

Enhancing Curriculum Implementation for the Improvement of English Language Teachers in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

Education plays a pivotal role in guiding individuals through the journey from childhood to well-integrated adulthood. However, to realize this progression, effective curriculum implementation is essential, as it significantly influences and bolsters the degree of success. This paper delves into the English language curriculum, the concept of curriculum and its implementation, hurdles encountered during implementation, and proposed solutions. The analysis concludes that proper curriculum implementation holds the potential to enhance English language instruction in Nigeria. Consequently, it is recommended that the federal government of Nigeria prioritize curriculum implementation. Furthermore, English language educators should undergo continuous training and development through seminars, workshops, and conferences to deepen their understanding and proficiency in curriculum implementation, thereby optimizing its outcomes.

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INTRODUCTION

Education is the best legacy any nation can give to her citizens especially the youth in their prime age. This is because education is so important for the development of any nation or community. As it is, education is the process of transmitting what is worthwhile to members of the society. According to Amadi and Segun (2018), education embraces all those experiences of the individual through which knowledge is acquired and intellect enlightened. Owing to its importance, education is considered a key investment in modern economics because of its strong and positive correlation between economic activity and education at explaining economic growth Abdulaheem (2015).

According to Wordu and Damgbor (2020), schools are established primarily for teaching and learning. School is an educational institution where people of different ages acquire education. Examples of some institutions are pre – primary schools, primary schools, secondary schools and tertiary schools. In actualizing educational achievement of students, the Federal

Ministry of Education (2013) articulated what the curriculum of the various levels of education should be in Nigeria. This includes the English Language curriculum. Wordu and Damgbor (2020), posited that curriculum is a total experience with which the school deals with in educating the young people.

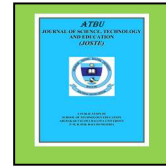
Also, curriculum is seen as a vehicle through which the school strives towards the achievement of educational goals; be it those of national, local government or even the community schools. The content of the English Language skills includes reading, writing, speaking and listening. These skills consist of vocabulary and comprehension, summary, grammar, oral English, Lexis and structure, essay and letter writing. It is based on this content that different schemes and topics for different classes are developed. Wordu and Damgbo (2020), stated that language is the vehicle of educative experiences which an educational institution offers, through its education programmes designed to meet specific objectives.

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The English language as a subject is regarded as the backbone of all other subjects taught in schools because English language is a medium of instruction in most tertiary institutions of formal learning in Nigeria. In fact, the English language is one of the core subjects recommended for education (FGN, 2022). It is therefore an essential prerequisite for further education. At least a pass in English is a requirement even for Science - based students because of the emphasis placed on passing English language ' O' level in Nigerian educational system. It is essential that the language is properly taught so that students can have effective mastery of the subject. Our political and social circumstances make use of English language imperative not as a foreign language but an official language.

There had always been public concern about the poor performances of students in external English examinations. There have been incidents of mass failure recorded in Secondary Schools and tertiary levels conducted in the country Lawyer (2014). Again at the Senior Secondary Schools and tertiary levels reports abound on the continual failure of students in English and these have been attributed to their faulty foundation (Assessment of the Implementation of English language Curriculum in Tertiary Institutions).

English Language Curriculum.

English language is the greatest legacy bequeathed to the people at the end of the British colonialism (Midat, 2019). It is the core subject in the school curriculum at the Secondary school and tertiary levels of education in Nigeria (FGN, 2022). The overall aims of English language Curriculum are: to provide learners of English with opportunities for extending their knowledge and experience of the cultures of other people as well as opportunities for personal and intellectual development, further studies, pleasure and work in the English medium; and to enable every learner to prepare for the changing socio-economic demands resulting from advances in information technology (IT), demands which include the interpretation, use and production of

texts for pleasure, study and work in the English medium.

The English Curriculum is designed with the four language skills integrated in the content. Topics are arranged around the skills which are listening, speaking, reading and writing, grammatical accuracy and literature. The prescription of the Curriculum includes the performance objectives; themes, content, activities for the teachers and learners, teaching and learning materials and guides for assessment. This prescription reveals the expected content to be taught in the class so as to achieve the objectives the Curriculum is designed for Onatere, Isama and Okpan (2021). Over time the Nigeria's educational system has not met the longings and aspirations of the Nigerian people. As a result, there have been regular changes in the educational system in a bit to ameliorate the quality of education. Also, Onatere, Isama and Okpan (2021), stated that any country that needs to address issues on ignorance, illiteracy and poverty as well as arouse and quicken the pace of National development. Political consciousness and National integration needs to make education important for the populace.

Curriculum Implementation

Curriculum can be defined as the document, plan or blue print for instructional guide which is used to teaching and learning to bring about positive change and desirable learning behavior change. It can be regarded as the map for the education of the learners Offoma (1994). Curriculum can be taken to mean the instrument by means of which schools seek to translate the hopes of the society in which they function into concrete reality. It is the vehicle through which education is attained. The essence of education is the ability to transfer the knowledge, facts, skills, values and attitudes learnt from one situation to solve problems in another situation and this is done through Curriculum (Offorma, 1994).

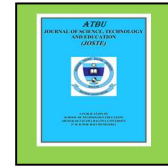
Curriculum implementation is defined as "that stage in the curriculum process and system whereby all the relevant curriculum inputs

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are brought into direct contact with the learners through a wide variety of activities, so that learning experiences and mastery can be maximized at a minimal cost. For Obasi and Ajeke (2007) Curriculum Implementation is a weaving together of the subject matter, learning activities which lead to the relevant outcomes. They believe that the main focus of implementation is the learner. While the most important person in curriculum implementation is the teacher.

It is very important to monitor the learner's behaviors during implementation to ensure that the learner's interaction with the learning Implementation is the instructional phase of the curriculum. After selection of objectives, content, method, resources and evaluation procedures, the teacher puts into action his/her world to use such as pictures, real objects, recorded cassettes, videos, televisions, computer and internet facilities to mention but a few. He/ she applies some strategies such as songs, drama, simulation, demonstration, use of examples, questions, excursion etc to execute the plan. This is implementation and it is at the classroom level. The main purpose of implementation is to promote learning, each time the teacher engages in some activities which focus environment is purposeful and leads to acceptable change.

Barriers of Curriculum Implementation

Learner Factors

The characteristics and needs of learners play a significant role in curriculum implementation. Learner diversity, including differences in learning styles, abilities, and backgrounds, can pose challenges to effectively delivering curriculum content (Smith, 2019).

Resource Materials

Availability and adequacy of instructional materials can impact curriculum implementation. Lack of access to up-to-date textbooks, technology, and other resources can hinder teachers' ability to deliver content effectively (Jones & Brown, 2020).

School Environment

The overall atmosphere and culture of the school can either support or impede curriculum implementation. Factors such as school leadership, support systems, and disciplinary policies can influence teachers' capacity to implement the curriculum (Garcia & Martinez, 2018).

Instructional Supervision and Assessment

Effective supervision and assessment practices are crucial for ensuring that curriculum goals are being met. Inadequate supervision and assessment strategies can undermine teachers' efforts in implementing the curriculum and assessing student progress (Wang & Smith, 2017).

Readiness and Knowledge of Teachers

Teacher Attitudes

Teachers' attitudes towards curriculum implementation can significantly impact its success. Positive attitudes, enthusiasm, and a willingness to adapt instructional practices are essential for overcoming implementation challenges (Johnson et al., 2020).

Teacher Knowledge

Teachers must possess the necessary knowledge and skills to effectively implement the curriculum. Continuous professional development opportunities and access to relevant training can enhance teachers' readiness to implement the curriculum (Glickman & Sullivan, 2019).

Structural and Cultural Constraints

Structural Barriers

Structural constraints within the educational system, such as bureaucratic processes and rigid policies, can impede curriculum implementation efforts. Flexibility and adaptability are essential for navigating these structural barriers (Clark & Martin, 2018).

Cultural Challenges

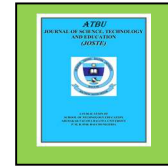
Cultural differences and norms can also pose challenges to curriculum implementation. Awareness of cultural diversity and sensitivity to students' cultural backgrounds

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are crucial for creating inclusive learning environments (Chen & Lee, 2021).

Time Constraints

Scheduling Challenges

Limited instructional time poses a significant challenge to curriculum implementation. Teachers often struggle to cover the required content within the allocated time frame, leading to rushed instruction and incomplete coverage of curriculum objectives (Brown & Williams, 2020).

Planning and Preparation Time

Insufficient time for lesson planning and preparation can hinder teachers' ability to deliver high-quality instruction. Adequate planning time is necessary for developing engaging lessons that align with curriculum standards (Roberts & Johnson, 2019).

Lack of Administrative Support

According to Lewis (2021), teachers face barriers to curriculum implementation due to a lack of administrative support. Without support from school leaders, teachers may struggle to integrate innovative instructional practices into their teaching. Lack of encouragement for field trips and concerns about expenses further exacerbate these challenges (Lewis, 2021).

Addressing these barriers requires a multifaceted approach, including professional development opportunities for teachers, adequate resource allocation, supportive school leadership, and policies that promote flexibility and innovation in curriculum implementation. By addressing these challenges, educators can enhance the effectiveness of curriculum implementation and improve student outcomes.

Resources

Resources are regarded as the most important support structure because curriculum management depends largely on resources available in schools. Implementation of a curriculum change without the relevant resources to teach it would cause stress and strain leading to dire consequences and impacting on the

teachers' morale to implement the planned curriculum changes. Lack of resources necessary for the execution of teaching and learning can inhibit effective curriculum implementation

Solutions to Barriers of Curriculum Implementation

Providing professional development education for teachers Karakuş (2021), have considered several solutions to mitigating barriers to effective implementation of new curriculum, pointed that the teacher is central to effective implementation and requires professional development to do so. Vander Ark et al.'s (2020), insisted that to address the barrier of inadequate skills to implementing curriculum, effective implementation requires six phases of professional learning. Therefore, knowledge and skill development on the content of the curriculum is key in effective implementation.

Increasing teachers' motivation

Another solution to barriers in curriculum implementation is increasing teachers' motivation. For their intrinsic motivation, it will be valuable to increase their professional knowledge, profession competence, interest and self-confidence for the teaching profession.

Provision of adequate resources

There is need to ensure that English teachers are well equipped in both material and human resource and ensure that teachers have sufficient mastery of content and varied methods of teaching.

CONCLUSION

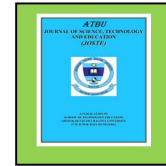
In conclusion, successful implementation of curriculum will enhance the teaching and learning of English Language in Nigeria. Curriculum implementers should be well – versed with the contents of the curriculum. They must be clear of the purpose, nature and the real potential benefits in the educational system.

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RECOMMENDATIONS

In the light of the study, it was concluded that:

1. Effective curriculum implementation should be taken into cognizance by the Federal Government, State government and all educational stake – holders.
2. English language teachers should be trained and re-trained by attending seminars, workshops and conferences to be more knowledgeable in curriculum implementation to achieve its objectives.
3. Curriculum planners should regularly have sensitized policy makers, schools and teachers through workshops, seminars and conferences on curriculum revision.
4. The task of improving teacher's welfare must be addressed immediately by our government in Nigeria. The working environment must be well equipped to retain qualified and experienced teachers in our classrooms.

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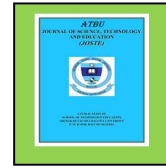
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