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JOURNAL

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Contents

EXTENT OF UNIVERSAL BASIC EDUCATION CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION OF INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNOLOGY INNOVATION IN KOGI STATE

Dr. .S. Awuja-Ademu and Dr. James Enemali Ukwedeh

Abstract

The paper discusses the extent to which UBE curricula implementation of instructional technology innovation to achieve its goals. UBE is aimed at free compulsory all-inclusive, child participation and gender equity in Nigeria but the new instructional technology innovation surpasses physical classroom boundaries to learn from books only as it utilizes computer on-line digital connectivity by reading each other's ideas via-audio visual equipment. Digital on-line connectivity provides learners from different geographical zones the opportunity to study together faster ahead of teachers' use of inexpensive old instructional technology like chalkboards, charts and pictures from around the world. Hence the use of new instructional technology innovation needs in-service training, workshop and seminars among other things for teachers to be acquainted with digital computer online teaching modes.

The new instructional technology innovation could take over teacher's definite duties as the scenario of teachers following structured lesson plan is fast fading away with every passing day as learners are no longer excited by lectures or the use of textbooks due to the virtual reality of telecommunication, multimedia and information and communication technology processing paradigm (Accascina, 2006). The utilization of computer internet connectivity opens a new world of potential instructional technological modes. Normally, teachers develop instructional technology without the need to acquire technical skills in the teaching and learning environments. The Universal Basic Education (UBE) was designed specifically to lay solid foundations for scientific and technological development in Nigeria (Enamiroro, 2009). The UBE is aimed at making education free and compulsory at the primary (1-6) and junior secondary schools (classes 1-3). The UBE was launched in 1999 to reduce illiteracy, poverty and ignorance in Nigeria to their barest minimum, especially the adults, women and children. It is a way of demonstrating the Federal Government's commitment to international policies toward the eradication of poverty and illiteracy in Africa.

Objectives of UBE

Education is regarded as an instrument par excellence for effective and efficient national development of her natural and human resources (FRN, 2004). The UBE is meant for every Nigerian child irrespective of physical, social, political, religious status or geographical zones to receive a quality education. There is a great need to use quality instructional technological innovation to attain UBE objectives in Nigeria at large and Kogi State in particular. To this effect, the study focuses on the extent of UBE curricula implementation and instructional technology innovation in Kogi State achieve its objectives. The UBE scheme was in response to the quest for a more functional educational programme due to the failure of the 6-3-3-4 system of education introduced in 1982 by the Federal Government of Nigeria but poor implementation and inconsistency in Nigeria's national policies on education have been responsible for non-achievement of our educational goals. To get rid of educational impediments which had led to the non-achievement of the 6-3-3-4 system of education, the UBE programme was launched in 1999 with the fundamental aim to: Develop in the entire citizenry a strong commitment to its vigorous promotion and consciousness for education,

1. Provide free compulsory universal basic education for every Nigerian child of school age,

2. Reduce drastically the incidence of dropout from the formal school system through improved relevance, equality and efficiency,

3. Cater for the learning needs of the young persons who for one reason or another have had to interrupt their schooling through appropriate forms of complementary approaches to the provision of basic education and

4.   Ensure the acquisition of the appropriate levels of literacy, ethical, moral and civic values for laying a solid foundation for life-long learning.

The Federal Government of Nigeria resorted to introducing the UBE programme because the Local Government Education Authorities (LGEAs) saddled with the constitutional responsibilities for basic education curricula delivery seemed to have failed to deliver access to quality basic education for every child of school-going age (between 6 and 15 years old) are becoming difficult (Accascina, 2006). In the UBE curricula, an attempt has been made to close the wide educational gap between old and new curricula contents to achieve its curriculum objectives as proposed by the Nigeria Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) whereby the basic education runs the combination of primary school (classes 1-6) and junior secondary school (Jss1-3) for 9-years of schooling continuously. The curricula implementation expectation is to acquire appropriate levels of literacy, numeracy, manipulative skills, long-life skills, ethical, moral and civic values required for self-reliance and technological advancement.

The 9-years Basic Education Curricula Specific Objectives include
1. Acquisition of science and technological skills,
2. Inculcation of value re-orientation, civic and moral responsibility,
3. Acquisition of skills for poverty reduction and
4. Empowerment for citizens to face national and global challenges (NPIT, 2000). The UBE is targeted at providing every Nigerian child with diverse skills and knowledge for entrepreneurship, wealth generation and educational advancement (NTI, 2008).

Universal Basic Education Acts-2004 and Curriculum Implementation
The universal basic education Act of 2004 drew its enabling power from section 18(3) of the 1999 constitution which enjoined the government to provide free and compulsory basic education as stated on item 60 (c) of part 1 of the secondary schedule of the constitution (Taiwo, 2011). This section confers powers on the National Assembly to make appropriate laws concerning setting up minimum standards of education at all levels. There is also constitutional provision for the states and local governments who are the owners of basic education institutions to make use of relevant sections for the purpose of uniformity in terms of qualitative basic education curricula implementation nation wide since UBE is a 9-year intervention programme aimed at eradicating illiteracy, ignorance and poverty.

The Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) was put in place by an Act of the National Assembly to coordinate and ensure proper implementation of the objectives of the UBE programme. The UBEC coordinates activities and implementation of UBE within its first 9year gestation period ranging from 2001 to 2009 and beyond (Taiwo, 2011). The essence is to stimulate and accelerate national development, political consciousness and national integration to ensure that effective linkages exist between government and civil society organizations and/or private providers and communities for successful implementation of curricula by the teachers.

The UBE curricula implementation cannot be successful without teachers' continuous professional development as a necessary condition for updating teachers' knowledge and improving his /her competency level of effectiveness in teaching and learning situations. In-service training and retraining as required by section 9 (b) of the UBE Act, 2004 states that 70% of the 2% of the consolidated revenue fund planned to be expended on 3 key areas of UBE which include:

(1) Infrastructural development (70%);
(2) Textbooks/non-consumable-instructional technologies/Materials (15%)
(3)Teachers' professional development (15%). The implementation procedures spelt out that UBE teachers' professional development is a necessity because a huge amount of money is budgeted for it.

Taiwo (2011) states that 14,023 teachers and caregivers, 149,638 primary school teachers and 40,003 Junior Secondary school teachers were trained on various instructional methods, effective management, computer skills, HIV/AIDs awareness and improvisation/utilization of instructional technology in 2005 using the Federal Government of Nigeria intervention funds.

It is also on record that National Teachers Institute (NTI) has trained 145,000 primary school teachers with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) funds. Participants were trained in four subject areas at the primary school level on how best to handle assessment, skill dissemination and instructional technology implementation. The training was concentrated on the UBE primary school teachers (60%), junior secondary school teachers (35%) and pre-primary education teachers (5%) which brought its total to 100% (Taiwo, 2011). The training was principally organized to equip teachers on how best to implement UBE curricula with the new instructional technology innovation to attain scientific and technological development. The UBE programme is a laudable project intended to bridge the wide gender disparity in educational attainment among Nigerian children (Enamiroro, 2009). However, poor instructional technological innovation utility tends to mar specified objectives of the UBE.

Instructional Technology Innovation Implementation

There is a positive relationship between educational resource utilization and students' academic performances as instructional technology facilitates teaching and learning activities (Olutola, 2001; Enamiroro, 2009). Instructional communication technology refers to a particular form of audio-visual equipment in the classroom, laboratory or other places designed for the purposes of teaching and learning encounters. Instructional technology has the capacity to stimulate, arouse and sustain interest of the learners. Leong (2006) believes that utilization of instructional technology needs to go beyond drill and practice levels, especially in this digital age. This is because the global innovation of qualitative instructional technology via electronic initiatives in the school curricula is quite effective. The quality of instructional communication technology innovation in this digital age makes teachers to utilize internet resources that are quite appealing, stimulating, learner-friendly and educational sound (Guy, Marcus, Thomas and Yawna, 2010). Before the advent of digital computer internet connectivity, instructional materials such as flowers, fruits, roots, leaves, animal skins, bottle tops, calabash, clay pots, chalkboards and charcoal were in use.

Today, the innovation of computer internet digital instructional technology supports the teaching and learning process which has opened a new world of knowledge acquisition. Indeed, many instructional technology tools are made available to us in the virtual classroom learning environment. The use of instructional innovative technology brings a cheaper understanding of how best a teacher can be more effective in helping learners to learn easily in the formal school setting. The need for utilization of quality instructional technology innovation to achieve UBE curricula goals cannot be overemphasized in Nigeria at large and Kogi State in particular.

The use of good quality instructional materials is expected to be more practically oriented and evidence-based solutions to the current persistent educational problems in teaching and learning situations. Otherwise, such instructional technology may not be good enough for instruction. Traditional instructional technology contributes to teacher effectiveness because, it is used to promote, improve, facilitate and attain specific instructional objectives (Awuja-Ademu, 2004). The new innovative digital internet computer instructional technology initiative has increased its quality more than ever before by its flexibility via access to new ways of communication between teachers and learners in the classroom. The new instructional technology paradigm integrates computer internet digital tools that surpass physical classroom boundaries to learn from books only but also avails learners opportunities for international teaching and learning virtually (Guy, Marcus, Thomas and Yawna, 2010). The adoption of a new innovation package of digital tools provides learners from different parts of the world a rare opportunity to learn together by reading each other's ideas and discussing differences in understanding individuals' views and attitudes. In this connection, digital

instructional technological tools have permeated beyond the lives of teachers' ability to teach around the world.

The new digital computer online connectivity allows teachers to take part in conferencing with colleagues worldwide. Therefore, the utilization of instructional technology tools allow individual to be dealt with directly simply since everything is sent online. Internet utility of instructional technology motivates and quickens learners' understanding to move faster ahead of teachers' manual methods in normal classroom teaching. This is due to the fact that the new technology employs increased group support and cohesion, especially in the remote classroom thereby helping the learners understand better a given topic or concept. Application of instructional technology involves audio-instructional media to produce sound or vibration to support the teacher's natural voice through radio, satellites, videotape, circuit television, slides, films and projectors. The three progressive stages of using instructional technology according to Accascina (2006) are:

1. Supported didactic which employs technology to support lessons virtually and not as an integral part of the tool for conceptual development. Learner's participation tends to be low because of his or her little interactivity,

2. Interactive uses of instructional technology stimulate learner's responses from time to time thereby demonstrating a better understanding of some concepts. For instance, the use of verbal, visual and aesthetic stimuli poses challenges for learners to think faster and learn easily and

3. Enhancing the teacher's capability to use the available approach to structure his/her lesson so that many opportunities could be provided for learners to respond to instructional technology stimuli as an individual as well as in pair or groups.

The interactive capacity of IT seeks to integrate concept and develops cognition in a way. A good quality utilization of instructional technology in the UBE programme can improve the implementation of UBE curricula but this tends to be elusive especially in science, mathematics and technology education due to inadequate provision of digital instructional technology (Guy, Marcus, Thomas and Yawna, 2010).

Challenges of Instructional Technology Implementation in UBEC
There are several challenges facing the implementation of the UBE curricula in Nigeria and these include:
1. Lack of specialist teachers who can use new upgraded instructional technology to facilitate the virtual classroom UBE curricula implementation.

2. The inability of UBE curricula implementers to utilize the new instructional technology of internet connectivity directly tailored towards the purpose of UBE.

3. Lack of incentives for teachers to update their knowledge on computer skill acquisitions.

4. Many learners tend to find virtual classroom facilities much more desirable than traditional ways of learning due to its flexibility and convenience that makes sitting in the classroom to listen to a teacher's voice a lot less desirable. As a result, few teachers who possess these skills are more marketable now than those who lack these skills thereby posing challenges to illiterate computer internet teachers in our UBE programme. You cannot give what you do not have and so, UBE curricula implementers who lack computer/internet technology knowledge to teach may be facing practical challenges of utilizing new instructional technology to achieve UBE curricula targets.

Conclusion
The extent of UBE curricula implementation of instructional technology innovation initiatives has been examined. The introduction of UBE to eradicate illiteracy, ignorance and poverty via free

compulsory education was a good plan but its curricula implementation to achieve its very aims has become source of concern. UBEC implementation declared all-inclusive, child participation and gender equity in Nigeria but lack a computer, internet and online experts to operate new instructional technology that surpasses physical classroom boundaries to learn from books only. The new instructional technology innovation adopts digital online connectivity to provide learners from different parts of the world opportunity to study together and learn faster ahead of teachers' use of old inexpensive teaching aids. Hence, it is concluded that skilful computer internet teachers are required to implement the new instructional technology innovation in the UBE programme, especially in Kogi State.

Recommendations

The ultimate goal of integrating new instructional technology innovation in UBE curricula implementation is to facilitate effectiveness in teaching-learning process in the digital age for eradicating illiteracy and poverty among the Nigerian populace. It is hereby recommended that;

1. Expert computer internet teachers should be trained and employed to implement new instructional technology for the virtual classroom.

2. The current UBE curricula implementation should accommodate the new instructional technology to include online digital connectivity tailored directly towards the objectives of UBE.

3. Adequate incentives should be provided for UBE specialist internet teachers who utilize upgraded instructional technology to facilitate the digital teaching and learning process in UBE schools.

4. Regular training and re-training should be organized for already employed teachers through workshops, seminars and conferences to update their knowledge and skills among other things.

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