

**UTILITIZING LEARNER-CENTERED TEACHING METHODS FOR  
EFFECTIVE BUSINESS STUDIES CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION  
FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA**

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**Abstract**

This study is a descriptive survey that investigated the impact of utilizing learner-centered teaching methods for effective Business Studies curriculum implementation for national development in Nigeria. Two research questions guided the study. The population comprised of three hundred and twenty (320) Business Studies teachers and 44,640 students in Junior Secondary Schools (JSS) in Imo State. The sample size comprised one hundred and twenty (120) teachers and four hundred and fifty (450) students selected through cluster and purposive sampling techniques from ten (10) public Junior Secondary Schools in Owerri Education Zone 1. A four point rating scale instrument was used for data collection. The research questions were answered using mean and percentages. The study revealed among many the various learner-centred methods that can promote effective Business Studies curriculum implementation. The researcher recommended among others that teachers should utilize learner-centred methods such as drill and practice and guided-demonstration during teaching to promote effective Business Studies curriculum implementation for national development in Nigeria.

**Key Words:** Teaching methods, learner-centred, Business Studies, Curriculum implementation

The aim of education is to empower learners with skills and values that will enable them become knowledgeable citizens. The end product of all academic pursuit is learner's high achievement in their particular area of

endeavour. Also, the outcome of every meaningful teaching and learning processes is seen when the learner exhibits practical knowledge of whatever skills, values and dexterity of contents taught. The way and manner by which the

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curriculum of any subject is implemented determines the learning outcome to be expected. Consistent evidences from researchers such as Okafor (2015) & Ibe (2012) shows that if we want to improve children's academic achievement and social skills development we need to focus on how teachers instruct and implement various subjects. Thus, there is need for teachers at various levels of education to pay attention on the use of appropriate teaching methods that can facilitate learning, impact meaningful and permanent knowledge and skills to the learner.

Business Studies is a subject that has a functional curriculum and is skill oriented and taught by trained Business Educators at the junior secondary school level. The emphasis according to the Federal Republic of Nigeria FRN (2014) National Policy on Education is on a functional curriculum that will assist in national economic development through reduction of unemployment, political instability and promotion of economic prosperity. Kanu (2005) explained that Business Studies is a prevocational subject that has a functional curriculum as it is learnt by doing and will assist in achieving self-reliance.

The subject comprises both the theoretical and practical aspect and is made up of five interrelated courses such as computer keyboarding, shorthand, book-keeping, commerce and office practice (Ibegbu, 2014). The Business Studies curriculum identified the integrated subjects (what to teach), the experiences, the contents and the activities

existing around each, the methodology as well as the evaluation techniques. The Syllabus is drawn up to guide the Business Studies teachers during teaching and learning. Since curriculum according to various experts comprises all the learning experiences, contents and activities, a learner must be exposed to under the auspices of the school for a change in behaviour Ivowi (2009), Duru, (2011), Wiles and Bondi (2011); such variables existing within the curriculum must be considered during implementation. These variables include the contents, activities, methodology, equipment/instructional materials requirement and evaluation procedures. Curriculum implementation has been summarized by different authors such as Offorma (2009); Mbakwem (2005) and Kanno (2004) as the process of implementing the contents of the curriculum document by the teacher to the learners in the classroom. Implementation therefore, occupies the strategic middle position where it links the curriculum objectives with the learning outcome. Curriculum implementation in order words implies the method and manner the teacher uses to execute the contents of the curriculum to the learner who is the end user.

Curriculum implementation admittedly, has a relationship with teaching method. A teaching method is the arrangement of the elements of the contents into the various ways in which they are introduced to the pupils (Esene, 2011). It is what the teacher uses during the actual teaching process (Curriculum implementation). There are varieties of

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teaching methods as well as categories of teaching methods. Teaching methods are classified under different classes which include learner-centered, teacher-centered, traditional, conventional and innovative methods (Esene, 2011, Mkpa 2009 & Mbakwem 2005).

The selection of any class of teaching method requires the teacher's consideration of factors such as learners' interest, nature of subject/topic to be taught, available instructional materials/equipment, expected learning outcome and time allotted to the lesson. Most educators emphasize the use of learner-centered teaching modes (Esene, 2011, Mkpa, 2009, Mbakwem, 2005). Learner-centered teaching methods broadly encompass those methods of teaching that shift the focus of the instruction from the teacher to the student Hannafin & Hannafin (2010). Learner-centered are sometimes referred to as student-centered. These methods aim at developing learner autonomy and independence by putting responsibility for the learning path in the hands of students. These type of teaching and learning methods focus on skills and practices that enable lifelong learning and independent problem-solving.

Researchers such as (Chukwuma-Nosike, 2015; Ibe, 2012; Matlin 2002 & Lambert & McCombs 2000) indicated that when the focus becomes learner-centered, colleges attain higher rates of students' retention, achievement and have better prepared graduates than the students who were traditionally trained. Student-centered institutions and nations whose

focus are on students acquiring skills and practices that will enable lifelong learning and independent problem-solving promote the use of learner-centered methods during teaching. Lambert and McCombs (2000) in agreement stressed that successful students are always actively involved in their own learning, and assume responsibility for their own learning. In Learner-centered methods the teacher acts as a facilitator as opposed to the teacher-centered where the teacher acts as an instructor. Learner-centered puts students interest first, by acknowledging student as central to the learning experience. This is in contrast to teacher-centered and traditional methods that situate the teacher as the primarily "active" role while students take a more "passive" receptive role. Armstrong (2012) claimed that traditional teaching methods ignore or suppress learner responsibility.

Student-centered methods encourage students to be active and responsible participants in their own learning and with their own pace of learning. Moreover these modes help to arouse the students' interest in the learning of all subjects irrespective of their nature and complexity especially if they are subjects that have skill application in their contents. This Esene (2011) stressed that a good teaching approach makes students develop interest to learn in a subject. Finally, it encourages knowledge and skill permanency as learners continuously engage in the learning activities and process (Chukwuma-Nosike & Okoro, 2015). Conclusively, learner-centered teaching, when employed in the teaching

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of skill-oriented subjects such as Business Studies, Accounting, Home Economics will encourage active participation of the learners as well as promote lifelong skill acquisition.

Learner-centered teaching approach according to Blumberg (2008), does not employ a single teaching method. This approach emphasizes a variety of different types of teaching methods that shift roles of the instructors/teachers from givers of information to facilitators of students learning. There are many different types of learner-centred teaching methods from which the teacher can select and employ a group of them during curriculum implementation.

Some identified learner-centered teaching methods that can promote the teaching and learning of Business Studies are problem-solving, guided-demonstration, laboratory, individualized instruction, discussion, project, participatory, drill and practice, guided-inquiry and assignment methods, (Chukwuma-Nosike & Okoro 2015; Ibe, 2012; Mkpa, 2009 & Uwatt, 2006).

Guided-demonstration is a teaching method that involves the guidance of the teacher in the basic application of concepts surrounding a particular skill with the aim of highlighting how it can be done under a perfect situation (Nsa, 2012). For instance, using the guided-demonstration method during teaching will encourage active participation of all learners during the learning of subjects like Home-Economics, Business-Studies, Engineering, Computer Science, Land

Surveying, Architecture, Building Technology and Nursing that are basically skill filled.

Individualized instruction is the method that focuses on the interest, needs and achievements of individual learners (Wiles and Bondi, 2011 & Mbakwem, 2005). This method can be used to teach the skill aspect of any subject/topic such as computer keyboarding in Business Studies. Guided-inquiry method is a research-oriented mode of problem-solving in which the learner is motivated and guided to draw on past experiences, history and knowledge existing around their environment to find solution to identified problem (Ibe 2012). It can be used by the teacher to teach topics that are expository in nature, for instance, means of transportation in commerce. Project method gives the learner(s) free decision on what and how to learn according to their area of interest under the teachers' guidance for the attainment of goals (Mkpa 2009 & Mbakwem 2005). This method encourages the learner to take initiative on areas of interest he or she wants to study. It also gives the learner the opportunity to determine the extent and duration of learning.

Discussion method encourages students to participate actively in airing their view in choice area of subject matter under review. Participation method requires the impact and contributions of the learner in practical application of knowledge, skills and capabilities (Duru 2011). This method that is related to Laboratory method can be used along with drill and practice method during teaching

and learning of shorthand outlines and speed and accuracy in Business Studies. It requires the learners' use of instructional materials and equipment for this method to be appropriately utilized during teaching and learning.

Researchers such as Nsa, Akpan & Williams (2012); Akpomedaye (2011) and Mkpa (2009) in their respective studies agree that learner-centered methods encourage active participation of all learners, make learning real as well as promote speed, skills acquisition and development of other proficiencies required. For instance, Nsa (2002) in his study on students cognitive performance in production skill acquisition revealed that students taught using guided-demonstration acquired skills better than those taught with lecture method.

Students' under-achievement in various subjects including Business Studies has been a recurring problem that has been discussed in many seminars and conferences. One of the emphases around the world today, is on equipping learners with life coping skills, through the use of learner-centered teaching methods by the teachers during teaching and learning. Thus, there is need for teachers in Nigeria to reconsider the modes they use during curriculum implementation, so that the learner under the auspices of the school are taught the required knowledge and skills using Learner-centered teaching methods instead of the traditional modes. These traditional modes mostly used by teachers have not enhanced the learning and acquisition of skills that can promote national development. What are those

Learner-centered teaching methods that can promote effective Business Studies curriculum implementation at Basic Education level? In what ways can these teaching methods promote effective Business Studies curriculum implementation at Basic Education level in Nigeria?

This study sought to find out the following: the different Learner-centered teaching methods that can be utilized for effective Business Studies curriculum implementation. Ascertain ways these teaching methods can promote effective Business Studies curriculum implementation.

### **Research Questions**

The following Research Questions guided the study.

1. What are the Learner-centered teaching methods that can be utilized for effective Business Studies curriculum implementation?
2. In what ways can the Learner-centered methods promote Business Studies curriculum implementation at Basic Education level?

### **Method**

This study is a descriptive survey design. The population of the study consisted of 320 Business Studies teachers and 44640 co-educational junior secondary school students offering Business Studies in Owerri Education Zone 1. The Cluster sampling technique was used to select the Owerri Education Zone 1 out of the six (6) education zones in Imo State and Imo State out of the

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thirty-six (36) states of Nigeria. The Purposive sampling technique was used to select students and teachers sample from schools offering Business Studies. Thus, the sample of the study comprised of One hundred and twenty (120) Business Studies teachers and forty-five (45) students each from ten(10) schools in the five Local Government Areas in Owerri Education Zone 1 totalling four hundred and fifty (450) Junior Secondary School students respectively. The instrument used for the study is a four point rating scale with response options (Strongly agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly disagree (SD) developed by the researcher. The instrument consisted of sections A and B. Section A required the respondents to supply the answers while section B consisted of item statements regarding the stated research questions. The instrument was validated by three experts, one each from Measurement and Evaluation, Curriculum Studies and Business Studies. A reliability of 0.86 was established using the test re-test method of reliability, whereby the instrument was administered and re-administered again after two weeks interval to 120 junior secondary school teachers and 450 students in Orlu Education Zone 1 the same number of teachers and students as used for the study proper. The researcher made use of two trained research assistants in administering and collection of the instrument. The respondents' answers were collated and subjected to analysis using the frequency counts, mean and percentages. The mean score of 2.5 and above formed the basis for

acceptance/agreed and below 2.5 for rejection/disagree with the statement concerning the use of learner-centered teaching methods for effective Business Studies curriculum implementation

## Results

**Table 1: Teachers and students responses to different Learner-centered Teaching Methods**

S / N	GENDER-FRIENDLY TEACHING METHODS	RESPONSES							
		TEACHERS				STUDENTS			
		Agree	%	Disagree	%	Agree	%	Disagree	%
1	Drill and practice	120	100	-	-	450	100	-	-
2	Project	114	93	6	7	450	100	-	-
3	Guided-demonstration	108	85	12	15	450	100	-	-
4	Guided-inquiry	112	91	8	9	410	91	40	9
5	Participatory	120	100	-	-	450	100	-	-
6	Problem-Solving	78	65	22	25	450	100	-	-
7	Discussion	110	88	10	12	420	93	30	7
8	Individualized Instruction	120	100	-	-	450	100	-	-
9	Assignment	120	100	-	-	450	100	-	-
10	Laboratory	120	100	-	-	450	100	-	-

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Table 1 revealed the teachers and students responses in identifying some of the different learner-centered teaching methods that can be utilized for effective Business Studies curriculum implementation. There is a high agreement rate by the teachers and students that drill and practice, guided-demonstration, guided-inquiry, discussion, participatory, laboratory, problem-solving, individualized instruction, assignment and project teaching methods are some of the learner-centered modes that can be utilized during Business Studies Curriculum implementation for national development.

**Table 2: Students and Teachers mean Responses to Instrument items relating to Ways the learner-centered Teaching Methods promote effective Business Studies Curriculum implementation**

S / N	ITEMS	RESPONSES		
		Teachers Mean	Students Mean	Decision
1	encourages active participation of learners	3.4	3.6	Accept
2	Arouses interest to learn among all learners as they learn by doing.	3.2	3.5	Accept
3	Discourages passiveness during learning as all attention is on the learner not the teacher.	3.4	3.2	Accept
4	Skills and abilities are permanently acquired by using these methods of teaching.	3.6	3.5	Accept
5	Encourages gender bias towards learning certain subjects.	1.9	2.0	reject
6	Makes the teaching of skill-filled subjects like Home Economics and Business Studies easy.	3.5	3.6	Accept
7	Helps teacher to act as a guide and facilitator than a custodian of all knowledge.	3.4	3.2	Accept
8	Reduces the teachers' work load and promote adequate students independence and empowerment.	3.5	3.1	Accept
9	Teachers sometimes give us assignments and projects to work on our own.	2.9	3.0	Accept
10	Learner-centered enables learners learn at their own pace by accommodating individual differences	3.4	3.5	Accept
Grand Mean and Pooled		64.4/3.2		

In table 2, the respondents expressed their acceptance of learner-centered teaching methods as shown by their mean responses to all items which are above 2.5, except one item that was rated 1.9 and 2.0 respectively. The grand mean and pooled mean of 32.2/3.2 indicated both respondents' high rating agreement on ways learner-centered modes can promote effective Business Studies Curriculum implementation. Thus, the research question 2 was answered affirmatively in

favour of ways learner-centered methods can promote effective Business Studies Curriculum.

### **Discussion**

Findings from the study show that learner-centered teaching methods can be utilized during Business Studies curriculum implementation. All the respondents agreed that teaching methods such as Drill and practice, discussion, assignment, guided-demonstration, participatory, individualized instruction, guided-inquiry, problem-solving, project and laboratory are learner-centered that can promote effective Business Studies Curriculum implementation at Basic education level. This is because learner-centered teaching methods encourage students' active participation, arouses interest to learn as well as promotes gender responsiveness towards all subjects. This agrees with Lakpini & Atadoga (2014:359) that "teaching method is one of the important elements of teaching and learning process" Therefore, considering the importance attached to the achievement of self-reliance and national development through effective Business Studies curriculum implementation, it is vital that the right teaching method be selected and adopted by teachers for adequate empowerment of learners with life coping skills.

From the items in the table 2, the researchers found out that learner-centered teaching methods are learner focused, promote learners active participation and discourage passiveness during learning, remove all forms of gender issues towards

certain subjects, make the teaching of skill-filled subjects like Business Studies and Home Economics etc. easy, reduce the teachers' work load as well as promoting students independence to learn. This is in line with the findings of Mkpa (2009) that the use of Learner-centered methods encourage learners' development of skills, active participation and interaction during teaching and learning thereby reducing the work load of the teacher.

### **Conclusion**

The use of learner-centered teaching methods during curriculum implementation is necessary. This is because it reduces learners' passiveness and bias towards the studying of certain courses and subjects at different levels of education. Effective utilization of appropriate teaching methods by the teacher will promote active participation of all learners during teaching and learning as well as increase the level of skill acquisition and development in our society. This will encourage sustainable national development.

### **Recommendations**

The researcher makes the following recommendations:

1. Teachers at basic education level should adopt the use of Learner-centered teaching methods such as drill and practice, individualized instruction and assignment to promote learners' active participation and skill acquisition for gross national development.
2. Teachers should be exposed to regular training and re-training through

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conferences, workshops and seminars on the use of different learner-centered teaching methods. This will help the teachers to effectively use these modes in the classrooms during curriculum implementation.

3. School Administrators should ensure that appropriate learner-centered methods are employed by teachers during lesson delivery especially in skill-filled courses/subjects. This will encourage learners' active participation and development of interest to make career choices in certain areas.

4. School administrators, curriculum planners and other stakeholders should organize the curriculum contents for each subject as well as emphasize the appropriate learner-centered teaching methods to be used during teaching so as to reduce the use of inappropriate methods.

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