

# INNOVATING TEACHER EDUCATION CURRICULUM FOR ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION IN NIGERIA

By

**SAMUEL W. AMADIOHA PhD**

*Department of Educational Foundations,  
Faculty of Education, Rivers State University,  
Nkpolu-Port Harcourt*

And

**VICTOR OJORKA AKOR**

*Department of Educational Foundations,  
Faculty of Education, Rivers State University,  
Nkpolu-Port Harcourt*

## **Abstract**

*The research explored innovating teacher education curriculum for economic transformation in Nigeria. It discussed the concept of innovation in teacher education, the concept curriculum and the concept of economic transformation. Furthermore, the steps for innovating teacher education curriculum for economic transformation were outlined and extensively discussed, strategies for transforming teacher education curriculum to economic power were properly addressed. Also, how to sustain economic transformation in teacher education were highlighted and challenges and solutions to economic transformation using teacher education curriculum was adequately dealt on. Thus, the study has recommended that the Federal Ministry of Education (FME) should develop policies that would encourage and reinforce the school/industry relationship that development and trained people for society in the past, the government should be deliberate in the budgeting and funding of teacher education by yearly earmarking a particular some of money to support teacher education programmes, the authorities that are in charge of handling corruption matters in the ministries, departments and agencies of government should be proactive enough to bring to book all that have diverted funds meant for developing teacher education in Nigeria, teacher education workers should ensure to bring in innovativeness in their activities, and learners in teacher education programmes should avail themselves of all opportunities for converting theoretical learning to economic powers.*

**Key words:** Innovation, teacher education, curriculum, economic transformation

## **Introduction**

Innovation is a term that is associated with the introduction of new ideas and conceptualisation on what or how of an idea had been and possibly the where of a thing. The process of carrying out innovation is the act and art of innovating. It is when trends previously viewed right change based on eliminating rusting areas and there is an introduction of newer ones that would serve the purpose better. According to Elis, Souto-Manning & Turvey (2018) innovation is developing and bringing to the fore new technologies, economic approaches or a new phenomenon. Thus, innovation brings to light the facts that innovating ideas are creations and creativity, a more profiting approach to enhancing the economies of society or changing the trends of operation of things. Since every creations show uniqueness, then innovativeness creates the avenue for creativity to be display. Though, the reason for an innovation is for the newly developed to enhance functionality, appearance or otherwise, it should be made clear that innovation does not necessary confer the attribute of being the best on the innovated material. However, it is usually deliberate and planned. This is necessitated by changes in the environment and prevailing conditions most of which are technologically driven and this forces education on the system and people buy into a knowledge society and knowledge economy. This again, makes the curriculum of the various segments of education to take the form that accepts the above. So a reconstruction of the curriculum is desired, this is to enable it carry every stakeholder in the business of education along (Findikoglu & Ilhan, 2016). Thus, innovation could thus be seen as a reconstructive process, an adaption process or an adoption of a better means of achieving desired objectives for individuals and the society. Nonetheless, the birth of the innovative process in the education circle begins with the teacher.

The teacher is the individual saddled with the responsibility of ensuring that teaching and learning take place in the school system. So he/she has the responsibility too of making sure that whatever the needs of the generation may be is provided to enable the learner fit into the society and even into the

*Innovating Teacher Education Curriculum for Economic Transformation in Nigeria*

---

future. The assignment of helping the learner fit into life generally makes it imperative that the teacher should be properly trained in such a manner that he carries out his/her functions with creativity for new creations.

Teacher education which is what teacher goes through before being certified has responsibilities in bringing into its professional practice the process of innovation in order that those being prepared to take up teaching in the society would perform their service with innovativeness in consideration of what they have learnt while in school. This is because according to Kinney (2017) education determines the way we solve problems, deal with others and even the way we perceive the world around us. Thus, teacher education should pursue the development in its recipients' creative thinking and innovativeness. The gap between education and innovation must be made to be very small if not totally eliminated and this can only be achieved through the curriculum.

Curriculum is viewed as all the learning experiences that a learner gets under the school. This means that for people to become whatever and attain anything after education, It is expected that the school should expose them to learning's that would make them productive citizens. The reason Amadioha and Akor (2019) have defined curriculum as that tool used for the relative permanent change in the behaviour of the learner in order to make him/her useful for himself/ herself and the wider society. It could be inferred that the curriculum has all it takes to change an unproductive person to become a productive person by achieving desired goals. Therefore, it could mean that if innovation in teacher education curriculum practice is carried to the latter that there is a tendency for economic transformation to evolve, considering that earlier innovation has been associated with the economy.

Transformation is a change in observation from what was originally known to the observer, but how now carrying a different look/ appearance. Web finance (2020) sees transformation as a total departure and change in a new direction with a different level of productivity. Gass (2012) sees transformation as a great, basic change that change perception about a subject or an object. This means that transformation is dual dimensional in that it could

be positive or negative, for better or worse, productive or unproductive. However, the expectation of transformation usually is for it to produce good and sustained change. Also, when a subject or object yields to transformation, it can never go back to its original state. Hence economic transformation through teacher education curriculum that has undergone innovation should be a beauty to behold.

Economic transformation is when sustained effort moves from low productivity endeavours to higher productivity endeavours. According to teVelde (2013) who defined economic transformation as taking labour from low to higher productive activities. This means that when there is a value chain opportunity in an endeavour, it could be concluded that such an endeavour can undergo economic transformation. This takes us back to what could be said of innovation in teacher education curriculum practice as having the potential to lead to economic transformation of Nigeria.

The teaching profession has suffered many setbacks for a long time, even though it is one of the sectors that engages people gainfully, yet, the economic desire associated with it has been a tall dream. Since most people take up teaching as a last resort, infact, from the point of admitting students to take up teaching careers when they are getting ready to gain admission higher institutions, the choice of a career in teaching is one of the most difficult choices they make. Hence, the students who take teaching courses are more often are the leftovers that other faculties did not accept or people who were rejected by other faculties for not meeting up the required cut-off mark, this has to change (Amadioha&Akor,2019). Therefore, the education faculty has always had the dumping ground experience even though the faculty of education unknowingly to many is the mother of all other faculties and this narrative shall remain so. Furthermore, it will be necessary to draw attention of the teacher and by implication teacher education being static having to change. This is based on the fact that teacher education transformation, economic transformation strives is what would further hold the Nigerian nation together.

Thus, the need for this study innovating teacher education curriculum for economic transformation in Nigeria.

### **Concept of Innovation/Innovating Teacher Education**

Innovation has been seen as a process of deliberately putting effort to develop new things out of the old and the newly created one would outperform the old one. NMSU (2018) described innovation as doing things in a new way. This may mean implementing curriculum practice in a new way. It could further be perceived as becoming technological or use of technology in enhancing a practice, in this case, teacher education when creatively in practice or curriculum implementation is introduced in order to make teaching and learning better. Innovation polishes teacher education and gives it a bright and colourful outlook considering that teaching as an art moulds the teacher to be able to do influencing and reshaping of the behaviour of the learner (Kundra, 2008).

The above presents the idea that without the feature of creativity it would be difficult for a teacher to attain effectiveness. Invariably, it is innovation approaches that distinguish a better teacher education school or faculty from another. In consideration of this, it becomes imperative that since innovation comes with its attendant changes for a better institution or person (teacher), the teacher education practice should be able to give adequate proportion of the overwhelming assignments and roles given through the curriculum in order to be able to tune into the times or lose touch with the present and struggle to catch up with the future. Therefore teacher education with the responsibility for the preparation of teacher must align itself such that it will produce teachers that are visionary or forward thinking in order to follow the trends in the society and technologically proffer solutions to problems of the now, stand on the present solutions to proffer solutions to future problems.

Teacher education is a programme that hands down to generation after generation the practice and methodologies that help in the education of the young learners in the society. Howey and Wideen (2001) emphasized that

teacher education is a system of study that people are exposed to in order to keep them equipped and for them to equip others for the future that is ahead of them all. Michigan University (MU, n.d.) describes teacher education programme as being connected to the proficient and competence development of teachers and aimed towards developing them to attain the standard needed for professional practice while (NCTE, n.d) sees it as a course of education learning that is geared towards research and development to teach at the various levels of education. Hence, teacher education could be construed as a course packaged towards enhancing those who are being prepared to carry on with the profession of teaching learners in preparing them for life in the society. So because the teacher is the main person when it comes to curriculum implementation, then, it is vital to say that he has the responsibility of bringing to bear his/her level of ingenuity that can produce creativity such that would make teaching and learning sustainable. This he would have learnt at the foundational level in the teacher education process in order to equip him for the future that is ahead of him. The teacher education institutions should be well arranged through a well packaged or innovative curriculum that gives room for dimensional and deep training opportunities for the learner who would eventually become teachers, tuning the curriculum at disposal to get out the best of it.

Teacher education embodies teaching skills, pedagogical skills and professional skills. Teaching skills are all the training and practices that comes with vagaries of techniques, approaches and strategies that would enable the teacher to instruct, reinforce and adequately do assessment. This means that the classroom must be effectively open for management and use of teaching aids/instructional material and communication proficiency skills. Pedagogical skills comprise of the philosophical, sociological and psychological issues that equips the teacher to have a good foundation for practicing teaching. It concern itself more with what the society value, why, when, where and how, the reasons why these considerations are the most important to the society not undermining how these are pushed down from one generation to the next as

### *Innovating Teacher Education Curriculum for Economic Transformation in Nigeria*

---

well as the age, background, thinking capacity, culture of the people among others. While professional skills considers what would enable the teacher to advance in career and daily work. They are all the soft skills; counselling, interpersonal relationship, computer knowledge and application, information acquisition and management skills, and opportunities for lifelong learning.

This is why teacher education aims at the following:

1. Teacher education supports and facilitates the process of helping learners to find out their talents and other capabilities they possess.
2. Tends to help tilt the curriculum to pursue the needs of the populace and align it with priorities in focus.
3. Pursue knowledge creation using reflective thinking.
4. Finds opportunities to build up the society towards the enhancement of the world around.
5. Give opportunities for self-learning, reflection and development of new and basic ideas for critical thinking. All these would be achieved through a properly constructed curriculum.

#### **Concept of Curriculum**

Curriculum is all the learning that a learner gets under the supervision of a teacher. It is every learning experience that a learner is exposed to in the course of going through school. More so, it is intended at bringing a positive behavioural change in the learner in order to enable him/her function optimally in the society. Priestly (2019) defined the curriculum as the whole arrangement of ideas and programme put together by an educational institution to enable the student needs to be met and to attain the educational aims of choice. This can be perceived as all the preparations, arrangement and activities engaged in by the school through the teacher in order to ensure that the learner is guided in the process of societal life and for the learner to be able to take a place in the society as growth goes on. This is as well to ensuring that the national intent of education is achieved. Curriculum can be construed as the knowledge, skills,

attitudes and values that learner is expected to learn that may serve as the learning yardstick or objectives that they must meet that confers on the learner full functionality (GSP, 2015). This includes all the process observed whether when the school is in session or out of session. The observance of the rules and regulation governing the school, the documented curriculum contents and the extra-curriculum activities that the school engage the students in e.t.c. These activities and many more are what the school do through the teacher or by the teacher. The teacher too has his/her own curriculum by which he/she gets necessary training in order to function properly at the duty post. The process through which the teacher undergoes his/her training is referred to as teacher education and the tool for training the teacher is called teacher education curriculum.

Teacher education curriculum could be seen as the instrument used in the preparation, equipping and discharge of the prospective teacher into the society to take up the role of educating the young for the future. This individual is equipped using theoretical and practical experience procedures called teaching practice that enables proper functioning that is appropriate in needed knowledge, skills, attitudes and value that permits him to be a rounded person who functions or contributing personally to societal development without doubt. This is affirmed by Wong (2010) who asserted that the curriculum of a teacher education programme should be able to train a teacher trainee in the methodology and pedagogy of teaching. It was further added that whole teacher preparation should be that one which has the above qualities as well as research oriented and practical enough with reflective and creative thinking skills that would help the teacher to observe the classroom procedure at any particular point in time and be able to determine the next step to take in pursuing and attaining stated objectives for teaching and learning.

The above confirms that a teacher that would make impact in the society is that one who is deliberately practical enough to contextualize situations that are overarching and causing the teaching learning process to suffer by making the process malleable. Be that as it may, the teacher in this



### *Innovating Teacher Education Curriculum for Economic Transformation in Nigeria*

---

discourse is that one who has been trained to be creatively innovative in consideration of a prevailing circumstance in the classroom which is the theatre of the teacher and the learner. The teacher is able to bring home what would ensure comprehensive interaction process that would guarantee full learning through adequate and active participation of the learner. At this point, they, the observers would hypothetically refer to the teacher education curriculum as that which is used to prepare the kind of teacher that has the capacity to go through creative and innovative activities in the classroom and to develop in the learners the tendencies for economic transformation.

#### **Concept of Economic Transformation**

Economic transformation is the process and development that is able to cater for the economic well-being of people. This type of transformation has the capacity to liberate the people from poverty and other attending difficulties. It can be viewed as that structural change where limited productive activities leads to higher and sustained better life of a people. Alexander (2020) sees economic transformation as that spiral arrangement that ensures that productivity is obtained through a shift in labour and other resources towards sustained economic growth.

The foregoing description seems to mean a situation where a changed mind through learning is able to earn higher living and better economic terms. Again, it conveys that education, yes, teacher education through the curriculum can be the catalyst for such transformation in that a person that previously was experiencing low economic output could suddenly experience a surge in economic earnings perhaps because such an individual has applied himself to learning and has converted the learning to tangible economic growth. This leaves it to be said that a well innovated teacher education curriculum has the capacity to bring economic empowerment both to the teacher and the learner under him/her.

### **Steps for Innovating Teacher Education Curriculum for Economic Transformation**

For teacher education curriculum to enjoy the benefits attainable towards economic transformation, this mechanism as to be built into the curriculum construction. The curriculum development must take certain steps toward pushing for what would bring about productivity in form of economic transformation. They may include:

1. **Observe the Learner and Learning Situation:** For an innovation that would stand the test of time and produce needed appreciable results, the curriculum developer should ensure that the learner is observed in his setting putting into consideration all the pros and cons that would make it possible that there is a sequential scope building on learning as teaching and learning progresses in order to determine who is being carried along and who is left take every. All pursuing towards taking everyone from whatever point they may have been.
2. **Employ Shared Ideas:** Ensure that the process of taking learners from where they are to where they should be is not a responsibility of one man but that of many people who share similar passion to achieving a productive classroom environment that engenders experiential learning where the learners are put in smaller groups that would easily help to identify laggards and to remediate what the problems may be as quickly as possible.
3. **Double the effect:** Once the original smaller groups of the learners begin to produce results that helping to attain curriculum objectives, the groups should be duplicated in several places in order that the effect of the innovation would gain a wider coverage.
4. **Get feedback through reports, oral presentations and each one tell one process** (Machtly, 2017)

### **Strategies for Transforming Teacher Education Curriculum to Economic Power**

Here are some suggestions of strategic steps towards transforming the teacher education curriculum economic power as this would have been the end result desired.

1. Engage in continuous review of the curriculum development process with the aim of determining weak areas to strengthen them and to reinforce areas of strength.
2. Have a long term perspective in view by constantly adding value to reviewed cases.
3. Encourage the practical application and reflective thinking among learners.
4. Encourage learners to be involved in productive time use and to be result oriented.
5. Programme efficient use of resources in the learners such result can be obtain through the application of minimal effort without compromising quality and sustainability.
6. Learners should be helped to develop the spirit of industry in that every effort is capable of producing commensurate output.
7. Flexible learning approaches that allow a learner to learn at his/her pace and still produce results should be permitted.
8. Align classroom experiences with daily life experiences of the learners.
9. Convert the classroom where possible to the laboratory for solving the problems facing humanity
10. Give opportunity for others ways of development in the learners through projects.

### **How to Sustain Economic Transformation in Teacher Education**

It is one thing to bring about economic transformation through the classroom experience and other learning opportunities that the learner may have been exposed and it is another thing to sustain what has been achieved or

*Samuel W. Amadioha PhD and Victor Ojorka Akor*

---

being achieved. The following may help in the sustenance of economic transformation produced.

- a. Make access to learning and skill acquisition process less difficult and cumbersome.
- b. Close-up gaps that would encourage drop-out from the system rather remediate opportunities for weaker learners to open-up on their weaknesses.
- c. Provide affordable tool-kits that would make a lee-way for empowerment and self-reliance
- d. Encourage holistic learning that include life literacy skills, communication skills and manipulative skills (Eneyoh & Ekeng, 2012)
- e. Involve learners in various aspects teacher education opportunities and creatively tilt the curriculum to be able to produce opportunities for economic and career advancement.

### **Challenges and Solutions to Economic Transformation Using Teacher Education Curriculum**

Teacher education faced some challenges that it left poor and unattractive. Some of the reasons are include:

1. Poor Remuneration of Teacher Education Worker: Teachers and teaching profession is one of the most neglected in the society. Society has not given teaching its pride of place yet and until that happens there may not be a way to remedy all the remote issues associated. Worst still, the staff members in the sector only get peanuts instead of an adequate remuneration and better welfare package. This requires urgent attention because if the challenge continues our institution may have become poultry houses instead of schools for training people due to abandonment. Let there be adequate remuneration for teacher education workers.
2. Poor Design and Implementation of Teacher Education Curriculum: There is need for improvement in the design of the curriculum for educating teachers such that the latest technology approaches to

### ***Innovating Teacher Education Curriculum for Economic Transformation in Nigeria***

---

curriculum implementation are captured, entrepreneurial skills embedded in the design and for it to be delivered creativity, thus, leading to economic transformation.

3. **Poor Installation of Required Tools:** The infrastructure in our schools gradually decayed and most of them are already obsolete. There is need for regular replacement and update of required tools for proper teacher education and learning process to take place especially in meeting the demand of the standard we would want to give us the right results.
4. **Abandonment of Weak School/Industry Partnership:** In the past industrial training experience (ITE) was taken seriously and it produced results for recipients in that after gaining needed knowledge and skills from industrial training experience they were able to replicate the things learnt but now even engineering students prefer to do ITE in offices rather than in workshops (Ugwoke,2012). This challenge has led to many coming back from industrial training experience without knowledge or skill gained/acquired to contribute to the society. There has to be paradigm shift from this point in order to avert the challenge of unemployment that has come us like rain of stone from above.
5. **Corruption:** Corruption is one of the challenges facing the Nigerian national economy which needs to be dealt with. Funds budgeted for any infrastructural development should not be diverted any more but used for the proposed purposes and there would be guarantee of better development of the education sector and by implication teacher education.

### **Conclusion**

The foregoing discourse has highlighted issues on innovating teacher education curriculum for economic transformation in Nigeria. The facts mentioned that creativity leads to innovation and that when the steps outlined as well as the strategies suggested are followed to the latter then there would surely be economic transformation but with a strong affirmation that some of

Samuel W. Amadioha PhD and Victor Ojorka Akor

the challenges that teacher education has faced overtime be turned around for good and all those involved in bringing in the change process participate fully by contributing their goodwill quota.

### **Recommendation**

The following are the suggestions supporting this study:

1. The Federal Ministry of Education (FME) should develop policies that would encourage and reinforce the school/industry relationship that would develop and train people for society in the past.
2. The government should be deliberate at budgeting and funding of teacher education by yearly earmarking a particular some of money to support teacher education programmes.
3. The authorities that are in charge of handling corruption matters in the ministries, departments and agencies of government should be proactive enough to bring to book all that have diverted funds meant for developing teacher education in Nigeria.
4. Teacher education workers should ensure to bring in innovativeness in their activities.
5. Learners in teacher education programmes should avail themselves of all opportunities for converting theoretical learning to economic powers.

### **References**

- Alexander, K. (2020). Economic transformation. [www.gsdre.org](http://www.gsdre.org). Retrieved, 19<sup>th</sup> September, 2020.
- Amadioha, S. W. & Akor, V. O. (2019). Utilizing curriculum studies for Nigeria's national development through effective teacher programme. *Journal of Education 11(1): -257-265*
- Ellis, V., Souto- Manning & Turvey, K. (2008). Innovations in teacher education. Towards a critical re-examination. *Journal of Education for Teaching 45 (1)*. doi: 10. 108 0/02607476.2019.1550602

***Innovating Teacher Education Curriculum for Economic Transformation in Nigeria***

---

- Eneyoh, E. S. &Ekeng, C. (2012). Vocational and technical education: A catalyst for economic transformation in Nigeria. *International Journal of Educational Research* 12(1): 110-114.
- Findikoglu, F. &Ilhan, D. (2016).Realization of a desired future.*Educational Research*, 4(11): 2574-2580.
- Gass, R. (2012). What is transformation? And how it advance social change.[www.strategies for social change.com](http://www.strategiesfor-social-change.com). Retrieved 16<sup>th</sup> September, 2020,
- Great School Partnerships (GSP, 2015).The glossary of education reform. [www.edglossary.org/curriculum](http://www.edglossary.org/curriculum)
- Howey, K. R &Wideen, M. (2001).Teacher education.[www.sciencedirect.com](http://www.sciencedirect.com).Retrieved 17<sup>th</sup> September, 2020.
- Kinney, Phil (2017). Innovation in the classroom: why education needs to be more innovative. [www.philmcknney.com](http://www.philmcknney.com). Retrieved 16<sup>th</sup> September, 2020,
- Kundra, T. (2018). Innovative practices in teacher education programme. *International Journal of Applied Research* 4 (4): 238-240.
- Machtly, R. (2017). Six steps to innovation. [www.educause.review](http://www.educause.review). Retrieved 19<sup>th</sup> September, 2020.
- Michigan University (MU, n. d.). Concept of teacher education.Retrieved 17<sup>th</sup> September, 2020.
- National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE, n.d.).Teacher education.Retrieved 17<sup>th</sup> September, 2020.
- Northwest Missouri State University (NMSU,2018). Why innovation absolutely matters in education. [www. online. nwmsu missouri.edu](http://www.online.nwmsu.missouri.edu). Retrieved 17<sup>th</sup> September, 2020.
- Priestly, M. (2019). Curriculum: Concepts and approaches. [www.mpriestly. Wordpress.com](http://www.mpriestly.wordpress.com). retrieved 19<sup>th</sup> September, 2020.
- teVelde, D. W. (2003). Economic transformation: Where are we heading, post-2015?.[www.odi.org](http://www.odi.org). Retrieved 16<sup>th</sup> September,2020.

*Samuel W. Amadioha PhD and Victor Ojorka Akor*

---

- Ugwoke, E. O. (2012). Promoting entrepreneurial skills development in business education programme for economic transformation of Nigeria. *International Journal of Education Research* 12(1): 67-74
- Webfinance(2020).Transformation.[www.businesseducation.com](http://www.businesseducation.com).Retrieved 16<sup>th</sup> September,2020.
- Wong, M.N.Y. (2018). Teacher education curriculum.[www.sciencedirect.com](http://www.sciencedirect.com). Retrieved 19<sup>th</sup>September, 2020.