

# RE -ENGINEERING THE INSTRUCTIONAL STANDARD OF SECRETARIAL STUDIES PROGRAMME

By

**CECILIA U. EGEONU**

*Department of Business Education,  
Federal College of Education,  
Okene.*

## **Abstract**

*This paper, examined reengineering of the instructional standard of secretarial studies programme. The acquisition of skills requires the instructional materials that could be used in teaching business classes to enhance the learning process in the classroom. However, the most effective approach to achieve the objective of business education is to reengineer the instructional standard and the curriculum of secretarial programme through strict compliance to the minimum instructional standards as drawn by the National Board for Technical Education and course specifications. The recommended that there should be provision for training of business educators in the operation of modern technological equipment such as computer, IBM, Word processors, e-mail and Internet gadgets as well as refresher courses in computer science, secretarial studies, etc.*

Reengineering is a process which requires starting over and rebuilding the system rather than simply changing an existing system. Perhaps, the effective means to improve instructional standard of secretarial studies in business education is to reengineer instructional standard of studies. Business Dictionary (2012) defined reengineering as to engineer something or a process anew while Adeyemo (1978) and Farrant (1982) cited in Wudiri (2010) defined instructional materials as the things that facilitate learning. Secretarial studies programme is structured mainly for skills acquisition, which results to self-employment and self-dependant in the field of work. Skill acquisition requires the use of standard and adequate instructional materials for effective teaching and learning processes. Instructional materials are crucial and are necessary tools that teachers used for accomplishment of a high level of competence expected of secretarial students. These materials are also used by the teachers to make their lessons more meaningful and understandable. It will enable the learner to receive, understand, retain and apply the experience acquired to work. Many students are scared of secretarial courses especially shorthand because of inadequate instructional materials and teaching methodology which leads to very few students offering it at higher education levels. Therefore, this paper critically looked at the reengineering of secretarial courses in Nigeria as a panacea for encouraging learners to take up studies in that area.

### **Need for Re- engineering Instructional Standard in Business Education**

The need for instructional materials/equipment as prescribed by the National Board for Technical Education, the National Commission for colleges of Education are still relevant for the training of today's secretaries and business educators. Adequacy in their provision and efficiency in operation should be highly reengineered to meet the required standard. The modern reengineering in business education should emphasize total office automation with information technology as the buzzword. Overall, technology course such as MIS and computer science are currently highly demanded, causing business schools to continue to move away from secretarial skills towards office automation and computer technology, accounting programmes, court reporting programmes, paralegal training, administrative training, legal secretarial programmes, medical secretarial programmes. These programs need experts/well trained business education teachers that will impact the knowledge to the secretarial students in other to meet with standard of technology today. The curriculum should also be reengineered to meet up with the needed modern era of skill acquisition

Thus, instructional materials transform the abstract to reality. The effective use of instructional materials crystallizes an obscure knowledge thereby providing for the learner real life experiences and practical knowledge that will go a long way in assisting him/her.

### **Educational Goals and Values for Using Instructional Materials**

The main purpose for utilizing and maintaining instructional materials in business education is for a meaningful understanding and application of the topic taught to reach overall educational objective. Nolan (1967) argued that the school that desires to offer a modern business education programme must include a thorough training in the use of business appliances. To give such training, the school must be equipped with the appliances in which it intends to give instruction. Olaitan (1993) commented that any efficient and effective programme in education uses a learning environment, which is similar to where the learner will eventually work, using the same methods, materials and requirement. Hence, the use of instructional materials in teaching of secretarial skills and competencies cannot be over-emphasized because such skills are practical in nature and must be taught practically so as to provide effective, permanent and interesting teaching. The instructional materials lead to effective learning of factual information and skills' learning takes less time than mere verbalization. This shows how indispensable instructional materials are, because they promote, stimulate and enrich learning. The important roles and advantages of instructional facilities in teaching and learning processes are enormous that is the FMEST (1985), the NBTE (1989) and the NCCE (1996) set minimum standards for classroom facilities, equipment and personnel for the teaching of secretarial and business education subjects at both the secondary, Colleges of Education and Polytechnics. Business education teachers cannot effectively teach students home- keys of a typewriter or how to operate adding machines without having the machines in the classroom.

The standards set up by these supervisory and controlling bodies made mastery of business subjects difficult in the absence of the requisite tools. This era of technological development, requires urgent need for the provision of prescribed minimum standards for classroom facilities, and personnel in the teaching of secretarial subjects especially typewriting and shorthand. Teaching typewriting for example requires basic tools. Tonne and Manassy (1970) stated that the service offered by business tools is more important than the tools themselves. Typewriting as a subject contributes to the development of basic skills of reading, writing, following instructions and listening to directions and computing. This cannot be achieved without the use of standard instructional facilities to acquire business skills that will provide for those who achieve the high level of competency required in the employment field. Attah (1993), cited in Njoku (2004) viewed the teaching and learning of vocational/business courses as skill-based programmes that require adequate modern equipment if the teachers and students are to make any meaningful academic achievement. Ema (1990) stated that undue emphasis on verbalism as the sole source of communication between instructor and learner proved that words only make learning abstract and inactive.

The following seven objectives can be achieved if the instructional materials and devices are properly used;

1. They supply a concrete basis for conceptual thinking and reduce meaningless word responses of students,
2. They make learning more permanent,
3. They have a high degree of interest for students
4. They offer a reality of experience which stimulates self-activity on the part of students,
5. They develop a continuity of thought; that is especially true of motion pictures,
6. They contribute to growth of meaning and hence to vocabulary development,
7. They provide experiences not easily obtained through other materials and contribute to the efficiency, depth and variety of learning.

### **Standard Instructional Equipments in Business Education**

The National Board for Technical Education (1989) curriculum and course specifications in secretarial studies listed and set minimum standards for various instructional materials/equipment for secretarial studies programme. These instructional materials are classified according to their areas of uses.

- Typewriting laboratory
- Speed development laboratory
- General Audio-visual centre
- Model office/office practice laboratory

In these laboratories there should be:

- Computers, word processors
- Typewriters – manual, electronic

### ***Pristine***

- Photocopying and duplicating machines
- Books – includes; journals, magazines, teachers' manual
- Audio-visual materials comprise the opaque/overhead projector, transparency marker, slide projector, video tape and monitor
- Electronic desk calculators, shredding machine
- Telephone equipment filing equipment, stop watches
- Central transmitting unit and transistorized receivers, a line jack with head phones, tape recorder/cassette recorder/player.

### **Instructional Materials and Secretarial Teachers**

Instructional material does not achieve any of the attributed values on their own. Their usefulness depends on what the teacher makes out of them. Handling of these materials carefully in the classroom is necessary in order to maintain high standard in education. Teachers all over the world need the basic knowledge and skills necessary to enhance the fullest use of instructional materials. Why available materials are not used by many teachers in schools and colleges is because they lack the needed skills to operate them. Teachers must understand how to use and control materials. They are responsible not only for helping to select equipment (instructional materials) when needed and for training students to use the equipment. In addition, adequacy and convergence of computers, telecommunication and other instructional materials and possession of manipulative skills will enhance instructional standard in business education, particularly the secretarial studies programme. The proper maintenance of resources and a definite replacement policy are essential in providing an effective business education programme.

### **Secretarial Teachers are Expected to**

- Observe and evaluate students' work to determine progress, provide feedback, and make suggestions for improvement.
- Prepare outlines for instructional programmes and training schedules and establish course goals.
- Determine training needs of students and workers.
- Supervise and monitor students' use of tools and equipment. Select and assemble books, materials, supplies, and equipment for training courses or projects.
- Prepare reports and maintain records such as student grades attendance rolls, and training activity details.
- Present lectures and conduct discussions to increase students' knowledge and competence using visual aids, such as graphs, charts, videotapes, and slides.
- Develop curricula and plan course contents and methods of instruction.
- Advise students on course selection, career decisions, and other academic and vocational concerns.
- Develop teaching materials such as instructional software, multimedia visual aids, or study materials.

- Conduct on-the-job training classes or training sessions to teach and demonstrate principles, techniques, procedures, or methods of designated subjects and
  - Supervise independent or group projects, field placements, laboratory work, or other training. (<http://www.mymajors.com/careers-and-jobs/secretarial-teacher>)
- Unless the classroom teacher uses these devices and directs the students' attention to what they should look for, the students will not learn as much as is intended from the devices. In this age of information technology, it is pertinent to ask and to know how many computers are available for secretarial studies programmes in our various institutions and how many teachers are computer literate.

Lierheimer (1986), cited in Njoku (2004) observed that a teacher who is well trained at the beginning of a career rapidly falls behind as a result of explosive developments and technology, unless such teacher continues to receive additional training. If the new technology is to be used wisely then business education teachers will need higher training and refresher courses from time to time. This may be achieved through short in-service training, workshops and seminars for efficiency and effectiveness. The expansion of knowledge and the development of new instructional hard- wares have contributed to the increase in the expectations of the teachers' roles in the field of business education. However, the effective teacher must be current and knowledgeable about new developments in his or her field, if he or she is to stand the taste of time and be able to contribute meaningfully to the growth and development of his area of specialization.

### **Information Technology and Re -engineering Instructional Standard**

Information technology as stated is the buzzword in a technology based environment. However, the acquisition of adequate tools will boost information technology. Thus, Information Technology is the use of computers software to manage information. The information technology department of a large institution would be responsible for storing information, protecting information, processing the information, transmitting the information, and later retrieving information as necessary. Lucy (1990) defined information technology as the acquisition, processing, storing and dissemination of vocal, pictorial, textual and numeric information by a micro-electronic-based combination of computing and telecommunications. Atueyi (1990) cited in Njoku(2004) saw the concept of information technology as a host of systems, equipment and materials essentially, computer-based which are used to achieve the set goals of an organized job seekers to be equipped with basic skills and competences to enable them enter and progress in their job. Therefore, information technology earnestly will reengineer the instructional standard of secretarial programme in business education where effective teachers participate in conferences, seminar, and training sessions will help to keep teachers abreast with developments in the field, and integrate relevant information into training programmes.

## **Conclusion**

Skills acquisition requires the use of standard and adequate instructional facilities for effective teaching and learning. It must be reiterated here that most of the institutions running secretarial studies programmes do not provide adequate and standard instructional materials to meet up with present technological advancement in the world. However, a thorough and proper training should be given to the secretarial teachers on how to use the existing instructional materials to impart knowledge to the learners in order to meet with the challenges of the present technological era. Finally, this paper concludes that the provision of adequate and standard instructional materials for secretarial studies programme will promote teaching, learning and also develop the office automation and information technology in the business education as a whole.

## **Recommendations**

For business education and in particular the secretarial studies programme to achieve its objectives of reengineering instructional standard, the following recommendations are made:

- i. Business education teachers should act as facilitators, consultants or guide on the side by helping students to access, organize and obtain needed and useful information. Therefore, teachers should be given higher training and current training, short in-service training, workshops and seminar for efficiency and effectiveness.
- ii. Adequate instructional facilities to ensure effective instruction and learning should be put in place. Thus, institutions offering courses in skill-based areas should ensure adequate provision of instructional materials.
- iii. There should be full compliance to NBTE prescribed list of facilities/equipment for the secretarial studies programme. The NBTE officials should from time to time visit institutions to ensure that such facilities are available. If not, they should place staff sanctions on such institutions.
- iv. The concerned institutions should give preference to the provision of modern equipment such as computers, word processors, E-mail and internet gadgets as employers of secretarial graduates demand for the knowledge and skills of this equipment as a pre-requisite for employment.
- v. Motivation makes teaching and learning more important and derives more self-satisfaction, self-esteem and self-actualization for the service they rendered to others.

## **References**

- Business Dictionary. Com (2012) Web Finance, Inc. [http:// www. businessdictionary. com/definition out sourcing.html](http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/out_sourcing.html)
- Ema, (1990) Educational communication and technology in teaching situations media-methods and materials. *Vocational and Technical Educators*. 2(4),181

- Anonymous (2012) *Secretarial Teacher job and career information* cited on 2/21/2012 at <http://www.majors.com/careers-and-jobs/Secretarial-Teachers>
- Lucy, T. (1990) *Management information system*, London: DP publications Ltd
- National Board for Technical Education (1989) *Secretarial studies curriculum and course specifications*, Kaduna: ATMAN Ltd.
- National Commission for Colleges of Education (1986), *Minimum Standards for NCE Teachers* (Vocational and Technical Education), Kaduna: NCCE. *Book of Readings*, 51
- Njoku, S. C. (2004) Improving instructional standard of secretarial studies, *Book of readings in Business Education*, 1(4),44.
- Olaitan, S.O. (1993) Human resources, *Vocational and Technical Education Journal*, iii (1), 46
- Tonne, H. A. & Manassy, L. (1970) *Principles of business education*, New York: McGraw-Hill book Co.
- Wudiri, Y.G. (2010) Fine art and the artist: Their Role in the Improvisation of Instructional Materials for the Improvement of the Quality of Education in Nigeria. *Vocational journal* 2(4),179