

## EXPLORING CURRICULUM DESIGN ASSETS INTRINSIC IN UNIVERSAL BASIC EDUCATION FOR ATTAINING QUALITY ASSURANCE IN TEACHER PRODUCTION FOR SUSTAINABILITY IN NIGERIA

SURAJO AMINU & ABDULLAHI ALIYU MADUGU

<sup>1</sup>Department of Education, Umaru Musa Yar'adua University, Katsina.

<sup>2</sup> Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education, Katsina State

surajoaminuksauri@gmail.com & abdullahialiyu185@gmail.com

### Abstract

*This study aimed at exploring curriculum design assets intrinsic in Universal Basic Education for attaining quality assurance in teacher production for sustainability in Nigeria. As a curriculum programme, universal Basic Education (UBE) becomes constituted into one of the important embedded features of the Nigeria education system. A major critical pivot of its pedagogical assets hinges on the perspective that its curriculum dimension and under-pinning imply that the programme itself is submerged in immense integrative, multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary commitments which derive the complex language structures enshrined in its curriculum framework. This framework does not only evoke a nation of curriculum integration but also calls for a sound Knowledge of the linguistic implications necessary for coping with the complex methodological dimensions and demands noded for addressing resolving pedagogical issue and problem in the programme examined in the frameworks of our primary and junior secondary school. The language dimensions of the curriculum imperatives of basic education which are intrinsic in its pedagogical design: the language rationalization of these curriculum structures could be explored and capitalized by the professional teacher to make the demands of basic education meaningful to learners. However, attaining quality assurance in teacher production must not necessarily derive from the teacher's subject matter and knowledge background but rather from his national application of methodologies principles and styles of classroom pedagogy which can contribute significantly to bring about innovations which are rooted in curriculum education. This line of thought represents a king of panacea which could employed by the professional teacher for the purpose of captaining on the assets intrinsic in basic education in enhancing the framework of Nigeria's primary and secondary schools education for nation-building and sustainability.*

**Keywords:** Curriculum, Design, Assets, Intrinsic, Quality, Teacher

### Introduction

The term 'curriculum' can be, and is, used, for many different kinds of programme of teaching and instruction. Indeed, as we shall see, quite often this leads to a limited concept of the curriculum, defined in terms of what teaching and instruction is to be offered and sometimes also what its purposes, its objectives, are. the word to denote the content of a particular subject or area of study from the use of it to refer to the total programme of an educational institution Kelly (2004). Curriculum design refers to the ways in which we position the curriculum components. Regardless of the supporting curriculum model, all curriculum designs endeavour to address four curriculum components why do we initiate instruction or aims What should we teach to realize our set aims and objectives How can we

interconnect target learning experiences. the process of curriculum design according to Mohanasundaram (2018) involve general overviews of major related sources, curriculum conceptualization and curriculum design stages, in addition to modern issues of classroom-level teacher curriculum design and class/room-level teacher professional development. Curriculum development is as planned, a purposeful, progressive, and systematic process to create positive improvements in the educational system. Every time there are changes or developments happening around the world, the school curricula are affected. There is a need to update them to address the society's needs.

The Federal Government's (2000) Implementation Blue Print for the University Basic Education (UBE) scheme in Nigeria emerged with a number of endorsements regarding the provision of education at the grass roots level in terms of her teeming millions of people as follow:

- i. A development in the entire citizenry a strong consciousness for education and a commitment to its vigorous promotion.
- ii. Where the child is not sent schools, he/she shall be encouraged to learn appropriate and the employer of the child shall provide the necessary facilities for leaning the trade.
- iii. That every parent shall ensure that his/her child or ward attend and complete his/her primary school education and encourage the child or to complete junior secondary education.
- iv. That every child off primary age has right to free, compulsory and University education and it shall be the duty of every Government in Nigeria to provide such education.
- v. A drastic reduction in the drop-out rate from the formal school system through improved relevance and efficiency.
- vi. A demonstration of care and concern for drop-outs and out-of school children and adolescents through various forms of complementary approaches to the provision and promotion of basic education and
- vii. The ensuring of acquisition of the appropriate levels of literacy, numeracy, manipulative and the skills needed for laying the foundation for life-long learning.

The Curriculum design issues and demands implied in the foregoing goals and objectives are no easy task to surmount. Among many other assets, the above mentioned ideals of Nigeria's University Basic Education (UBE) scheme call for initiating in learners the development and a capacity to learn and acquire a variety of skills including not only the basic skills of listening written and calculating but also the skills of hand together with the skill of observation, analysis and inference which are essential for forming sound judgement (Okam, 2004). The rationale for the UBE scheme, according to the Federal Government's Blue Print on the programme, is for Nigeria to attain the desired 100% national literacy rate. Thus, it is imperative that provisions ne made and actions taken to universalize basic education enthrone conducive learning environment and improve quality and standards. More importantly, the lofty ideals enshrined in the UBE, as a curriculum design instrument willy-nilly call for the enthronement of quantities expansion and qualitative and imperative demanded in the new scheme.

Tanner and Tanner (1980 in Okam 2019) endorse that the curriculum underpinnings of basic education are geared at creating avenues not only for self-direction and for the liberation of individual capacity but also for opening a world of changes and opportunity that may be available to an individual in life for self-fulfilment and or self-actualisation. In this circumstance, basic education demands that the learner, the society and the world of knowledge must be treated in their complementarily rather than antagonistically if educational progress is to be made. A commitment to the tenets of basic education is expected to provide a kind of general education which would help create unity out of diversity. The

tenets are in consonance with Dewey's (1952) progressivism views about the curriculum which subscribes that;

The body of knowledge is indeed one; it is a spiritual organism. To attempt to chop of a member here and amputate an organ there is varies impossibility. The problem is not one of elimination, but of organization: of simplification not through denial and rejection but through harmony.

Thus, the curriculum underpinnings of basic education, according to Tanner (1980) must of necessity, channelled at addressing and bringing about possible solutions to issues and problems which have bearings on the following:

- i. how best to relate curriculum to life;
- ii. the question of re-humanizing and re-synthesizing the curriculum in order to search for new curriculum structures;
- iii. a development off interdisciplinary studies and course for the possibility addressing and preferring solution to issues, concerns and problem;
- iv. inquiry and problem-solving including knowledge building;
- v. personal-social problem-approach to curriculum planning and development;
- vi. reflective thinking for a purpose of channelling it effectively to the social problem of the day to a sufficient degree;
- vii. an exhibition of intellectual productivity rather than a counter-productive enterprise that derives through the process itself;
- viii. A liberation of the capacities of very individual for a purpose of embracing individual autonomy;
- ix. an education that is tailed to the service of the democratic ideal and;
- x. an establishment of relationship between learning to real life situations and problem and possibly bringing about a closure of the gap between curriculum development and social needs;

Moreover, the provision of solution to the foregoing curriculum design issues and questions necessarily evoke a concern and consideration for the challenges of quality assurance examined in the context of effective teacher productivity in the UBE scheme. This thinking-pattern largely derive from the view that. In any educational system, the teacher is the most important variable whose function can enhance or deter the realization of her objectives and goals. A concern for quality assurance in the UBE largely call for a determination of the extent to which her teachers' Primary sources of support and professional growth including issue which emanate from instructional supervision have been sufficiently received and put in place so as to enable them effectively scale through the emerging challenges of the new scheme. In this perspective, it is positing that a realization of the goal and objectives of the UBE must be anchored on the endorsement and attainment of quality assurance imperatives in the context of effective teacher production and teacher productivity, if the scheme is to survive and be sustained.

### **Pedagogical Challenges Intrinsic in the UBE as a Curriculum Design Instruction**

Productivity is posing enormous challenges of the successful implementation of the UBE in this country. As a curriculum design instruction, the UBE represents a baseline that is designed to satisfy, at least, the minimum learning needs of people. It provides reading, writing, communication and numeracy skills, it comprises a wide variety of formal and non-formal educational activities and

programmes designed to enable learners acquire functional literacy. Programmes in basic education, according to Fadare (2001), are usually tailored at achieving, among other things, the purpose of promoting social effectiveness in people by raising their level of consciousness in such a way as to enable them align themselves with the dictates of the reality of their lives and be able to meet the demand of their environments. The Federal Government's Implementation Guidelines (2000) expatiates further that basic education is aimed at equipping individuals with such knowledge, skills and attitudes that will enable them achieve the following: live meaningful and fulfilling lives; contribute to the development of society; derive maximum social, economic and cultural habits from the society; and discharge their civic obligations completely. It is underscored here that whenever the UBE, as a curriculum design instrument is taught, the professional classroom teacher is the primary determiner of what individuals and students learn. That the teacher is the most important single factor in any teaching-learning episode is endorsed by Ukeje's revelation (1976) that:

Teachers are at the hub of an educational system. For upon their number, their quality, their effectiveness depends on the success of the system and no education system can be stronger than its teachers.

The foregoing considerations on the assets of quality assurance in teacher production and productivity have far-reaching implications for the role of the UBE teacher, particularly if his competence and expertise in the classroom pedagogy of the subject area is to contribute to the achievement of the objectives that prompted the establishment of its teaching in Nigeria. These objectives are geared towards grooming and building prospective and effective citizens in the country for nation-building and national development.

### **Quality Assurance Perspectives and Curriculum**

Okam (2004) reveals that the ideals of basic education are designed to counter the dichotomies and or -dualisms which have been allowed to persistently distort the equilibrium which is expected to operate positively and usefully with reference to the sustenance of the harmonious existence prevailing between the learner, the society and the world of organized knowledge during the course of classroom pedagogy. In this circumstance, according to Okam (2004), basic education demands that the learner, the Society and the world of knowledge must be treated in their complementarily rather than antagonistically if educational progress is to be registered.

The quality assurance imperatives of the curriculum underpinnings of Universal Basic Education (UBE) willy-nilly demands a commitment of the professional teacher not only to a mastery of the tasks intrinsic in teacher development but also serous subscription to the pedagogical ideals established in teacher professionalism as broad component of the curriculum (Tanner and Tanner, 1980, Adegoke, 2000; Okam, 2002; Nneji, 2003; and Okam, 2004). A knowledge of these theoretical and practical Skills, according to these scholars and teacher educators, are vital for the professional teacher since most teachers want to do well and would want to function as professionals. These aforementioned academics have generally considered the responsibilities of the professional teacher in terms of the curriculum underpinnings of Universal Basic Education (UBE) into a number of broad perspectives. The tasks ensconced in these responsibilities willy-nilly demands a commitment of the professional teacher in terms of the following activities considered within the framework of the UBE, as a curriculum design, thus:

- i. professional development of the teacher considered in relationship to the issues involved in curriculum development;
- ii. professional growth;
- iii. professional performance of teachers as established in the issues intrinsic in curriculum development;
- iv. approved practices built-into teacher education;
- v. avenues for curriculum improvement; and
- vi. functions of teaching.

### **The Responsibilities and Tasks of Professional Teacher in Curriculum Design**

The responsibility demands of teachers include the exploration of UBE instructional design and other general curriculum endeavours so as to gather and develop pedagogical strategies for proper and effective implementation of the programme at all level of education. Curricularists (Okam, 2001; Okam, 2002; Nneji, 2003) endorse that the ability to synthesize this knowledge in action is a major component of the hallmark of the professional teacher.

The professional growth of the UBE teacher calls for a commitment to the improvement of the curriculum ensconced in this ‘new’ instructional design and some other related and relevant subject matters. This development depends on the teacher’s recognition of the following responsibilities:

- i) a need for better professional preparation; and
- ii) a need to become ever more knowledgeable and the involvement if responsible decision-making.

These tasks demand that the professional UBE teacher is responsible for the control and management of all features that derive from a given teaching-learning environment. Specifically, Nneji (2003) displayed these responsibilities as follows:

- i. planning of the course unit or lesson and other extracurricular activities;
- ii. management of pupils, particularly in respect of control and disciplines;
- iii. impacting knowledge effectively and appropriately;
- iv. assessing pupils’ progress in terms of knowledge, skills and attitudes;
- v. sourcing instructional materials; and
- vi. being a professional all the time.

With reference to the issues raised above, good planning is imperative to good teaching and this constitutes a large part of the teacher’s job. The teacher is responsible for planning at three levels: the course level, the unit level and the lesson level. The teacher is also responsible for planning the extracurricular activities. At whatever level, curriculum planning in education involves three dimensions in the sphere of decision-making: decisions on what to achieve; decision on how to achieve; and decisions on how to recognize achievement. These three elements of decision-making require that the teacher provides answers to the following questions:

- (a) What are the aims and objectives?
- (b) What curriculum content and or subject-matter areas will feature in a given instructional plan?
- (c) What teaching methods will feature in the instructional plan?
- (d) What are the resources and aids needed and are they available and?
- (e) How will achievement be measured?

A provision of comprehensive answers to the above questions will necessarily commit the professional UBE teacher to the execution of a number of tasks such as: a development of a teaching plan; a scheme of work, syllabus or a curriculum design. He has to put in place pedagogical and management structures which are designed to foster pupils' control; this development is a necessary prerequisite which is meant to engender successful teaching and Learning.

Besides, the task of impacting knowledge is the most acknowledged responsibility of the professional teacher. He is expected to possess a wealth of requisite and relevant knowledge and subject-matter to render, otherwise he/he has no reason being in the classroom.

A number of these quality assurance imperatives demand a commitment of the professional teacher of the UBE scheme in terms of the execution of the following tasks with reference to learners (Okam, 2019).

- a) Identifying, recognizing and promoting individual differences;
- b) Varying learning experiences to take care of individual differences;
- c) Their participation and involvement in classroom situations;
- d) Use of questionings as instrument to challenge their intelligence and ability;
- e) Respect for their interests, choices, and individual decisions;
- f) Exploring and employing guidance and counselling techniques for treating and effecting management of individual and group development;
- g) Providing stimulating and conducive environments with learning opportunities through the employment of varied instructional materials;
- h) Execution of supervision so as to ascertain the adequacy of teaching-learning situations and the usage of techniques; and
- i) Engagements in critical observation and study of individual children.

In addition, since classroom work needs to be evaluated, the professional UBE teacher has to explore avenues of gathering feedback from learners in order to ascertain the level of work done. He has the responsibility of providing opportunities and instruments for checking pupils' progress in knowledge gain, attitude-change and acquisition of relevant skills. This teacher is also confronted with the task of devising appropriate tools and resource materials for the purpose of making his teaching interesting and effective.

### **Curriculum Design Intrinsic in the UBE for Attaining Quality Assurance**

A major aspect of the professional development of the UBE teacher, demands that he needs to recognize that the totality of the instructional design rooted in the "new programme may not necessarily be characterized in the mastery of classroom pedagogy in the Separate or traditional subject disciplines – whether arts, humanities and social sciences (Okam, 2002). The teacher's knowledge has to derive essentially from a curriculum content which is aimed at incorporating interactively knowledge and inspirations from many realms of learning. The professional teacher has to recognize that the curriculum content envisaged in these "new" developments may not necessarily be concerned with the production and propagation of knowledge for its own sake as with a utilization of highly differentiated subject-matter structures derived from a variety of disciplines for the purpose of addressing and solving personal and social problems. The professional teacher might have to demonstrate the teaching of

certain kinds of subject-matter content through the “integrated curriculum’ which, of necessity, could represent a natural response to the shifting views of society with Particular reference to different cadres of learners-whether drop-outs, out-of-school children or some – categories of adolescents. He has to display that the environment and all its natural phenomena could best be understood in the context of a unified and wholistic approach to the curriculum (Okam. 2002).

Secondly, the professional growth of the UBE teacher is rooted in his preparedness to visualize a development that curriculum programmes in this ““new” instructional design are meant to establish a strong bases and foundation for a life-long learning (Okam. 1992). These instructional criteria, according to Okam (2002), must be made operational in a classroom setting within a framework of tie understanding that the UBE represents a relevant curriculum package which aims at integrating many related subject areas and disciplines so long as they offer to the learner holistic portrait of man and his knowledge of society.

Thirdly, if curriculum improvement is to be constituted into a vital feature of UBE, the profession teacher has to visualize the curriculum design established in it as a vital instrument for propagating the ideals of democratic citizenship. In this perspective, according to Okam (2002), this teacher needs to be committed to enabling young learners gain and develop awareness in terms of the following:

- i. constitutional rights and liberties, the environment, ethical values, interdependence of people human rights and responsibilities;
- ii. a development of skills of participation in civil life and a commitment of values compatible with democratic principles;
- iii. the need for heterogeneous groupings of students in all school-work related to civil competence;
- iv. the virtues associated with a democratic school environment; and
- v.an involvement of the entire school faculty in teaching citizenship education

Fourthly, the professional teacher has to entertain a possession of a sound knowledge of the philosophy behind the UBE considered within the framework of teacher education. He must necessarily cultivate the view that this philosophy is visualized as one of the curriculum avenues of establishing a strong basis for producing prospective citizens and of foraging a cohesive society that will support a notion nation-building in Nigeria.

## **Conclusion**

After reviewing and discussions on the exploration of the curriculum design assets intrinsic in Universal Basic Education for attaining quality assurance in teacher production for sustainability the researchers concluded that, In order to ensure effective implementation of schools-system, there is need for professional teacher who must necessarily endorse and display, in practical terms, the quality assurance imperatives in the perspectives established in teacher production and teacher productivity in the context of UBE scheme.

It is also concluded that, for quality assurance imperatives in the context of the UBE scheme, and for effective implementation of the programme, professional teachers operating in it need to be committed to the quest for improvement and development.

## **Recommendations**

Based on the exploration of the curriculum design assets intrinsic in Universal Basic Education for attaining quality assurance in teacher production for sustainability the following recommendations were made:

- a) exposure to training and re-training designs, devices and techniques so as to meet changing scientific and technological challenges;
- b) identification and maximization of abilities in the interest of learners;
- c) encouraging and endorsing the relevance of UBE and wholistic education, through language structures, in order to promote all-round skills' acquisition and development of learners;
- d) a commitment to consistent and continuous curriculum development to cater for different

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