

## CREATIVITY AND INVENTIONS IN CURRICULUM PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

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### **Abstract**

This paper examines the concept of creativity which refers to the ability to use a skill and imagination to produce new ideas or work. Creativity has to do with the skill and ability to produce new things or ideas. While invention refers to a thing or idea that has been invented, the emergence of new ideas in curriculum planning and implementation is referred to as an innovation. Innovation in curriculum therefore refer to changes, or the introduction of novel factors perceived as new by a given school community. The paper also reviews the process of curriculum innovation and reasons for curriculum innovation. Innovative issues in Nigerian education have also been highlighted in the paper. Emergent curriculum issues which require innovation in Nigerian education have also been discussed. These focuses mostly on teachers implementing the curriculum in the classrooms, suggestions and solutions to major problems in curriculum planning and implementation were also given in this paper.

According to Oxford Advanced learners dictionary by Hornby (2010), creativity refers to the ability to use a skill and imagination to produce new ideas or works. It has to do with the skill and ability to produce new things especially a work of art or new ideas. While invention refers to a thing or idea that has been invented or the ability to have new and interesting ideas. Thus

when people talk of creativity and inventions in curriculum planning they are referring to the emergence of new ideas in curriculum planning and implementation. These new ideas in curriculum planning and implementations are referred to as innovations in curriculum.

Innovations are useful in any educational system and in human

experience in general. Agun (1984) noted that education like other human organizations and institutions introduces or is forced to introduce changes as new ideas and information about man and his environment emerge, beliefs and situations change, so also new practices, approaches and materials are developed. Innovations are important in education and in curriculum because they are man's means of survival in a rapidly changing environment. In the context of education, curriculum and curriculum implementation, some innovations have evolved and more innovations will continue to evolve since education and curriculum are dynamic and always in a state of change.

Before moving further we have to understand what curriculum innovation is. Innovation originates from a Latin word innovation which stand for something newly introduced or the act of innovating. To innovate means to make changes or to renew. This is concerned with something new, or the act of making a change or new arrangement in the curriculum. Innovation and change have everything in common. They are both talking about something new or better to some extent (Nggada, 2006).

Unriuh and Alexander (1974) viewed innovation in general as the introduction of a novel factor, perceived as new by a given school community, supported by a driving force, and implemented as a practical advance that deviates from established or traditional forms, Miles (1964) define innovation as a deliberate,

novel and specific change which is thought to be more efficacious in accomplishing the goals of a system. To Miles innovation is often willed and planned for. It does not occur spontaneously and haphazardly. When there is deliberate effort to improve any practice in respect of some desired objectives, one can conclude that innovation is being conceived.

Chauhan (1979), also noted that innovation in education is to create or evolve ideas which could be in the aspect of goals and objectives of education, content, learning experiences, curriculum materials and evaluation. What motivates innovation is the desire to have something, that is better or preferable and something that will improve an existing situation. What should be borne in mind is that innovation entails the introduction of novel ideas and practices in any one part of the curriculum or in different parts of the curriculum.

### **Process of Curriculum Innovation**

Curriculum innovation or change can be considered as an on-going process that can result from constant evaluation of any existing curriculum. The process of curriculum innovation follows certain steps:

1. Identification of the area that needs change and then agreement on the need for change to take place. This will involve the innovator and those concerned with the system to observe and study activities in the school and the

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society. From this study, acts that do not satisfy the needs of the learner, school and society need to be identified and discarded. In this situation, suggestions for change will be made and agreement on the area that needs change will be reached.

2. Identification of direction of change:- this means thinking out new objective which implies having one or more new practices/innovations that will most probably meet the identified needs. It is at this stage that better alternatives are proposed to replace old ideas requiring change.

3. Organization of workshops where by relevant curriculum materials are produced and training of teachers and other personnel on innovative practices or alternatives that will soon be introduced.

4. Field Testing and evaluation of new practices or alternatives. This involves what is regarded as experimental try out or field testing of innovative ideas with a pilot group similar to the group that will eventually use the new experimental try out or field testing and any defect detected from the innovative ideas need to be corrected.

5. Dissemination and adoption of the innovation. If the new practices or alternatives tried out in step 4 turn out to be successful, such new practices or alternatives will therefore be

disseminated to schools to be adopted and put into operation on a larger scale.

6. Evaluation:- As the new practices or alternatives are being operationalised, they will be subjected to constant evaluation so as to establish to what extent they are achieving expected results or the desired outcome.

### **Reasons for Innovations in the Curriculum**

There are certain reasons why the curriculum must have innovations to meet the changing needs of the society which is dynamic in nature.

(a) **Social Change or Change in Social Order:** The school system exists in a society and the curriculum is an instrument for the education of individuals in the society for their own good and the good of the society. The school curriculum is geared to transmit to individuals the beliefs, values, aspirations and ideals of the society. As noted by Smith, Stanley and Shores (1957), the curriculum is interwoven with the social order that sustains it. It is a known fact that the beliefs, values, aspirations and ideals of a given society change with time. It is also a known fact that curriculum is dynamic and not static. Therefore, for any curriculum to be effective it must change and reflect the changes in societal values, aspirations and ideals of any given society to be effective. In any given society, once there is any major dissatisfaction with an aspect of the

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curriculum or the entire curriculum in use, the need for change or innovation arises. The dissatisfaction may be with the curriculum goals and objectives, content, learning experiences/instructional methods, curriculum materials, evaluation systems or with the entire curriculum package. For any change in societal values, ideals, beliefs and aspirations of the society which are reflected in the curriculum. Obviously curriculum objectives, content learning experiences and teaching methods will also be affected.

(b) **Dynamic Nature of Knowledge:** It has been widely acknowledged that knowledge also is not static but rather it is dynamic, growing and ever changing. The extent of change or expansion in knowledge particularly in the science has reached a stage of knowledge explosion. Because of constant researches in knowledge, some aspects of knowledge in some subjects have become obsolete. As one of the chief functions of education is to expose individuals to worthy and authentic knowledge, then changes in knowledge should essentially be reflected in the curriculum. It is these changes that make it necessary that curriculum innovations will always emerge.

(c) **Increase in Facilities that Improve Teaching and Learning:-** with advances in technology, a lot of educational media that can aid teaching and learning have been developed.

Many hard ware and soft ware media have been developed, so also are different learning packages. It will very much be in place that whenever there are new facilities that can enhance and promote learning some curriculum innovations could be evolved. This could be in terms of providing better learning experiences that will involve much of pupil activity and practical experience.

(d) **Research Findings in Respect of how Learning Occurs:** various researches in education, in psychology of learning and intellectual development among others have revealed some new insights into how learning occurs. The research findings have had much influence on instructional methods and techniques in teaching-learning situations with much emphasis on discovery mode of teaching-learning particularly in the sciences. It is therefore expected that occasionally the need for some curriculum innovations will arise to take care of relevant research findings.

**Nigerian National Policy on Education and Innovative Elements**

(1) Governments intention to make provision in teacher training institutions for student teachers who want to specialize in preparing education to do so.

(2) The use of mother tongue or language of the immediate community

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as medium of instruction for pre-primary education.

(3) Intention to use mother tongue or language of immediate community as medium of instruction at the initial stage of primary education (primary 1-3) and then English at later stages of primary.

(4) Study of the language of immediate community or mother tongue and any of three major languages in Nigeria which include Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba.

(5) Abolition of first school leaving certificate examination and issuance of primary leaving certificate by headmaster of individual schools based on continuous assessment of pupils and not on the results of a single final examination.

(6) Conversion of secondary schools from a five year to a 6 year course and the inclusion of technical, commercial and vocational courses in addition to other academic courses so as to make senior secondary school learners immediately employable, which is functional education.

(7) The abolition of sixth form (that is High-School certificate (HSC) course and restructuring of courses from 3 years to 4 years degree course pattern to suit the six year secondary school system.

(8) The educational assessment and evaluation in the school system should not be based on final examinations alone but continuous assessment of the progress of the individuals which should form 40% of the score. JSS III leaving school certificate is to be later based on continuous assessment. However, the final secondary school leaving certificate is to be based on a combination of results of a national examination from (West African Examination Council (WAEC) or National Examinations Council (NECO). Forty percent of continuous assessment should form part of the result. Tertiary Institutions are also expected to incorporate elements of continuous assessment in the final grade of graduates.

(9) Intention to liberalize access to higher education for anyone who can benefit from it through universities or correspondence courses or through the open university or part-time and work study programmes.

(10) Provision of adult and non formal education and special education.

**Emergent Curriculum Issues for Innovation in Nigerian Education**

According to NERDC (1999) the following are the teething curriculum issues in Nigerian Educational system which need innovations.

(a) The issue of reference of the curriculum to the goals, objectives and

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aspirations and needs of the society have remained largely unresolved.

(b) Curriculum content is continually expanding and becoming overloaded as a result of additional and integration of new materials e.g. Civic education.

(c) The interest and needs of learners and of the society at large are changing with times forcing the curriculum to adopt changes to meet with the needs of learners.

(d) Curriculum review, revision and adaptation are lagging behind and need to be considered as priorities.

(e) Integration and infusion of global issues and concerns as HIV/AIDs, environmental degradation, drug abuse and population explosion into the curriculum continues to pose serious challenges to curriculum development as well as to school text book writers and publishers in Nigeria.

(f) Large class sizes and overcrowded school time table pose serious problems to curriculum implementation.

(g) The possibilities of learning without teachers' loan higher in our educational system today as teachers are in short supply.

(h) The quantity and quality of teachers produced over the years have

fallen short of National expectation and needs.

(i) Curriculum assessment and evaluation are bedeviled by massive examination malpractices and fraud, aided by such domestic trauma as drug abuse and cultism in our schools.

(j) Teachers are faced with an ever growing variety of subject matter contents, skills techniques, machinery and equipment, information and communication technology (ICT) for which the teachers are ill-prepared.

(k) Teachers require help to successfully mediate the new curriculum and new attitudes towards learning new technologies.

(l) Strategies are yet to be developed to help teachers cope effectively with the above problems in the educational system.

### **The Way Forward**

The problems of teachers who are responsible for implementing the curriculum not end with lack of respect for the teaching profession and teaching not being lucrative, but one of the biggest challenges facing teachers lies in coping with an ever growing class size, a busy school time table, and increasing variety of subject matter, contents, skills, techniques, machinery/equipments information communication technologies (ICT), evaluation procedures, including continuous

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assessment and public; examination, examination malpractices, drug abuse and cultism are rampant in our higher institutions (Buba and Adamu, 2010):

(1) For the teachers to cope with myriad of social, economic and financial constraints as well as the numerous curricular, pedagogic and psychological problems, the government and the citizens need to show greater understanding of the plight of teachers from primary to University levels.

(2) Compassionate attention needs to be paid to teachers demand for recognition and respect for the profession.

(3) Enacting and implementing favourable conditions of service for teachers through the teacher's salary structure (T.S.S.), staff development, i.e. training and retraining of teachers particularly about new information, knowledge and skills, better conditions of service, remuneration, job mobility and promotion.

(4) The Nigerian society must be prepared for better funding of education to guarantee adequate infrastructure, school materials, supply of equipment to laboratories and workshops.

(5) The society must ensure confidence building measures in the teaching profession such as certifying and recertifying teachers periodically

after a mandatory period of teaching in schools.

(6) Nigerian society must ensure that the language of the curricula is easy for interpretation and implementation by teachers. The curricular should be relevant and should reflect the dynamism of the larger society.

(7) Capitalizing on small class size. Effort has to be made to reduce the class size from the large classroom size seen at all levels of education in Nigeria particularly in the primary schools which have been at the forefront in discussions about education for decades. This paper emphasizes that effort has to be made to reduce classes size to smaller size which can easily be managed by our teachers to the ratio of 1:30 pupils to one teacher to derive the greatest benefit from them (Buba, 2009).

(8) Stream lining the charter schools: In Nigeria charity organizations and various religious bodies own sizeable number of schools in the country. Charter schools reflect their founders varied philosophies, and are committed to improving public education. These institutions should be made to operate according to government regulation and National Policy on Education to increase the quality of students they produce into the society.

**Conclusions**

A new curriculum which will emerge from an innovation is expected to be better and more effective than the one which it tends to replace. In every society it is expected to encounter some problems to which they must respond to by bringing about changes. Since education is part of the agencies bringing reforms in the society, it must be dynamic and not static. A simple society may require a simple system of education, but as the society becomes more complex, or complicated, the curriculum has to change to solve the teething problems in the society and the necessary developments. A worthwhile curriculum should be dynamic and under constant improvement, revision or reform. The aims and objectives, contents, learning experiences, methods of instruction and evaluation strategies are aspects of curriculum which should change continuously so as to cope with current societal values, demands and aspirations. New materials that are valid should be updated while obsolete ones are discarded.

The whole essence of curriculum innovation or change is for improvement. Curriculum innovation thus entails the introduction of novel ideals and practices in any one part of the curriculum or different parts of the curriculum, so as to make it more relevant to the varying needs and aspirations of the learners and to every changing need of society.

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