these in is highest when people are in close proximity, but the virus can transmit over longer distances, particularly indoors and in poorly ventilated areas. Transmission can also occur, rarely, via contaminated surfaces or fluids. This is one of the major global challenges that have severely affected education system of the whole world. Online programs and e- learning should be included on the curriculum to ensure continuity of Education in a COVID-prone society.

Environmental degradation

Environmental degradation is the deterioration in environmental quality from ambient concentrations of pollutants and other activities and processes such as improper land use and natural disasters. Environmental degradation is the deterioration of the environment through depletion of resources such as quality of air, water and soil; the destruction of ecosystems; habitat destruction; the extinction of wildlife; and pollution. Deforestation, biodiversity, ozone depletion; acid rain is one of the components of environmental degradation. This should be included in the curriculum to educate the students on the dangerous activities of such acts the environment and ways to improve it.

Population explosion

Population explosion refers to the number of people that live in an area. It is a major issue for developing countries. The government is not taking proper measures to control this problem. Population explosion is one the major global challenges posing challenges. It is important to notify the populace on the dangers of over population.

Unemployment

Unemployment is a very trivial issue affecting the whole globe especially the developing countries. Unemployment is a term referring to individuals who are employable and actively seeking a job but are unable to find a job. The curriculum should include programs on job creations, self employment skills etc.

Gender Inequality

Gender inequality is the social phenomenon in which men and women are not treated equally. The treatment may arise from distinctions regarding biology, psychology, or cultural norms prevalent in the society. Some of these distinctions are empirically grounded, while others appear to be social constructs. This occurs mainly when a particular gender are considered important than the other. This should be included in the curriculum to educate students on the need to avoid uneven segregation and discrimination.

Conclusion

It is obviously clear that no society can function without education and no academic institution can perform well without a functional curriculum. The 21st century is characterized by a society where things are changing in such an exponential pace and education. Therefore, the curriculum should provide the skills, knowledge and information to cope with this astronomical pace of change . To achieve this, Education curriculum must be restructured to be responsive to the demands of these global challenges and changes.

The content of academic institution's programmes must be changed to reflect the changing society in order to prepare the students who are employable, adaptable, resourceful, flexible and equipped with basic skills and knowledge that will enable them to take advantage of globalization and what the 21st century has to offer.

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