

**NEW HORIZON IN CURRICULUM STUDIES, FROM
ACCESS TO QUALITY ASSURANCE IN TEACHER
PRODUCTION: PANACEA FOR EFFECTIVE
ADMINISTRATION**

By

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Abstract

Virtually all countries in the world today are bracing up to catch up with the challenges posed for the achievement of the millennium development goals in different relevant, desirable and feasible change of ideas and making them work in practice is by far the hardest part of quality improvement and commutative process. A coherent teacher-education programme should systematically have curriculum innovations which reflect in the social, economic and political environment of a modern society. In this paper, the concepts of New Horizon, curriculum studies, quality assurance are discussed as well as what teacher production is. The paper highlights also some of the hindrances to qualitative teacher production, discusses the strategies and relevance of quality teacher production for effective curriculum implementation.

Keywords: New Horizon, Curriculum Studies, Quality Assurance and Teacher Production.

An educational programme that is worthy is that which emphasizes quality, relevance, accessibility and equity. Quality education, therefore connotes that a product of an educational system must effectively face the realities of life. According to Abdulkareem (2011), education has been universally recognized as investments in human capital, which increase the productive capacity of the people, which later yield economic benefit and contributions to further national wealth. Aghenta (2001) opines that education is the most powerful and dynamic instrument for social, economic, political, scientific and technological development of nations. Colleges of Education and universities where teachers are produced occupy an important place in modern society. This explains why the highest number of certified experts in different fields of study needed for the advancement and development of the society are engaged in high institutions (Olaleye, 2006). The aim of producing teachers should be to have high effective schools and improved students/pupils outcomes and this should be the key objectives of government. This is because education of the highest quality is the foundation for the future of the country.

Building human capital has been recognized as crucial to the overall development of any nation. The best the Nigeria government can give to its citizens therefore, is quality education which open the door to development and progress. This assertion can only be possible if there is quality assurance in teacher production to enhance effective and efficiency in schools. The administration of the school will no doubt, be faulty, if the production of teachers who work with the system is not qualified to ensure competence.

Conceptual Clarification

Curriculum is not an end itself, rather, it seeks to achieve both worthwhile and useful learning outcome for students. It is in and through the curriculum that key economic, political, social and cultural questions about the aims, purpose, content and processes of education are resolved, to enable students to acquire and develop the knowledge, skills and values, and the associated capabilities and competencies, to lead meaningful and productive lives. Key indicators of the curriculum success include the quality of the learning achieved by students, and how effectively students use the learning for their personal, social, physical, cognitive, moral, psychological and emotional development. A quality curriculum maximizes the potential for effective enhancement of learning. Of prime importance is that good teaching and learning are greatly enhanced by the quality, relevance and effectiveness of the curriculum.

Curriculum is typically a phenomenon which includes many dimensions of learning, including rationale, aims, content, methods, resources, time, assessment etc which refers to various levels of planning and decision-making on learning, for example on international, national, local, classroom and individual level and which relates to multiple representations of learning (for example, as 'intended', implemented, 'attained, etc). Curriculum can be understood as the totality of what children learn while

at school including what they learn through classroom activities; in interdisciplinary tasks, across the school, for example, in the play ground, at lunch time when eating (civic responsibilities, etc). This curriculum totality also includes opportunities for wider achievement through sport, music, debating and the like. (Achuonye & Ajoku, 2003)

In other words, judging the quality of the curriculum itself cannot be done in isolation from the broader processes of curriculum development, implementation and evaluation.

The paper therefore considers criteria for judging the quality of curriculum in four main categories, as illustrated in figure 1.

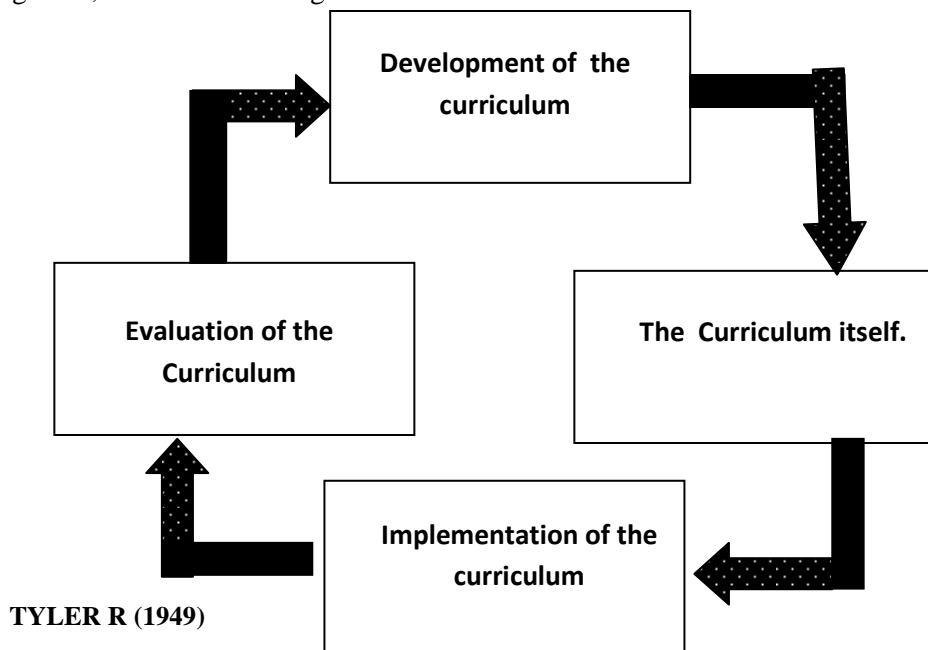


Figure 1: Categories of Criteria for Judging Quality

The criteria to be considered within these four categories are summarized in Table 1:

Categories of Judging Quality

Category	Description
Development of the curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planned and systematic • Inclusive and consultative • Led by curriculum professionals • Cyclical in nature • Sustainable

The curriculum itself	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Values each child and holds that every child matters equally.• Comprises high quality relevant and appropriate content and contributes to the development of competence• Is well organized and structured.• Is underpinned by a set of assumptions about how children learn.
Implementation of the Curriculum	<p>New expectations placed on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students• Schools/learning environments• Education systems and authorities
Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Systematic and planned• Regular• Conducted by qualified and experienced people.

The Concept of ‘Quality’ in the Industry and Management

Quality became an issue with the advent of industrialization and adaptation of new scientific approach to management based on strict division of labour (Tyler, 1949). With Mass- production and breaking down of work into smaller and repetitive tasks handled by machines, the role of workers for self-checking of quality was reduced. In the days of artisanship, the responsibility of quality remained with the worker. The later stage necessitated the need for inspection of the products to ensure they met specifications before they left the factory. This came to be known as “Quality Control” (Onye 2012).

In the initial days of quality movement in the United State and Japan (where it was more popular) statistical approaches ruled the domain. Walter of Bell Laboratories used Statistical Process Control (SPC) to study variation in the performance of systems. Later on Edwards W. Deming, a student of Shewhart using SPC helped engineers during the World War II to produce bullets. Many scholars have contributed significantly to what we know today in the field of “quality”. Some of them are W.Edwards Deming, Joseph Juran, Philip B. Crosby, Kauru Ishikawa and Genichi Taguch (Onye, 2012).

The concept of quality is hard to define precisely, especially in the context of tertiary education where institutions have broad autonomy to decide on their own visions and missions. Any statement about quality implies a certain relative measure against common standard.

Concept of Quality Assurance

Quality as Maduwesi (2005) put it, is a degree of excellence in a product. He defined Quality Assurance as “the policies systems, strategies and resources used by the institution to satisfy that its quality requirement and standards are being met”. This appropriately described it as “fitness for purpose” In another way, Akinkugbe. (2004:6) opines that Quality Assurance is “the degree of conformity of procedures of an organization with set standard.” Quality Assurance refers to the systematic activities implemented in a system so that quality requirement for a service and products are met.

This implies that, quality assurance is to be sure that the right things are done, the right way and at the right time.

Way and at the Right Time

Quality Assurance is seen as a preventive measures to avoid wastage of resource in an institution so as to attain a level desired level of, accountability (Onye, 2012). According to Onye (2012), it is more, rewarding and less expensive to take steps to prevent failure and wastage before they occur. This is why quality assurance, which is preventive rather than corrective is being advocated because it promotes the need to increase productivity so as to minimize wastage in an organization or institution. To Effanga 2005) Quality Assurance is a preventive measure to avoid wastage. This implies that it requires a lot of genuine inputs resulting from careful planning at the higher education level of Nigeria educational system. Quality Assurance deals with how well the learning experiences available to the students, help them to realize functional knowledge and worthwhile skills in order to survive as individuals in the society.

According to Bush and Coleman (2000), it can be differently called “Quality Management, Total Quality and Total Quality Management”. Quality Assurance/Management therefore, focus attention on identifying and solving problems of causative factors that militate against quality delivery.

Stressing the importance of Quality Assurance, the proponents of the concept, Joseph Juran, Edwards Ni Dieming, Philip B Crosby in Yetunde (2001) in their study opined that the attainment of continuous improvement of high standard at affordable cost and price is possible only when there is continuous improvement in production. Quality Assurance in recent years is exchanged for Quality Control because Quality Control is a retroactive action used to determine the quality of a product or a system after processing during which wastage or mistake would reoccurred, waiting for rejection or rectification, as in management, inspection rules and sanctions. Cole (1999), defines quality control as a system for setting standard and taking appropriate action to deal with deviations outside permeated tolerance. Quality Assurance and Quality Control are not the same but are used interchangeably in most organization.

With this measure, the uncommitted, non-focused and unserious student teachers in Colleges of Education and University campuses are best with service problems or inability to set up properly. Quality Education, quality assurance and quality control help to reduce incidence of social problems ranging from examination malpractice, inability to pass course, poor reading habit, cultism, prostitution etc which made Ezekwesili (2006) lament that Nigeria’s education can best be described as crisis. There is therefore need for emphasis on Quality Assurance in teacher production. This will go a long way in eradicating vices and promote effective school administration. Quality Assurance entails involvement of teachers, students, parents, managers, curriculum specialist/experts, curriculum planners, managers, inspectors and administrators in the process in order to get them become the language and watch word

of all. Quality Assurance in teacher production is indeed a gateway to effective school administration.

For an alternative measure of Quality Assurance. Agency, is to see that organizational students, processes and policies are in place and also carried out to recommend and implement improvements which must be communicated to stakeholders. Quality Assurance therefore “audits” and /or “review” and is intended to determine the efficiency of these processes and policies. Quality Assurance assists managers and curriculum planners of institutions to plan so that their system can follow certain institutional procedures, goals and milestones.

The essence of quality insurance is to ensure that the outcome of the product of an institution conforms and continues to conform to the expectations of the controlled procedures and policies. As the system progressed, quality assurance would mount checkpoints along the way to locate points of cracks and in some cases where it is moving beyond where it has authorization. These would ensure that remedial approaches are adopted at appropriate time. This may account for the process of benchmarking, resource verification, accreditation (programme and institutional) guidelines for admission, teaching and non- teaching staff ratio, guidelines for facility provision and procurement, guidelines for the establishment of universities and all others that will enhance the orderly development of the Nigeria universities system (NUS), by the NUC.

Quality Assurance is “process” related. For example, in Imo State University, Owerri, ensuring coverage of course content, conducting an examination for a course, setting the examination question, writing the examination, and marking the scripts all follow specified procedures from the departments to faculty and Senate.

Teacher Production

The successes and failure of the school system to a large extent depends on the teachers’ effectiveness and to some event, the success of the system. This is why it is said that no educational system can raise above the quality of its teachers (FRM 2014). Teacher education therefore, should occupy a pre-eminent status in any educational scheme to ensure efficiency and effectiveness in school administration. Teacher production has to do with teacher education. The production of effective and efficient teachers make for effective and efficient system. This view is supported by Nwana (1995:10) who seek to classify this issue by asserting that “Teacher education may be considered as imparting those skills, interest, appreciations, attitudes etc , that would promote the production of efficient as well as effective teachers. Teacher Education is an education, which is carefully designed to prepare and groom those who teach or will teach with relevant professional services needed for our schools and colleges (Aleyeideino 1996:22). Teacher production therefore includes the training and giving inform of education, the exposures to up-date knowledge, inform of conferences,

seminars and workshops. It also include in the present millennium, the ability to be ITC, complaint.

Hindrances to Qualitative Teacher Production

Effective teacher production or preparation in a dynamic nation is fraught with a legion of problems which are rooted in the inadequacies of the government's schools, students, parents in providing necessary human and material resources. These problem inhibiting effective qualitative teacher production include;

1. Inadequate funds
 2. Increasing students in large classes and heavy workload.
 3. Paucity of relevant textbooks
 4. Insufficiency of flexible educational facilities
 5. Lingering economic and political crises
 6. Political crises
 7. The scourge of examination malpractice
 8. Inadequate support for viable research
 9. Resistance to curriculum change and training programme
- (Agulann 2004).

Strategies for Assuring Quality in Teacher Production can be Listed as Follows:

1. An academic staff-student ratio of 1-30 students per lecturer for effective teaching, supervision and necessary learning tasks.
2. Meaningful research work and information on innovations and practices should be taught in schools.
3. Increased entry requirements with minimum of five (5) credits including English Language and mathematics.
4. Adequate knowledge and practice of the relevant roles and qualities of good teachers beyond the classroom operations.
5. Creative organization and presentation of meaningful lessons with good language and multi-media system.
6. Sufficient exposure to well-planned academic programmes.
7. Sufficient exposure to regular ethical orientation and continuous supervision of instruction during micro-teaching and teaching practice sections.
8. Six months or one year teaching practice that will provide the Teacher-trainee with enough experience and opportunity to imbibe practical classroom experience. But because of the present school calendar, it can be reduced to eight (18) weeks.
9. Regular in-service training programmes through conferences, seminars, workshops, and in-house empowerment courses.

Relevance of Quality Teacher Production to Effective School Curriculum

The heart of the Nigerian education system is the teacher, no matter the levels: as it is the teacher who refines the learners from raw material stage, who will be useful to the society in various aspects of life. This is why the society imposes much expectations on the teachers. The society make a lot of expectations from the teacher to impact knowledge to the learners, effectively install values in learners, to initiate ideas and actions towards community development, to adopt innovative techniques of teaching. The Federal Republic of Nigeria realizes the above views as it states in its National Policy on Education revised 2014th no educational system can rise above the quality of its administrators or curriculum planners can only offer what they have or have acquired as “no one gives what he or she does not have”.

Quality teachers will have the pervasive desire skill and talent to treat the children reasonable to gain their love and trust to guide them with vision for the remediation for the emerging education problems in according to their expectations in life. It is therefore expedient that a resourceful teacher would be able to provide conducive liberalized school climate that offers freedom and flexibility in thinking and abilities to advance ideas in problem solving situations. A quality and well trained teacher has expensive flair for correct implementation of planned policies and therefore would perform efficiently well as a school administrator. Quality Assurance in teacher production is very relevant for effective school administration. (Okafor, 2013). Teachers who are well-groomed and well-trained should be the light of the world that brightens and nurtures the vibrant lives of other individuals. Such committed teachers will always help the students to learn, understand and achieve their life ambitions.

Conclusion

Considering the discussions so far, based on the fact that Quality Education is a prerequisite for the growth and advancement of the learner who later becomes the finisher product and that Quality Assurance is dependent on the input process-output mechanism, the producers of teachers for effective administration must ensure that whatever goes in as input are of standard. The running of these institutions should be qualitatively and rationally carried out to avoid undue manipulations out of selfish interest. Producers of teachers should have good services and positive approach to quality assurance, as teachers are viable instruments for sustainable quality education.

Recommendations

It is therefore recommended that adequate funds, adequate instructional and infrastructural facilities should always be provided for Colleges of Education and universities where teachers are produced to enable the producers of teachers discharge their responsibilities. There should also exist conducive research environment for teachers. This can be done by providing research grants and establishing linkages and networks with other institutions around the world.

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