

Implementation of the Primary School Curriculum Modules in Nigeria: The Role of Supervision

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ABSTRACT This paper focuses attention on the content of the primary school curriculum modules and the role of school supervision in the interpretation and application of the curriculum contents by teachers. Identified roles of school supervision includes: effective school inspection and instructional supervision, regular workshop for school inspectors, headmasters and teachers on the interpretation and application of the curriculum contents. Formation of standing curriculum supervision committee at the federal, state and local government levels, allocation of adequate fund and time for effective study of the curriculum modules and dynamic leadership by supervisors are also essential for the positive coordination of the implementation of the curriculum modules in the 21st century.

INTRODUCTION

Curriculum is the summation of a systematically planned process of teaching and learning based on the aims and objectives of the educational policy of any country. It is made up of academic or subject based curriculum and non-academic or extra curriculum programmes. The primary school curriculum module is an academic curriculum based on all subjects designed for the primary school level. According to Urevbu (1990: 27), "Curriculum is a human educational/enterprise in which people attempt to do something in a purposeful, thoughtful and careful way. Acting purposefully with some end or procedure in mind in one sense at least, holding that end or procedure as valuable, good, desirable, etc."

The present primary school curriculum modules are well -designed and meant the views of Urevbu. The achievement of the curriculum objectives demands positive co-ordination of man and material resources through effective supervision.

Nwaobasi, (1984), Peretomode (1995) and Ogunu (1998) viewed supervision as ways of stimulating and improving professional growth of teachers to develop appropriate techniques, methods and procedures of teaching in ways that will improve their overall performance or effectiveness. School supervision is concerned with the positive implementation of the school curriculum. It is directed positively towards the utilization of available human and material resources in achieving specific module

(instructional) objectives and general educational goals (National Policy on Education) for the purpose of national growth and development.

School supervision role in the implementation of the primary school curriculum modules is concerned with a well- planned action programmes to be executed by supervisors using democratic leadership style. It involves supervisors helping and working with teachers and pupils on the daily implementation of the curriculum modules. It is concerned with explaining to both teachers and pupils each item in the curriculum.

THE CURRICULUM MODULES

The current primary school curriculum is the result of Sofolahan Committee write-up held in 1987. In a well simplified form and terms, in the different subjects, the curriculum modules are programmed schemes-of-work based on the national syllabus for primary schools. Discussions are based under the following headings: The Primary Schools Curriculum Modules (1988: 2):

- a. The number of the module;
- b. The topic content of subject matter dealt with in the module;
- c. Content elements: that is a breakdown of the content into small separate units that form the subject matter. These enable the teacher to deal with the topics in small steps;
- d. Objectives: that is, the knowledge to be gained or the skills to be acquired by pupils after the teaching/learning interplay on the module. These are stated in behavioural terms,

that is, in terms of the changes in behaviour, we expect in the pupils to be able to do at the end of the teaching/learning interaction on the module;

- e. Pupils' activities that will lead to the achievement of the objectives. By performing these activities, pupils will be able to gain the knowledge or acquire the skills stated in the objectives;
- f. Teaching aids and teaching hints are suggested to assist teachers in the preparation of their lessons;
- g. Suggested assessment techniques: these are suggestions on the instruments to be used for assessment, that is, the means and method by which we intend to observe or detect, and measure the extent of the knowledge gained or the skill acquired by pupils, as they perform each activity;
- h. The period of time work in the module is expected to last is stated in week.

The curriculum content is detailed and is an indication that the planners have in mind the qualifications and methods of teaching by teachers in primary schools. Today in Nigeria, primary school teachers are generalists, that is, teachers who teach all subjects to one set of pupils throughout the year. Performance depends on the training received on curriculum implementation, professional assistance and co-operation received from the head teachers, senior and expert colleagues.

The present political development in Nigeria calls for the important role of school supervision in the implementation of the primary school curriculum modules. In 1976, General Olusegun Obasanjo, prematurely launched the Universal Primary Education Programme (UPE). The inadequate preparation could result in overpopulation of pupils in school and production of unskilled teachers through cash programmes in Teacher Training Colleges and Colleges of Education. During this period, Federal Government was not hundred percent (100%) involved in the welfare of primary schools teachers and also did not make provision for adequate supervision and evaluation of the programme.

In 1999, the same man who launched the UPE in 1976, planned and launched the Universal Basic Education. The sources of teachers for the expected increase in pupils enrolment is the National Youth Service Corp members without consideration to the corpers areas of specialization. The same group of ill-trained teachers are

now to work with the corp members, to pilot the affairs of primary education in the 21st century.

Between, 1976 and 1999, Nigeria was able to come out with well-prepared curriculum modules for primary schools. We also have a good percent of the primary school teachers with National Certificate of Education, products of the Unity Party of Nigeria, free education programme between 1979 and 1984.

Despite these achievements the disparity in the number of educated people which exists among the states still exists in the country, because of difference in political parties. The performance of pupils in public primary schools since 1976 is not encouraging compared to pupils in good private schools, as indicated in Common Entrance Examination Results into Federal Government Colleges. The Universal Basic Education (UBE) 1999, is different from Universal Primary Education (UPE). The present government interest in our primary schools called to mind certain questions: could adequate utilization of the primary school curriculum modules by supervisors and teachers improve the quality of education in primary schools? In what way could school supervision promote the implementation of the primary school curriculum modules, in order to enhance academic performance of pupils in Nigeria public primary schools in the 21st century?

THE ROLE OF SUPERVISION IN CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION

School Inspectors should use modern supervision approach and regularly visit schools. Such visits should be directed towards assisting and assessing school heads and teachers in curriculum interpretation and application.

Workshops should be organised for the National Youth Service Corp members by school heads and teachers. Such workshops should be co-ordinated. This will also result into a proper orientation of the teachers (corpers) to the school and community. This is a vital supervisory function and could make the corp members, happy and well-adjusted teachers and feel secured in their new job.

Establishment and Co-ordination of a Program of Teacher Teaching in Co-operation with Neighbouring Colleges and Universities: This could make a significant contribution to classroom instruction and individual primary school teacher as a prospective member of the teaching profession. Also, effective supervisory

practice is needed if a teacher in service programme is to be beneficial to all concerned.

Establishment of a Co-operative Curriculum Study and Development Unit in Schools: This is essential for the maintenance of an up-to-date and worthwhile classroom experience for pupils. Every staff member should be involved in this work. Among the positive outcomes on curriculum implementation at the school level could be, improved courses of teaching based on latest research findings, better staff understanding and relationships, improved participation among the various school units, such as a general awakening of interest in newer trends, instructional media and methods of school organisation (Neagley and Evans 1970: 127).

Planned-in-service Programme such as Sandwich, Long Distance Learning and Weekend, for Teachers: A carefully planned-in-service programme on curriculum implementation could contribute much intellectual growth in the area where research and experimentation are having an impact.

ACTION RESEARCH AND EXPERIMENTATION

Supervisors should carry out at the local government and school levels action research and experimentation on the curriculum. This is desperately needed in our public primary schools, to identify classroom management problems facing curriculum implementation.

Coordination of Special Services and Subjects by Supervisors, Such as Local Language, Speech Correction, and Developmental Reading, with the Total Program: This could help remove a major supervisory problem particularly in the supervision of pupils' activities and work in the classroom.

Pupils spend more time at home than at school. Supervisors should educate parents through Parent Teachers Association Programmes on their role in curriculum implementation, especially extra curricular activities. They should be told the effects of some of their actions on childrens' moral and academic performance.

HOW TO IMPROVE THE SUPERVISION OF THE CURRICULUM MODULES IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Regular Inspection of Schools: The inspectorate division of the federal, state and local

government areas, and ministries, should be provided with more supervision facilities including manpower. This could result into adequate and uniform implementation of the curriculum modules throughout the country, a major objective of the federal government for designing the curriculum modules.

School inspectors, school heads and other specialist teachers involved in instructional supervision should be familiar with developing theories of the curriculum. As a starting point, a dialogue in curriculum theory should be joined with the fields of educational administration and leadership. This could be achieved through workshops/seminars and would provide some basic theoretical and practical positions.

Regular Inspection of Primary Schools to Confirm Regulation in Curriculum Implementation: School inspectors should use modern supervision approach and regularly visit schools. Such visits should be directed towards assessing and assisting school heads and teachers in curriculum interpretation and application. Assistance could be given through workshops for teachers, especially corp members serving in primary schools. Inspectors and school heads should organize co-ordinated workshops. This could result into a proper orientation for the old teachers and corp members to the school and community, a vital supervisory function of school administrators. Corp members involved in such programmes will be happy and well-adjusted and feel secure in the primary school teaching assignment.

Enough time should be provided for an effective study of the curriculum, especially by the new and very old teachers. Teachers cannot be expected to work effectively for higher productivity after full days work. As a result, extra or extra calendar days should be provided for curriculum work. At the very minimum, per academic year, three or five full days or equivalent are needed to carry out any significant project on the curriculum as it affects the school environment.

There should be regular evaluation of the curriculum implementation by supervisors and teachers. This will make room for continuous re-teaching of teachers through effective supervision, using various techniques, especially clinical and demonstration method. This could also help supervisors in helping teachers to overcome classroom management problems, which could affect effective teaching and learning.

One of the problems of supervision of instruc-

tion is the overcrowded classroom (Oghuvbu 1998). If teachers are to have time for needed reading and research between regularly scheduled curriculum days, teacher pupil ratios and class loads must be reasonable for effective management.

Adequate sum should be provided in the budget for initial resource persons and curriculum study materials in the UBE program. Money should be increased for each important and additional subject area to be studied. The amount of money should be based on pupil enrolment and number of teacher involved in the UBE program.

School supervisors, at all levels should be dynamic in carrying out their responsibilities, because dynamic leadership is essential in effective supervision. Teachers should be involved in curriculum developmental projects. Such projects should be sensible in scope and not too burdensome to the persons involved.

The school communities, through P.T.A. should be involved in curriculum supervision, especially non-academic aspect of the school curriculum. Reports and opinions of the citizens of the community should be integrated into the school programmes during curriculum evaluation and adaptation programmes. Action research and experimentation at the school level should be based on pupils, parents and teachers opinions. Findings from such research should be collected at Local Government, State and Federal levels for an overall appraisal of the curriculum modules.

CONCLUSION

The achievement of the objectives of any

program depends largely on the management of available human and material resources. The achievement of the primary education objectives in Nigeria depends on the adequate implementation of the primary school curriculum modules, which depends on provision of basic facilities and positive supervision of teachers and other school personnel. The Universal Basic Education (UBE) may be a mere political point and not educational achievement if, government, supervisors and parents do not assist teachers and pupils in the daily execution of their responsibilities as workers and learners.

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