

PERSPECTIVE ON THE
HISTORY
OF
EDUCATION
IN NIGERIA



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Revised Edition

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Chapter Twenty-Six

THE NEW SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL CURRICULUM

Aburime, A. O. (Mrs.)

Introduction

In response to the ongoing national and global reforms in the social, physical and economic contexts, the Nigeria Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) the arm of Federal government with curriculum development as one of its core mandates, developed the 9 year Basic Education curriculum, with the Senior Secondary Education Curriculum having 34 trade/entrepreneurship subjects for use at both the basic and senior secondary education levels in the country.

Developing the human capital of young Nigerians is vital if only to keep our dwindling economic growth. Our future entrepreneurs need the 21st century skills and knowledge to create successful ventures and to spur innovation in the Nigerian economy. It has been argued that sustainable development is not a function of policies alone. It must involve active sector of education, the government, NGOs, development partners, communities, the private sector, parents, guardians, teachers, students etc. One major instrument to drive the Millennium Development Goals(MDGs) vision statement and needs is a functional curriculum which guarantees and brings about poverty eradication, wealth/job creation, knowledge and innovations in the formal and non-formal systems. (NERDC, 2012). A strategic curriculum renewal is one of the educational reforms that have been witnessed by the education sector in Nigeria.

What is a Curriculum

The term curriculum has been defined in varying ways. For instance, Abdullahi (1982) defined curriculum as part of the school academic programme specifically designed to provide planned and guided learning experiences. Oke and Brown (1982) also defined curriculum as all the experiences a child has under the guidance of the school. Curriculum is a comprehensive plan for an educational/training programme/course to offer new/ improved manpower to fulfill the rising needs of a dynamic society. Curriculum is divided into four interrelated components: these are the objectives, content, organization of content methodology and evaluation.

Curriculum is typically considered to be the official written document from a higher authority, such as the local school district or school board. Such a document is seen as a mandated template that must be followed by all teachers (Connelly, 1988). Good (2001) defined curriculum as a general over-all plan of the content or specific materials of instruction that the school should offer the student by way of qualifying him for graduation or certification or for entrance into a professional or vocational field. A curriculum is a plan for learning. It is all the experiences a learner has under the guidance of the school (Foshay, 1995). A curriculum can become one's life course of action. It can mean the paths we have followed and the paths we intend to follow. In this broad sense, curriculum can be viewed as a person's life experience. It is the planned and guided learning experiences and intended outcomes formulate through the systematic reconstruction of knowledge and experience, under the auspices of the school for the learner's continuous and willful growth in person-social competence (Tanner & Tanner, 1990).

Types of Curriculum: These are: (1) overt, explicit, or written curriculum, (2) societal curriculum, (3) the hidden or covert curriculum, (4) the null curriculum, (5) phantom curriculum, (6) concomitant curriculum, (7), rhetorical curriculum, (8) curriculum-in-use, (9) the internal curriculum, (10) the received curriculum, (11) the electronic curriculum, and (12) competency curriculum. (Bloom, 2004).

Kinds of Curriculum (according to the four families of learning theories)

These are: (1) Social (2) Information processing (3) Personalist, and (4) Behavioural

The Difference between the Former SSSE Curriculum and the New Curriculum/ Uniqueness.

In the former secondary school curriculum attention were paid to theoretical education. The curriculum was not functional in that it does not make the learner to be self-reliant. The students could not generate the knowledge they have acquired into innovation. Thus, there was too much dependence on paper work rather than practical oriented skill. It was based on an inarticulate policies, inadequate research and poor planning and its implementation has become ineffective and lacks any useful feedback mechanism anchored in review, analysis and redesigned processes.

However, the new secondary school curriculum emphasises functional and entrepreneurial education which caters for the needs of the child and the industrial need of the nation. The new curriculum is now more practical than theoretical. Its emphasis is now on skillful, creative, innovative and technological education. With the new secondary school curriculum, creativity is the order of the day. The students on their path could function with what they have learnt. Hence,

the emphasis of the new curriculum is on science, entrepreneurial skills and technological education without compromising quality

Shortcomings of the Previous Senior Secondary School Curriculum

Uzodinma (2004) observed that the 6-3-3-4 educational system failed because it was not duly implemented in Nigeria due to faulty teaching that is theory centered. From the foregoing, it is apparent that Nigeria Secondary School Teachers use theoretical method in the teaching and learning process and pay less attention to the practical aspect meant to empower the youth for prosperity and for wealth creation. The Public Relations Officer of the Ministry of Education, Mr. Sabio Mammud reported that the new curriculum was fashioned by the NERDC to ensure a gradual phasing out of the current curriculum. He also stressed that the need for a new curriculum was a question that Nigeria needed no debate.

The Executive Secretary of the NERDC Prof. Godwill Obioma declared that priority was not placed on professional skill acquisition and the curriculum was not geared towards the reality of the employment market. There is no close link between secondary education and industrial production hence the introduction of 34 vocational subjects marked a radical departure from the subsisting curriculum. Since its independence in 1960, Nigeria has struggled with designing and implementing a sustainable educational curriculum that adequately prepares its children for adulthood. Several years later, the country faces the rising tide of an educated but unemployable workforce, as Nigeria students graduate from secondary and tertiary institutions without essential work place skills. Based on an inarticulate policies, inadequate research

and poor planning, curriculum implementation has become ineffective and lacks any useful feedback mechanism anchored in review, analysis and redesigned processes.

School curriculum is expected to equip learners with skills that will make them self reliant, prepare them to enter into jobs, make progress and contribute to national development. Recognising this, the National Curriculum Conference of 1968 has advocated for vocational as well as technical education as a way of advancing entrepreneurial education in the country. The extent to which this has been achieved is however questionable as evidenced from various studies showed that there is no link between our school system and entrepreneurship education. (Offorma, 2005). There is no link between secondary education and industrial production.

Why Most Curriculum Formulators Failed?

The importance of teachers in curriculum planning, development and most importantly implementation cannot be over emphasised. Teachers most times are not involved during policy formulation even though they are expected to implement this curriculum for overall efficiency. A major setback in the ineffectiveness of the curriculum implementation is the problem of unqualified teachers especially specialist teachers in vocational and technical subjects. Sofolahan (1998) noted that at the J.S.S level due to shortage of teachers, the requirements of two (2) Nigerian languages are no longer strictly observed. In addition, introductory technology, local crafts which are part of the core subjects are poorly implemented in the curriculum.

Background Features of the New Senior Secondary Education Curriculum

To consolidate the gains of the present 9-year Basic education programmes as well as to ensure the actualisation of Federal Government's agenda for national development, NERDC developed a new curriculum structure for Senior Secondary School (SSS) in Nigeria. The new Senior Secondary Curriculum is systematically connected with the contents of the present Junior Secondary School Education Curriculum (JSEC).

The curriculum is diversified - it is made to cater for the following:

- 1. Differences in talents:-** The students in the senior secondary school are naturally endowed with various talents and skills which can be identified and developed to enviable capacity.
- 2. Opportunities and future roles of individual:-** The skills acquired by the students will pave way for them to be gainfully employed, and also be boss of themselves.
- 3. It is developed to provide trained manpower in the applied sciences, technology and commerce.-** This area is observed to have insufficient manpower for natural development, with the new Senior Secondary School Curriculum, more qualified manpower will be trained to also train others to enhance more capable hands.
- 4. Technical knowledge and vocational skills necessary for industrial and economic development were also greatly considered in the development of the curriculum.** Economic growth and development is greatly dependent on the level of skills acquired, when more people are technically and vocationally trained, it will lead to

economic growth and development as more small and medium enterprises will spring up.

5. The curriculum is also designed using the thematic approach and the provision of options in school subjects: This approach is used in teaching and learning, involves integrating all subject areas together under one theme; it is a way of teaching whereby many areas of the curriculum are connected. (National Policy on Education, 2013)

Structural Design of the New Senior Secondary Education Curriculum

The New Senior Secondary School Curriculum structure is geared towards job creation, poverty alleviation, eradication, and wealth creation. The curriculum structure is designed to drive the development of appropriate skills for social and economic transformation. It will provide effective support foundation for higher education if well implemented. It is also expected that a community of Nigerian youth with trade/entrepreneurship skills will emerge the steps taken in the curriculum transformation, this include but not limited to the following:

1. Developing the curriculum with respect for individual and cultural differences.
2. Developing the curriculum subjects and sources which are societal needs driven, inclusive in content language, teaching and assessment methodology.
3. Proving a curriculum which will facilitates challenging learning environment, which are socially and culturally appropriate, supportive and physically comfortable.
4. Developing curriculum which promotes social responsibility, empathy, sensitivity and equal and non-violent relationships.

5. Ensuring more participatory teaching and learning methodologies which will gear towards national development and which will give equal opportunities for citizens to participate actively in nation building.(Ojerinde, 2011)

The Senior Secondary Education Curriculum is Designed as Follows:

1. **Theme** – This refers to a broad concept which provides an umbrella for a cluster of relevant and related topics.
2. **Topic** – Topics are derived from a given theme. This theme is broken into topics for easy implementation. This can be broken down into chapters depending on the volume of the content and objectives to be achieved within a stipulated period.
3. **Performance objective** – These are statements of achievable task. i.e. what we want the students to achieve within the stipulated period (perhaps in a year, a term, a week, a day).
4. **Content** – These are the body of knowledge, skill, principles, ideas that would lead to the achievement of the stated objectives.
5. **Activities** – These are broken down into teacher and students activities. These activities are what the teacher and students would do that make learning take place. It could be discussion, demonstration, drawing, speaking, writing, reporting, dramatising, etc. selected activities depend on the content and what should be taught and learnt to achieve stated objectives.
6. **Teaching and learning materials** – These involve the choice of suitable teaching and learning materials that would lead to the achievement of the stated objectives.

The choice of materials would depend on the topic to be taught. All these have been provided in the curriculum.

- 7. Evaluation Guide** – At the end of teaching and learning exercise, students should be able to perform or demonstrate giving tasks that would indicate how far they have learnt or grasped what has been taught. Evaluation guide help to access learner's ability as far as the lesson or topic taught is concerned. The evaluation guide should closely test the performance objectives.(Agbulu, 2011).

In the new SSEC, the following high points of the curriculum structure are identified.

1. Alignment of the compulsory cross cutting subjects
 - English
 - General mathematics
 - Civic education
 - Trade/entrepreneurship
2. Alignment of curriculum into four distinct field of study
 - Senior Secondary Education (Science/Mathematics)
 - Senior Secondary Education (Humanities)
 - Senior Secondary Education (Technology)
 - Senior Secondary Education (Business)
3. Inclusion of trade/entrepreneurship, and civic education as compulsory cross cutting subjects
4. Trade/Entrepreneurship

The new senior secondary school curriculum structure therefore comprises:

- (i.) A group of 4 compulsory, cross-cutting subjects that must be offered by all students.
- (ii.) Four field of study
- (iii.) A group of 34 Trade/Entrepreneurship subjects

(iv.) Elective

[Note that a field of study is a group of subjects representing a student's potential area of specialization].

The Implication of this new curriculum structure is as follow:

1. Senior secondary education has four distinct streams, and any secondary school in Nigeria can stream into all four or any combination of the four.
2. An appropriate degree of comprehensiveness is brought to bear on the education system.(Agbulu, 2001).

Subjects offered in the New Secondary School Education Curriculum

A. Compulsory Cross Cutting Subjects are:

1. English
2. Mathematics
3. Civic education
4. One trade entrepreneurship studies

All students irrespective of their field of study are to take the above listed compulsory cross-cutting subjects.

B. Core Subjects in Specialized Field of Study

Humanities

- Nigerian languages
- Literature in English
- Geography
- Government
- Islamic studies
- History
- Visual Arts, economics
- Music, French, Arabic and Christian Religion Studies.

The students are expected to take five (5) subjects including one Nigerian language and one foreign

language and one entrepreneurial subject as the case may be.

Technology

- Technical drawing
- General metal work
- Basic electricity
- Auto mechanics
- Building construction
- Wood- work
- Food and nutrition
- Home management
- Clothing and textile

Students are expected to take one (1) of the vocational subjects above in order to make them self-dependent.

Science and Mathematics

- Biology
- Chemistry
- Physics
- Further mathematics
- Agriculture
- Health education
- Physical education
- Computer science

In this regard, students are expected to take the first five (5) core subjects and probably with computer science including two (2) entrepreneurial subjects in relation to what is available and or obtainable in its immediate environment.

Business Studies

- Accounting
- Store management
- Office Practice
- Insurance
- Commerce

With the business related subjects, the students are expected to take Accounting, Office Practice and Commerce and then take either of Store management or Insurance as elective.

C. Elective

These are subjects chosen outside the student's specialisation of study i.e. a science student may decide to take music as elective.

D. Trade/Entrepreneurship subjects

Respective school is expected to choose a specified number of trade/entrepreneurship subjects in relation to what is available and or obtainable in its immediate environment. It is however recommended that schools should choose between three (3) and five (5) trade/entrepreneurship subject based on the new Senior School Curriculum Structure:

1. Auto body repair and spray painting
2. Auto Electrical Work
3. Auto Mechanical Work
4. Auto Part Merchandising
5. Air Conditioning & Refrigerator
6. Welding and fabricating Engineering Craft Practice
7. Electrical installation and maintenance work
8. Radio, Television and Electrical Work
9. Block-laying, Brick-laying and Concrete Work
10. Painting and Decoration

11. Plumbing and Pipe-fitting
12. Machine woodworking
13. Carpentry and Joinery
14. Furniture Making
15. Upholstery
16. Catering Craft Practice
17. Garment Making
18. Textile trade
19. Dying and bleaching
20. Printing Craft Practice
21. Cosmetology
22. Leather Goods Manufacturing and Repair
23. Stenography
24. Data Processing
25. Store Keeping
26. Book Keeping
27. GSM Maintenance
28. Photography
29. Tourism
30. Mining
31. Animal Husbandry
32. Fisheries
33. Marketing
34. Salesmanship

Students are to offer the entire four (4) compulsory cross-cutting core subject, namely English language, General mathematics, Civic education, and one trade/entrepreneurship studies.

Students may then choose two (2), three (3), four (4) or five (5) subjects from any other fields of study depending on their potential, interest and capacity such that the minimum

number of subjects is eight(8) while the maximum number of subject is nine(9).(NPE, 2013).

Envisaged Challenges and Suggestion for the Implementation of the Curriculum in Schools

As laudable as a curriculum may be, it usually does not go without some challenges likewise the new Senior Secondary School Curriculum. Among the challenges are:

1. **Lack of necessary support from stakeholders, e.g. private sector, teachers and government:** there is no adequate support from government who are policy makers. They do not create an enabling environment for the new curriculum to work, teachers alike are not embracing the system.
2. **Inadequate provision of fund:** programmes like these, are capital intensive. It requires building new structures, equipped with right facilities, recruitment of qualified teachers etc.
3. **Lack of adequate training for the users (teachers) of the curriculum:** The trainers are supposed to be adequately trained to be able to transfer such knowledge to the students. Teachers are not prepared for the task at hand and so the objectives cannot be completely actualized.
4. **Inadequate instructional materials, facilities and equipment:** In most schools, the required facilities for the implementation of the new Senior Secondary School Curriculum is not adequate and in some schools they are not available, thereby depriving the students the skills they ought to acquire at the set time.
5. **Lack of proper circulation of the curriculum:** The New Senior Secondary School Curriculum is not well

- known to all educators particularly those that are in the rural areas and those that are informed does not know how to implement it.
6. **Others include:** Inadequate skill instructors, lack of adequate remuneration for the curriculum operators.
 7. **The use of old textbooks:** the old textbooks are completely not relevant to the new curriculum. Teachers are compelled to use the old textbooks and new textbooks have not been developed for the newly added subjects.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were put forward to help proper implementation of the New Secondary School Curriculum.

1. Government should allow schools to work in partnership with professionals outside the school with some of the trade subjects. In this regard, the schools can either be taken to the community or the community be brought to the school.
2. The curriculum planners should make secondary school education curriculum relevant to the needs of the students and the industrial needs of the nation.
3. Policy formulators on education should ensure that secondary education philosophy on education emphasises functionalism especially as it relates to secondary education curriculum. The curriculum should be properly implemented.

Suggestion for the Implementation of the Curriculum in Schools

1. Funds should be made available to acquire necessary resources, facilities and even the payment of teachers.
2. **Support from stakeholders:** All hands must be on deck to make the New Senior Secondary School Curriculum work; it should be embraced and supported to achieve the set goals.
3. **Training the trainers:** Educators and curriculum implementers must be adequately trained to be able to transfer the right knowledge skillfully to the learners in a way that they will find it interesting. The teachers can not impact beyond their level of exposure and training.
4. **Development of instructional materials:** instructional materials should be up to date, i.e. meet up with the new development or curriculum and the 21st century challenges, facilities should be improved upon to achieve the set goal.
5. **Circulation of the New Senior Secondary School Curriculum:** The New Senior Secondary School Curriculum (SSSC) is not yet well known amongst the expected users and where they are known they do not know how to implement it; therefore the curriculum should be well circulated, workshops, seminars should be organized for stakeholders for proper implementation of the New Senior Secondary School Curriculum.
6. **Development of textbooks:** New textbooks are to be developed to serve as instruction and systematic sequence of learning experiences for newly introduced subjects.
7. **Motivation of instructors:** Teachers should be well remunerated; this will serve as motivation and encouragement to go all out to help the New Senior Secondary School Curriculum succeed.(FRN, 2010).

8. Proper evaluation, accountability and transparency must be ensured so that available funds can reach the grass root.
9. Government should establish technical workshop for students to function with.

Prospects of Entrepreneurship and Skill Acquisition in Schools

The introduction of Entrepreneurship education in Nigeria schools is surely expected to lead to a lot of positive development within the education sector and more importantly, in the larger Nigeria society, some of the expected outcomes of this laudable policy include:

- **Increase the number of self employable graduates in the society:** as a result of skills acquired. The senior secondary school will turn-out more of self-reliance individual, who can stand on their own e.g. soap making, carpentry etc. this will help them to also contribute meaningfully to the society.
- **Increase number of small and medium scale enterprise (SMEs) and employment:** Since entrepreneurship aims at individual to be able to start little business and grow them, the more SMEs we have, the better for the nation and national income.
- **Reduced crime rate and other social vices:** The skilled acquired will enable them to be engaged in a more meaningful enterprise that will reduce crime rate, armed robbery and other youthful exuberance.
- **Increase competitiveness:** there will be healthy rivalry among our youths because a good number of them have the same skills. The first to start out among others is always there.

- **Lead to the empowerment of teachers:** all trainers must be trained, it broadens the knowledge of the teachers, and it creates avenues for the qualified teachers in the field. (Olaitan,1996).

Conclusion

In conclusion, it is a known fact that education is an instrument for social and economic transformation. Failure in the challenges for effective implementation of these curriculums could lead to a run-down system and a crash from the heights sought by the players.

The mission of operational curriculum in the secondary school is to give effect to the nation's drive for self-reliance, prepare a world class and African leading, create skilled and creative work-force in capacity building, service delivery that would transform Nigeria natural resources into goods and services that will positively affect economic, social well being and quality of life of the people. The current policy shift in this direction by the Nigeria government through the introduction of a pragmatic curriculum in schools will definitely lead to increase in employment rate, decrease in crime rate, decrease in poverty rate and overall increase in national productivity. Hence, all hand must be on deck to make the curriculum a success. Well planned, transparent superb supervision and evaluation are expected of all stakeholders as suggested.

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