

IMPLEMENTATION: A CRITICAL VARIABLE IN CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT

The argument is that everything about implementation depends upon the man who so to speak and are inside of it, and who are who are to make it work. If the members who are to implement the innovation respond to influence other than the intentions of the advocates of the innovations, that the most carefully worded and strongly supported curriculum development is unlikely to be implemented as planned. In other words. Implementation refers to the actual use of an innovation or what an innovation consists of in practice.

IMPLEMENTATION: A PHASE IN THE PROCESS OF CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

As Carlson (1965) puts it, an innovation has a national history and in a sense a life cycle. The full account of the life cycle of an innovation is the story of its invention, development and promotion, adoption and diffusion, along with an account of the problems encountered and solutions developed in introducing and maintaining the innovation and specific settings, and the unanticipated consequences growing out of it.

Equally Bishop (1986:4) sees most innovations as going through something approaching these logical phases.

1. There is some problem, some dissatisfaction, some need that requires attention
2. Some possible solutions are considered.
3. Particular solutions are considered selected as being the most likely to meet the problem.
4. The optimum solution is tried and evaluated
5. If promising, the solution is implemented on a wider scale.
6. The solution is absorbed into that system; it is institutionalised.

WHAT THEN IS IMPLEMENTATION ?

In the process of curriculum development, it must be realised that for effective planning and execution of an innovation, the implementation phase should be regarded as a distinct process from earlier 'trial' phase. Implementation entails new and distinctive issues and problems that call for new distinctive approaches.

According to Fullan and Pomfret (1977), implementation refers to the actual use of an innovation or what an innovation consists of in practice and this differs from both intended or planned use and from decision to use, the latter being defines as adoption. This merely means that regardless of who develops an innovation, when it is developed, or how it is developed, some implementation will have occurred at the point when certain new characteristics are actually in use in a social system. Change should be seen as part of the complex process of innovation. Its study involves coming to grips with implementation and an exploration of the notions of the curriculum-in-use and what an innovation consists of in practice.

Analyses from studies on implementation (see Brown 3 981) generalise that successful implementation is always accompanied by "mutual adoption", in which the design of the innovation is adopted to suit the particular situation. At the same time, the social system and the staff adapt to the demands of the system. Brown also identified two other types of implementation outcomes.

1. "non-implementation" when no adaptation occurs and

2. "cooptation, where the innovation is adopted without a corresponding change in the users. Similar phenomena according to Hoyle (1969) have been identified in Britain and called "tissue rejection" and "innovation without change".

Successful implementation tends to be associated with a problem-solving stance.

One of the earliest and clearest examples of an attempt to measure the degree of implementation of an organizational change is provided by the case study of an Inner-city elementary school by Gross et al (1971) in trying to implement a major change role of the teacher. The conclusion of the study is that despite the teachers being positively disposed to accept major organizational changes in the school when the innovation was presented to them, there was a case of failure to implement a major innovation. In their discussion of the study, Gross et al observed that prior formulation studies so far available have concentrated their attention on the changes required of the teachers and have given little thought to the changes required of administration. They have usefully pointed also to the undue emphasis placed on the organizational members' initial resistance to change as an explanation of the failure of innovation efforts. They have stressed the importance of viewing the implementation of organizational innovations not as an event but as a process that involves an interrelated set of conditions that can shift over time-for example, the acceptance or clarity of a change proposal.

THE DETERMINANTS OF IMPLEMENTATION

One of the greatest works on studies of implementation by Fullan and Pomfret (1977) provides support in their analysis of determinants of implementation. The various factors in Fullan and Pomfret's analysis can be organised into four broad categories, each containing a number of specific variables

1. *Characteristics of the Invocation:*

(a) Explicitness - There appear to be two ways to address this problem. One is call for greater specification of the implementation characteristics by sponsors or developers of innovation. An alternative way is set up procedures for continually moving toward greater explicitness during initial implementation. These two approaches are not necessarily mutually exclusive and the analysis by Fullan and Pomfret of the research indicates that increased emphasis on both are needed.

Havelock and Huberman (1977) observed that in developing countries (including Nigeria), given the disequilibrium between the objectives of many projects and the capacity of the educational and administrative systems to service so many and such various components, a great number of logistical problems are encountered and there is a resulting lack of clarity in the structure for making decisions within the project

However, given that vagueness of many education innovation, the lack of attention to how new roles could be established, and the subsequent frustrations of would-be users, it is evident that same process of developing greater explicitness or specification is necessary for implementation to occur

(b) Complexity/difficulty. The second innovation characteristics is the degree of complexity or difficulty in using the innovations. It is likely that complexity affects explicitness, that is, the greater the complexity the more difficult it is to be explicit about the operational characteristics of the innovation. Researchers and practioners in change situations should be oriented to addressing continuously the programme explicitness and degree of complexity. This leads to the question of what strategies and tactics that have been to affect implementation

2. *Strategies and Tactics*

From their analysis of research Fullan and Pomfret (1977) observe that the following strategies and tactics are important for implementation:

- a. In-service training
- b. Resource support (time, materials etc)

c. Feedback mechanisms that stimulate interaction and problem identification

d. Participation in decision - making Inservice training: Fullan and Pomfret argue that it appears that intensive in-service training (as distinct from single workshops or piecemeal training) is an important strategy for implementation.

Resource Support - This concerns the provision of time, materials and other facilities during implementation. Lack of time and inadequate materials were identified as barriers to implementation by Gross et al 1977 and Downey et al (1975)

Feedback mechanisms - These are supposed to function as means of identifying problems encountered during implementation in order to provide support for addressing such problems. Some researchers cite the absence of the feedback networks during implementation a critical problem.

Participation: This is the innovation process by those who are expected to implement the new programme.

3. *Characteristics of Adopting Unit:*

In answering the question 'what are the characteristics of adopting units that have effective implementation Fullan and Pomfret (1977) can only briefly outline three kinds of issues that were evident in their review

1. nature of the process of adoption and self-selection,
2. the organizational process characteristics of adopting units, i.e "organizational climate; and
3. the demographic characteristics of adopting units and their immediate environments e.g. Urban- Rural areas.

4. *Macro Socio-Political! Factors*

This refers to the role of political agencies outside the adopting organization. These range from local school boards, local government, community agencies to national and federal organizations. At the macro level the following types of factors appear to have significant impact on degree of implementation: design issues of reform, incentive system, the role of evaluation and political complexity. House (1974) argues that the personal costs for teachers of trying innovations are often high, and that there is little indication that innovations are worth the effort. Equally, the specific disincentive reward system for teachers is compounded by other factors such as lack of teachers involvement in change decisions, inadequate understanding by planners of the complexities and difficulties of implementation.

COSTS AND REWARDS OF IMPLEMENTATION:

As already noted in this paper, research on implementation has identified a number of factors that present barriers to innovations and put limitations on their success (see also Doyle and Ponder, 1977; Brown and McIntyre, 1978; Haveiock and Huberman 1977) but Brown (1980) observes that little has been developed in the way of productive theory about the conditions that would likely lead to the desired changes. She notes that the possibility of being able to establish a general prescriptive strategy for effective implementation of curricular innovations is remote because innovations are of many different kinds and the situations into which an innovation is to be introduced vary.

However, any attempt at educational reform is only likely to be successful if teachers are both willing and able to account for new ideas about their work and able to implement them in their teaching. (Brown. 1980) This implies that the effectiveness of an innovation depends on the extent to which 'reward' to teachers involved in implementing the desired change can be maximised and the extent in which the 'costs' can be minimized

IMPLEMENTATION OF CURRICULUM INNOVATION: THE NIGERIAN EXPERIENCE

Some Nigerian educationists (Tura 1983, Svase 1983, Fufunwa 1984, Yotoge 1984, Obasi 1989) have looked at the implementation aspect of innovation in Nigeria and have reached almost the same conclusion: Innovation in Nigeria is characterized by lack of proper planning and lack of adequate resources among other things.

In Nigeria, a major objective of the educational policy at the start of the 1960s was to provide school places sufficient to permit every child to have access to at least a few years of primary school. In effect, Nigeria maintained "U.P.E" as a serious and explicit goal. Tura (1983) observes that: efforts to expand and equalize

educational opportunities face many constraints. According to him the most obvious one is lack of resources - not only financial, but also physical and human. Next, geographical and demographic conditions - vast distance, high density population, unsuitable environment, and poor communications - make the construction of schools, the supply of books and equipment, and the provision of qualified teachers a difficult and costly task,

Ivase (1988) states that the introduction of "UPE" in the whole of Nigeria in 1976 was the third attempt at this innovation in the country. In 1957, the Eastern Region of Nigeria introduced UPE in the schools and this lasted only for one year because by 1958 rising costs had forced the government to re-introduced fees in the schools. But before then, in 1955, the then Western Regional government of Nigeria had to introduced a scheme of Universal Primary Education 'UPE'. The Western regional government projected that there would be 492,000 enrolled in the first year of primary school. Instead of that number 800,000 were actually enrolled. The projected number of teachers in 1954 was 17,000: This rose to 27,000 in 1955. The expenditure on education increased from 2.2 million in 1954 to 5.4 million in 1955.

Thus, Ivase, Obasi concluded that four factors have stood prominently as the main causes of the constraints of implementation in Nigeria; The factors are i. lack of adequate and proper planning, ii. lack of finances and the mismanagement of the scarce finances iii. Inadequately trained and, I he poor quality of untrained, manpower w. lack of incentives for the manpower and the political situation in the country.

Fafunwa (1984:7) highlights some factors militating against the implementation of the National Policy on Education. He states:

that the first major error made by *the* Federal Military Government in the implementation of the national policy cu education was its lack of sight, for it failed to realise that time was needed for adequate preparation in launching such a gigantic UPE programme.

Fafunwa still asserts that another factor contributing to poor implementation of the national policy on education is

finance. To him the states were using lack of federal funding as an excuse.

Yoloye (1984: 20) expresses the situation thus. "The fate of the new national policy is till very much in the balance.

The chances are that it would be implemented for the most part but its form would be modified considerably by

political, economic and social factors".

Nwagwu (1981:85) bemoans the situation thus "Good policies have been produced by Use various governments but

the method and spirit of implementation have been

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