APPLICATION OF CONTEMPORARY INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS FOR CURRICULUM DELIVERY IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Quality and progress in educational sector in Nigeria can only be achieved by maintaining a balance or tilting towards a 21st century method in Nigeria curriculum practices. In this study the questions that could be asked are: To what extent are innovative methods applied against traditional methods for curriculum practices in Nigeria? What could be the likely challenges that prevent teachers from actualizing their goals in teaching towards realization of quality education in Nigeria? What is the way forward to achieving sustainable quality education in Nigeria? Review of literature has shown that contemporary methods are to a lower level applied for teaching and learning in Nigeria across all levels of education. Challenges to this were attributed to lack of facilities and materials, poor attitude towards the innovation, fear and ignorance of the change, lack of knowledge among others. A way forward to innovative application of method would be through organizing workshops for instructors on the use of innovative instructional methods, funding of teaching by government and NGOs, integration of technological media into the curriculum content, attitudinal change of teachers towards innovation, in-service training and collaborative training for teachers. In conclusion, contemporary methods although productive, are less preferred for teaching than the traditional method of teaching across all levels of education in Nigeria. Hence, realization of quality sustainable development in education could hardly be achieved if challenges envisaged are not addressed.

Keywords: Application, contemporary instructional methods, curriculum delivery, Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

The effectiveness of teaching and learning lie in the approaches, methods, techniques, and strategies utilized in teaching. A successful lesson therefore is accountable with the method applied. Thus, teaching method according to Mkpa, (2009) is a way of doing the teaching business with the appropriate integration of instructional materials to achieve the objectives at the classroom level. Instruction is the interaction between the teacher, the learner and the learning environment. Instructional method simply means ways of facilitating learning. It is the implementation, delivery or action phase of the curriculum meant for effective teaching of the learners. Alison (2019) believes that instructional method ensures greater efficiency and effectiveness in the acquisition of knowledge or skill by learners. It embraces all the activities of the curriculum implementer, starting with setting of the instructional objectives and ending with the evaluation and use of feedback for improvement. Instructional method therefore is a process of executing curriculum activities for quality education in every subject. As the world is changing, so are the curriculum and the method of delivery. A paradigm shift is required in solving educational problems in order to achieve to a higher height using contemporary innovative ways of teaching and learning globally.

A contemporary instructional method is an innovative idea, methods and new ways of doing things. It is the introduction of new knowledge, skills and attitude in the course of curriculum practice for efficiency and achievement in the system. It is an innovation in the art of teaching in the 21st century classroom globally which is usually seen as a progressive approach that is learner centered in approach as against the conservative tradition method that is subject centered in approach. Each approach in application is determined by some criteria for choice of teaching method used. This depends on what fits the teacher as the curriculum implementer such as: 'educational philosophy, objectives or school mission statement, classroom demography, nature of task in a subject area, learner's characteristics and instructional materials available' as identified by Moemeke (2016, p. 187). The 21st century is marked with great changes in the educational system. These changes are synonymous with the functionality of the curriculum in the society. Curriculum is the instrument used to effect the changes.

Curriculum is the roadmap to the attainment of the goals of education through best contemporary practices. According to Rufa'I, (2018), curriculum consists of the diverse parts of the education process that participants need to go through in order to attain the objectives of the education set. So, the school curricula normally change, once there is any change in the educational system. The changes may be in the objectives, content, learning experiences, educational resources, delivery methods, and evaluation which are the components of the curriculum. Since society is dynamic and not static, so is the emergence of new ideas and new knowledge through research globally, in terms of curriculum practices. Putting into practice the officially prescribed courses of study is known as curriculum implementation or practices, where the learner is the central figure (Nwafor & Okoi, 2018). These new ideas are integrated into the existing curriculum to make them functional and worthwhile as theorized by theorists.

One major factor that distinguishes conventional and contemporary instructional method is the theory or a set of principles that guide each approach. While the conventional methods are based on S-R theories, or cognitive constructivism, innovative methods are based more on social constructivism. It could be recalled that Vygotsky, the father of social constructivism introduced the zone of proximal development (ZPD) (Yasnitsky, 2018); as the distance between actual development level and the potential development level made possible by interaction with more capable persons. It is the range of abilities that a person can perform with assistance but cannot independently (Cherry, 2019). Such assistance can come from more knowledgeable persons (e.g. teachers, master craftsmen, peers), social interaction (such as during discussion, debate and social networking) and scaffolding (providing learners with assistance, in form of activities and instructions that eventually will be removed, and the learners will complete the task independently). The ZPD is an offshoot of the social cultural theory put forward by Vygotsky. The implication of developing innovative methods based on the ZPD is that what a learner can learn is determined

more by the quality of help provided to such a learner, than the level of cognitive development of such a learner. Consequently, innovative instructional methods are designed by providing learner-learner, learner-teacher and learner-materials interactions than in the traditional or conventional method.

In a conventional teacher-led classroom, the lesson plan is what the teacher uses to present the lesson. On the other hand, in a self-directed learning situation, instruction is designed based on the actual needs of the learners. Different learners may have different needs and so instructions are designed to be responsive to the individual needs of the learners. In other words, instructional method should be adaptive to the needs of the learners. Although both traditional and contemporary instructional method can be used in group and individualized instructional modes, the former is mainly designed for group instruction, while the latter is for individualized instruction. This explains why traditional methods are suitable for teacher-led lessons, while contemporary instructional methods are very appropriate for self-instruction. Contemporary instructional methods are also regarded as the recent additions to the earlier ones. Hence, contemporary instructional methods have been regarded as newer ways or processes of teaching and learning.

The concern of this study is to discuss the applications of contemporary instructional methods in curriculum practice in Nigerian classroom base on literature reviewed. It would also analyze the challenges or barriers to application of the contemporary instructional methods in order to proffer solution to a way forward. Conclusion and implications would be made based on findings from review gathered. This is not an empirical study but theoretical or opinion paper based on literature review in the context of Nigeria.

CONTEMPORARY INSTRUCTIONAL METHOD IN CURRICULUM DELIVERY IN NIGERIA

Instructional methods refers to the general principles, pedagogy and management strategies used for classroom instruction**.** However, Obasi (2015) views teaching method as a global term which involves simultaneous variation of several activities. This means that for effective teaching and learning to take place, series of activities have to be performed. It is also viewed as a professional technique teacher's use in their instructional exercises to enable learners acquires relevant knowledge, attitude and skills (Mkpa, 2009). Teaching method serves as a communication link between the teacher, students and subject matter. In planning for an effective curriculum delivery, Olaitan and Agusiobo, (1981), advocated the use of more than one dimensional method or technique. A technique is an integral part of a method while a method results from an approach.

Teaching approach is a set of principles, beliefs, or ideas about the nature of learning which is translated into the classroom. The approaches for teaching can be broadly classified into teacher and learner centered (Isioma, 2015). In teacher-centered approach, the teacher is the main authority figure. Students are viewed as "empty vessels" whose primary role is to passively receive information (via lectures and direct instruction) with the goal of testing and assessment. Although, it is the primary role of teacher to pass knowledge and information onto their students especially as he/she is looked upon by the learners as an expert or an authority (Igwe, 2017), yet in this approach, teaching and assessment are viewed as two separate entities. In this case, the teacher is at the center of affairs as he/she is seen as the master of the subject matter who measures students' learning through objectively scored tests and assessments. The teacher has the task of talking, handling equipment, demonstrating, experimenting, writing on the board, drawing, carrying out displays and other actions (Yusuf, 2015). Hence, Ngwoke (2010) argued that this approach encourages the teacher to be tale-teller, and the learner to engage in rote memorization and regurgitation of the teacher's tales. Examples of such methods are expository or lecture methods - which require little or no involvement of learners in the teaching process (Yusuf, 2015). It is also for this lack of involvement of the learners in what they are taught that such methods are called "closed-ended" or traditional method. This approach has been criticized according to Moemeka (2016) for the following reasons:

I.   It focuses on the teacher's knowledge, skills and abilities instead of the extent of learning acquired by the learners.
II. It encourages teachers dominance to the detriment of the learners
III. Information flow is basically one directional hence interaction is stifled.
IV. Learners are not encouraged to use their initiatives in learning skills and attitude.
V.   Learning is substituted for by rote memorization.

In the 21st century classrooms the use of traditional teaching methods by teachers are still rampant. Thus, Offorma, and Obiefuna, (2017) lamented that 21st century teachers are still found applying grammar translation method, the lecture method, note dictating and copying, and other teacher-oriented methods in Nigerian schools. These methods encourage regurgitation of information without deeply understanding the content. This may explain why learning outcome are poor and the products of the system non-functional. For instance, Akuakanwa (2017) regrettably stated that majority of the methods used in teaching History in Nigeria are still very much on the conservative method in Nigeria such as lecture method. However, innovative method is acknowledged as important in learning the subject in the curriculum but teachers rarely use methods such as: project, field trip or excursion, mind and concept mapping, jig saw, think-pair-shore, fishbowl and others for teaching. Hence the invisibility of history curriculum at the senior secondary school level in Nigeria was found to be very high (Ogwu & Azor, 2019). This explains the fact that teaching using contemporary method can only be achieved using the learner centered approach.

The emphasis on teaching in the 21st century is to make teaching and learning activities interactive. The interactive nature demands that the activities should be learner-oriented and not teacher oriented. The Learner-centered approach in teaching known as the contemporary or innovative approach takes into consideration students' interest, passions and capitalizes on their strengths as well (Isioma, 2015). This type of innovation promotes the 4Cs: Communication, Collaboration, Creativity and Critical thinking, which is the focus of today's teaching (Offorma & Obiefuna, 2017). This is why the concept of teaching has changed from 'telling' to facilitation of learning. According to Walters, Green and Walters (2017), teachers and teaching methods must reflect the needs of the learners, the nation, and the world as a whole. This approach helps students form a strong

learning community with the teacher as a coach and facilitator of student learning using instructional materials. This approach as acknowledged by Moemeka (2016) allows for learners' active participation in knowledge construction; creating interaction and positive learning environment; developing initiative; reasoning and critical thinking; developing manipulative skills in learners and making learners more productive rather than by rote learning as in the traditional approach. Under learner-centered approach, students learn from cognitive, social interaction and psychological point of view. According to Moemeka (2016, p.172) methods in this category include:

I. Discussion
II. Activity
III. Project
IV. Inquiry
V. Role play
VI. Modeling
VII. Student demonstration
VIII. Guided discovery
IX. Experimentation/laboratory
X. Concept mapping
XI. Games and simulations etc;

Hence, it is important to apply contemporary teaching methods in the teaching of school subjects in a developing country like Nigeria. However, according to Moemeka, majority of these instructional methods are still not used in schools by 21st century teachers in Nigeria. In recent times, advancement in technology has also uncovered certain emerging approaches to teaching-learning process of certain subjects. According to Tips for Educators (2016) and Candler (2016) these include: Visualization, technology tools, active learning, and learner autonomy. These strategies according to the authors are actually embedded in various contemporary methods of teaching in the 21st century classroom in advanced nations like USA, Australia, Canada, and Japan among others. Visualization is a good teaching strategy for teaching reading and literacy to boost reading culture and achievement in a small group. This is done by using text materials to visualize what is learnt in small groups. It is used to help students organize and get connected to concepts with mastery, ability to transfer knowledge and lead to a deeper, longer-term understanding of what is taught. Veřmiřovský (2019) asserts that visualization is associated with cognitive activities; hence, teaching students with visualization skills help them to understand, recall and think critically about the subjects they study. In the same vein, Shatri and Buza (2017) opined that the use of visualization approach in teaching helps to increase communication, critical thinking, motivates students to learn, increases their cooperative ability and provides analytical approach to various learning based problems. Nevertheless, the recent push in technology has offered new ways of teaching and learning in educational sector using ICT to facilitate learning as well (Shatri, 2015).

Technology tools are contemporary innovative method that could also enhance student's learning experience such: as television, computer, radio, internet, multi- media, tablets, digital cameras, videoconferencing technology and GPS device. Possible uses of technology in the classroom include: using video games to teach mathematics and foreign languages, leveraging Skype to communicate with classrooms or guest speakers around the world, or multimedia projects that allow students to explore subject matter using film, audio and even software they create (Candler, 2016). The use of audio-visual documentaries and audio-taped to teach abstract subjects like history (Azor, 2017, Osokoya, 2007) and physics (Quarcoo-Nelson, Buabeng, & Osafo, 2012) have also been observed to be a learner centered contemporary approach towards teaching in Nigerian schools. This is because, the application of computer-assisted learning through the use of the aforementioned technological media, can increase student's motivation and create better learning environments as rightly argued by Falode (2018). Nevertheless, in Nigeria, this is to a low extent applied in teaching vital subjects in the curriculum such as English language (Igwe, 2017), mathematics, economics, science among others at various educational level in Nigeria.

Active learning is another process whereby students engage in activities, such as reading, writing, discussion, or problem solving that promote analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of class content (Candler, 2016). Active learning involves hands-on activities that require movement, talking, and listening which activate multiple areas of the brain (Scholastic, 2017). Cooperative learning, peer tutoring, discussion groups, projects, role play, simulation, collaborative problem solving, problem-based learning, and the use of simulations are some methods that promote active learning. Active participation of the learner is one of the principles of effective teaching and learning. It calls for hands-on activities, which expose the learners to interact effectively with the learning materials. Some interactive methods teachers can employ include: reflection/reflective practice, use of ICT, field-trips, simulation, learner autonomy, communicative approach/method, and projects, to mention but a few. According to Igwe (2017), simulation is a method of teaching by creating real-life situations in the classroom to gain a better understanding of the situation. The teacher creates a situation and controls the parameter of the world and uses it to achieve the desired instructional results (Kanno, Obasi & Obih, 2016). It is a problem-solving activity, which encourages critical thinking in real life situations although it takes a lot of time and resources. This however, could lead to motivated learning experiences among the learners (Cicuto & Torres, 2016).

Another active learning method is the field trip activity based teaching method which gives the learner opportunity to see things or events in their natural setting (Ogwu & Demelu, 2017). It is a kind of excursion taken outside the classroom for the purpose of making relevant observations, and also obtaining specific information by being directly engaged in observing, collecting information, studying relationships, and manipulating objects (Sheida, Abubaka & Utulu, 2018). This activity contributes to the intellectual and affective development of the learner. It gives the students valuable practical experience and encourages learning by doing (Kwakye, 2016). It promotes and sustains the students' motivation and takes care of the individual differences of the learners. Knowledge gained through field trip is permanent because the learner is actively involved. However it is expensive, time consuming, risky, and sometimes, parents and school administrators do not support it. In Nigeria, this

method is rarely applied in curriculum delivery across the subjects at various levels as observed by many researchers (Igwe, 2017, Ogechi & Anuluobi, 2017; Ogwu & Dimelu, 2017).

Learner autonomy is another approach that refers to a student's ability to set appropriate learning goals for themselves. It is a contemporary innovative form of individualized learning approach. According to Alonazi (2017), learner autonomy is seen as the learner's ability to take responsibility of their own learning. Learners develop a capacity for reflection and recognize strategies that help them succeed. Learners accept responsibility for their learning, review their learning, and evaluate its effectiveness. This environment is one that is positive and motivating, and encourages collaboration and social interaction. A few strategies that can help to build an autonomous learning environment include:

- Problem-based learning situations that require students to use their knowledge to create solutions for specific situations
- Writing in journals and reflecting on what, why, and how they learn
- Assembling portfolios that document their learning process over a period of time
- Using rubrics that include the learner's individual expectations and a self-assessment component and peer assessment that allows students to evaluate each other using rubrics and clearly stated objectives.
- Some characteristics of an autonomous learner as identified by (Krzanowski, 2011)
- Include:
- Critical reflection and thinking
- Self-awareness
- Taking responsibility for own learning
- Working creatively with complex situations-venturesome
- The ability to create own meanings and challenge ideas/theories.
- Self-motivated/curious
- Flexible
- Accountability
- Persistence/responsible.

This type of innovation is moderately used in Nigerian higher institutions with lecture method still dominating presently. The choice of teaching method/s depends largely on the information or skill that is applied in curriculum delivery, which may also influence aptitude and enthusiasm of the students and teachers.

In as much as there are many subject matters, so there are as many methods of teaching. Majority of the contemporary methods identified earlier in this study were usually used for quasi experimental studies to test for the efficacy of the methods used; but not usually applied as continuity in practice after this in Nigeria. These have been attributed to a lot of problems or barriers to continuity in curriculum practice at all educational levels in Nigeria.

CHALLENGES TOWARDS ACTUALIZATION OF SUSTAINABLE QUALITY EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

Many a time, most beautiful curriculum plan fail at the implementation stage. Policy, human and material resources are usually held accountable. Based on the review made, many researchers have attributed barriers to effective curriculum delivery to shortage of qualified teachers, lack of incentives, inadequate infrastructural facilities and materials, poor funding, lack of knowledge of methodology and time (Akaraonye, & Ajero, 2017; Akuakanwa, 2017); poor policy implementation (Anyanwu & Ibe, 2015; Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2013).

Other challenges teachers face from personal interview with teachers at various educational levels on the use of contemporary instructional methods converges systematically to include:

- Lack of systematic ways of monitoring independent work;
- Fear of trying the new innovations;
- Lack of trust leaving the entire activities to the learners.
- Shortage of skilled instructors.
- Problem of assessment since some of the learners may not likely submit themselves for examination and teachers also use poor assessment techniques.

CONCLUSION

Research has shown that contemporary instructional methods are to a low extent applied in curriculum delivery across educational levels in Nigeria despite all the advantages accorded to it. This is because teaching is still practiced using the conventional methods. However, barriers teachers face are attributed to fear of the unknown, shortage of skilled teachers and time for operation, lack of incentives, materials and facilities to work, poor planning and monitoring of curriculum policy implementation, poor assessment techniques amongst others. Since the 21st century teachers are the drivers of economic, social, political and technological development (Chigbu & Azor, 2018; Puhan, Malla & Behera, 2014), curriculum delivery needs to be channeled towards learner centered methods of teaching and learning. It is therefore pertinent that teachers imbibe the new technologies and import them into the classroom to make their teaching active, relevant and functional.

The study has implications on the policy of education in Nigeria, in making sure that the recommended innovative methods are utilized by teachers in the course of teaching as stipulated in the Federal republic of Nigeria (FRN) (2013). The study also has implications for the realization of sustainable quality education, if the contemporary methods are well implemented as it ought to be by teachers. It has implications for teacher supervision and monitoring by Ministry of education, to ensure that the innovative methods are effectively implemented as asserted by Modebelu and Duvie (2012). Government of Nigeria would also be sensitized into sponsorship of schools by providing facilities, technological materials, funds and human resource for effective implementation of innovative methods where it is found wanting.

WAY FORWARD TOWARDS CONTEMPORARY CURRICULUM DELIVERY IN NIGERIA

1. Teachers should avail themselves the opportunity to get training in ICT application for enhancing of learner centered teaching.
2. Technology should be integrated into the teaching and learning of contents in arts and humanities at the junior and senior secondary for efficiency in the system.
3. Teachers should employ learner-centered and interactive activities such as the teaching of all subjects in the curriculum at the classroom levels.
4. The use collaborative teaching methods should be given more attention by teachers in the classroom in order to enhance learner centered teaching and learning.
5. Planning a capacity building workshop by Ministry of Education on the use of innovative instructional methods by various school authorities should be made mandatory.
6. Teachers should be sensitized to have attitudinal change towards innovation in order to fit into the 21st century classroom (Modebelu & Duvie, 2012).

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