

CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES TO THE NEW SOCIAL STUDIES EDUCATION TEACHER

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Abstract

The success or failure of any educational programme depends on the effectiveness of its curriculum implementation by the teachers. Hence this paper focused on the curriculum implementation challenges to the new social studies education teacher. The issue of the unique nature of the social studies teacher and vile / uninterested students were first discussed. The paper exhaustively looked at the major challenges before the teacher towards curriculum implementation and finally some suggestions were made such as organizing proper orientations for both the teachers and students to change the vile behaviours; recruitment should be passed on both paper qualification and aptitude test; private sector participation in funding the schools etc.

Introduction

The teacher has been regarded as the key agent of curriculum implementation and very important member of any school system (Ekpo and Osan, 2006). It is the teacher that translates educational policies into action and principles and theories into practice. This explains the fact that in 2010, Curriculum Organization of Nigeria (CON) titled their conference theme: Curriculum and the New Teacher). One can never talk exhaustively on curriculum without mentioning the teacher who will see to the actualization of the whole issues in curriculum.

Curriculum according to Wheeler in Duru (2011) is defined as planned experiences offered to the learners under the auspices of the school whether planned or not. This implies that curriculum statements of aims and specific objectives some and organization of contents manifest certain

patterns of learning and teaching and programme of evaluation of the outcomes.

In educational perspective, it can be associated with the grounds which the learner needs to cover in order to attain the goals which in turn could be in the form of grades, certificates or commendations. This work will be treated by discussing the following issues as it relates to the topic: Concept of Curriculum, its Implementation, Objectives of Teachers Education in Nigeria, unique nature of the New Social Studies Teacher, curriculum implementation challenges and suggested ways forward.

Concept of Curriculum:

According to Doll (1978) curriculum refers to the formal and informal content and process by which learners gain knowledge and understanding, develop skills and alter attitudes, appreciations and values under the

auspices of that school. It can also be seen as a road map for the education of the learners. Curriculum according to Izuagba and Mkpa, (2009) is a programme which is made up of three sub-programmes viz programme of studies, programme of activities and programme of guidance. Elaborating more on these sub-programmes, Anyanwu and Mbakwem (2003) stated that programme of studies are made up of list of school subjects for example English, Igbo, Social Studies etc. Programmes of utilities include all those activities provided by the school which enhances and support the concepts, skills and abilities in the programme of studies example games, clubs etc. While programme of guidance, they are helping service in which those benefit are helping to develop the capacity of helping themselves. This programme however exists in three forms;

- i. Educational guidance: This focuses on the educational growth and development of the learner. It is all about helping the learner select the right course of study based on his interest, ability, needs as well as the type of career he hopes to take up in life.
- ii. Personal cum Social guidance:- This is concerned with the development of the entire individual. This however shows that this service deal with both the vocational guidance, educational guidance social and personal as well as emotional problems which may hinder the learners from been accepted into his society as a complete citizen after his graduation.
- iii. Vocational guidance: The purpose of this service is to provide guidance to the

learners with regard to their choice of vocation. In this kind of service, information about the learner's needs, interests and ability is sought after which the learner is encouraged to choose a vocation.

Curriculum therefore means a vehicle through which the school seeks to translate the hopes of the society into concrete reality. Here the teacher who is the curriculum implementer comes in to translate the curriculum document into operating curriculum. The teacher executes the curriculum plan using curriculum materials that have been developed for this purpose by the curriculum development agents.

According to Nwachukwu (2002) the challenge of quality and quantity of Social Studies teachers in Nigeria should be paramount to education planners and administrators. Unfortunately, both unqualified people are still teaching Social Studies courses in our schools today contrary to the clear policy statement regarding the training of teachers and the minimum qualification for entering into the teaching profession in the National policy on Education (FRN, 2004). In like manner recruitment of new teachers into the teaching job is not based on objective criteria aimed at effective curriculum implementation apart from unverified paper qualification. This leaves the nature of the new teacher to be a principle challenge to his effective curriculum implementation.

Curriculum implementation entails putting the decisions reached at the development stage into practice for the purpose of realizing the objectives for which it was designed (Ogwo, 1996). Curriculum

implementation according to Duru, (2011), Mbakwem (2009) is what takes place when the teacher puts the school programme of instruction into practical use in order to achieve the general specific goals of the school.

Objectives of Teachers Education in Nigeria:

The new social studies teacher is that teacher that has achieved the objectives of teacher education in Nigeria as stated as follows:

- (i) To produce highly motivated, conscientious and efficient classroom teachers for all levels of our educational system.
- (ii) Encourage and further the spirit of inquiring and creativity in teachers.
- (iii) Help teachers to fit into social life of community and society at large and enhance their commitment to national goals:

Unique Nature of the New Social Studies Teacher

Social Studies is an integrated programme, which concerns itself with those subjects and skills that seem to be uniquely associated with citizenship. The question here is, who is the new Social Studies teacher? The new Social Studies teacher is someone who is professionally qualified to impart knowledge and stimulate learning formally in a classroom situation. He must be a specialist in one or more areas/subjects that are uniquely associated with citizenship. In the words of Ogbu (2011), the teacher is said to be new when he or she is recently recruited into the teaching field after graduating from his school of education.

Akuma (2002) also stated that even the beginning conventional teachers in the teaching profession find it difficult to embark on the teaching art let alone when the teacher is very new. According to Abiam and Odok cited in Ogbu (2011), the quality of training teachers receive is very crucial to the successful implementation of Social Studies curriculum; after all, no one gives what one does not possess. Another unique nature of the Social Studies teacher is that he must be dually qualified i.e. he must be both educationally qualified, culturally qualified, pedagogically qualified through efficient teacher education process. Thus, when ever these qualifications are lacking in the Social Studies teacher, curriculum implementation capabilities will be affected. Hence the amount of curriculum implementation challenges to be faced by the new Social Studies teacher depends solely on his unique nature on enlistment into teaching profession.

Curriculum implementation challenges

Implementation of a curriculum means passing it through a reality – test, wherein the paper – work is subjected to real life applications. According to Ogwo (1996), Danladi and Mustapha (2011), curriculum implementation involves trying out the curriculum content with the prescribed activities for teachers, students and instructional materials. The teacher's position is pivotal as well as paramount because he takes final decision on content, material and activities choices during curriculum implementation. With the new Social Studies teachers, many factors come into play leading him to greater difficulty in curriculum implementation. They are as follows;

- School – related challenges.
- Teacher – related challenges
- Learner – related challenges and
- Government – related challenges.

(i) School – related challenges

Inadequacy of facilities and instructional materials are hindrances to effective curriculum implementation. In the words of Nwachukwu (2002), the class rooms and libraries are dilapidated. Learning environment is not conducive. The new Social Studies teacher cannot move freely from one learner to the other for effective supervision of their work. The policy of education for all is also one of these school related challenges in the sense that it has led to population explosion in our schools without equal and adequate production and employment of teachers. According to Danladi and Mustapha (2011), Education planners lack up to date statistics to guide their projection of manpower needs. Above all the teachers are being involved in the implementation stage of the curriculum rather at the planning stage.

(ii) Teacher – Related Challenges:

Teachers have being regarded as the key agent of curriculum implementation and the hub of any school system. Observation shows that most of the teachers are not qualified to teach, reason been that many teachers came into the field of teaching because there are no job. On a similar tone, most Social Studies teachers did not do Social Studies, they are child of circumstance. Hence they are not resourceful most times. Also associated with teacher – related is language of instruction. According to Danladi and Mustapher (2011) Nigeria is a multi – linguistic society. This

situation has made it difficult for the School to adopt a lingua franca for instruction. It should be noted that Language is a basic tool for the communication of learning experiences in schools. Also to be included is the Slavish to old and ineffective teaching methods. Akuma (2002) stated that the method of teaching adopted by a teacher may promote or hinder learning. Obsolete methods and materials rank highest among the challenges to effective curriculum implementation. Credit work over load is not left out.

iii. Learner-Related Challenges:

The new social studies teacher with the zeal needs to be encouraged. A bunch of uneducable with very high JAMB Scores that correlate negatively with their academic performance in the school generally. This is a clear case where probably 75% of the students are wrong audience with almost zero entry behaviour.

iv. Government Related Challenges:

The problem of funding in curriculum implementation is a serious matter. The success of the entire components of the curriculum in schools depends on adequate funding. E.g the training of manpower and their remuneration, the provision of infrastructural facilities, and Instructional materials, monitoring and supervision, all require adequate and regular funding. In Nigeria, the funding of Education is faulty. A situation where the Federal and State government can fund provision of roads and electricity but cannot fund recruitment of teachers and other supporting staff is a contradiction and misplacement of priority in curriculum implementation.

Associated with the above challenge is Leadership: This component of curriculum implementation is a major concern because it distorts the entire system of the school. Leadership problem is manifested in the degree of corruption that pervades the society in general and the education sector in particular. Other challenges may include poor time table / credit hours, lack of electricity supply, poor curriculum, poor remuneration of teachers and poor ICT preparations.

Suggested solutions to the Challenges/ way forward

The following are possible way forward:

- i. Schools should be provided with adequate facilities and materials, for effective curriculum implementation by the teachers both old and new.
- ii. Teacher Training Institutions should ensure that the requisite skills and knowledge are imparted on the graduating teachers. Also social studies teachers' recruitment should no longer be based on paper qualification, rather aptitude and achievement tests should be conducted to select the best hands.
- iii. Orientation should be regularly organized for students of social studies education to change their vile behaviours and be interested in their course of study.
- iv. Organized private sectors should be encouraged into partnership with the government resulting to public private partnership as at when due; sending of teachers to in service-training, workshops and seminars.

- v. Parents on their part should encourage their wards to come to school and come in time by letting them know the need for school and education in general. They should also provide them with school materials.

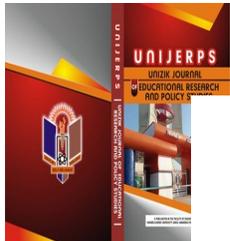
Conclusion

This paper focused on the curriculum implementation challenges of the new social studies teacher. Thus any well designed, planned and developed curriculum will only turn out to become a merry-toy if it was not effectively implemented by teachers.

Therefore the unique nature of the new social studies teachers was examined followed by vile nature of our students. The conclusion is that once these too principal issues are addressed in curriculum implementation, all others ones will be gradually deal with.

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