



2nd

International Conference on Education Proceedings

Theme: Quality Education for Societal Transformation

July 20-22, 2011
Nairobi, Kenya

Editors

Dr. Adelheid Bwire
Prof. Joanna Masingila

Mr. Yan Huang
Prof. Henry Ayot

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Preface

Kenyatta University and Syracuse University have had an institutional linkage since 2000. This conference is one of the activities sponsored through the Kenyatta University-Syracuse University Partnership.

These proceedings are a written record of the research presented at the International Conference on Education held July 20-22, 2011 at the Kenyatta University Conference Centre, Nairobi, Kenya. The theme of the conference, *Quality Education for Societal Transformation*, focuses on an important set of opportunities for research to be useful in improving teaching and learning. Keynote addresses were given by Prof. Melissa Luke, Prof. Olive Mugenda, and Dr. Beatrice K. Njenga.

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THE ROLE OF CURRICULUM EVALUATION IN QUALITY EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

The paper dwelt on the role of Curriculum Evaluation in quality education in Nigeria. The quality of education in Nigeria has come under serious criticism in recent years. The paper revealed that credence has been lent more to these criticisms because of the poor performance of students noticed in public examinations like the West African School Certificate Examination (WASCE) and the National Examination Council (NECO). As a result of these fall out, the effectiveness of public secondary school in Nigeria has become an issue of debate.

The paper stated that, since curriculum evaluation is the act of gauging the value and effectiveness of any aspect of educational activities, it then becomes imperative to look at certain aspects of the Secondary School System in Nigeria, especially the teaching learning process.

The paper goes further to explain how curriculum evaluation may come handy in solving some of the problems facing secondary school education in Nigeria, such as, issues bothering on instructional methods, instructional materials, class size, students' assessment and evaluation and other sundry issues affecting quality education in Nigeria.

The paper concluded that mass failure in public examination can be drastically reduced in Nigeria if curriculum evaluation is allowed to thrive within the educational system in the country.

Curriculum Evaluation

Curriculum evaluation is the process of gauging the value and the effectiveness of educational activities Salia (1987). The word curriculum, itself is derived from the latin word "*currere*" which means "a course to be run" (Kool-Chun, 2002). According to Tanner and Tanner (1975), curriculum entails planned instructional experiences designed to assist

learners develop and exhibit individual capability. The major elements of curriculum comprise:

- Aims and objectives
- Content of Curriculum
- Organization of learning experiences/methods
- Evaluation

Curriculum evaluation is concerned with the quality of educational programmes because one of the problems of quality control in education is how to maintain the effectiveness of curriculum over a period of time. Curriculum evaluation is therefore saddled with the responsibility of:

- Ensuring that curriculum goals and objectives are being met.
- Determining if allocated resources to an educational programme is producing desired benefits.
- Identifying curriculum areas that need improvement.
- Identifying curriculum areas that are yielding desired results, areas that are not, and why those areas are not working well.
- Reporting education progress to relevant stakeholders.

The issue of quality in education is more germane in the African continent whose education has come under serious criticism in recent years. The seemingly poor quality of education is perhaps, a direct fall out from the socio-political and economic instability that have bedeviled some African countries in recent times. Coupled with these shortcomings are, poor funding of education and mismanagement of public fund in some African countries. The resultant effect from these happenings are, infrastructural decay in schools, non-availability of instructional resources, over-populated (large classes) classes, poor remuneration of teachers, lack of qualified teachers in certain subject areas among others. It is therefore not surprising that there have been noticeable decline in the performance of students in public examinations in recent years since quality education is closely related to students' performance. This decline in performance among other factors, seems to have lent credence to the criticism of the quality of education in this part of the world. Such public examinations include, West African School Certificate Examination (WASCE), National Examination Council (NECO) etc.

Shielding light on this, Otti (2011) writes that:

...the monster of failure has taken over the throne, unleashing its fancy on students year after year. The harvest of academic failures has brought many students to their knees in tears.

Even, the Federal Government of Nigeria is disturbed by the persistent poor performance of Secondary School students in public examinations conducted by WAEC, NECO and other bodies in the country, Idoko (2009). Also, Fabayo (1998) hinted that local and international stakeholders in education are worried about the poor performance of students in public examinations. As a result of these shortcomings, the effectiveness of public Secondary Schools in some African countries has become an issue of debate. Babalola (2009) therefore suggested that a lasting solution of improvement be found for the schools, the curriculum and methods of teaching.

Curriculum evaluation on its part, play vital role in quality education and such evaluation may be **Formative** or **Summative**. When it is **Formative**, it can be used to:

- Monitor the quality of learning during instruction.
- Determine the effectiveness of instructional resources.
- Determine the effectiveness of instructional methods.
- Assess the quality of school facilities/infrastructure.
- Quality of school personnel
- To find out the interaction level of all of the above.

Formative curriculum evaluation is used to monitor learning progress during instruction. The purpose of such evaluation is to provide continuous feedback to stakeholders in education on learning successes and failures (Gronlund, 1976). For instance, feedback to learners provides opportunity for learning adjustments. Also, feedback to teachers provides them with appropriate information for modifying instructional activities, and it also provides to teachers, prescribe remedial action for individual or group of students.

On the other hand, **Summative evaluation** of curriculum comes up at the end of school programme or course – which is typically at the end of a term or at the end of school year. This type of evaluation determines the overall effectiveness of the programme. **Summative evaluation** can reveal the extent to which instructional objectives have been attained. It is also used for:

- Students' assessment
- Assigning course grade to students
- Certification of students

- Promotion of students

Evaluation Model

The next question is, how can a curriculum be evaluated to ensure quality sustainability? This brings us to the issue of Models of curriculum evaluation. First of all, a model of evaluation is a framework or a paradigm that helps evaluators to explain a reality. In other words, a model of evaluation is a comprehensive framework for guiding curriculum, programme, project etc. evaluation models are used to define the parameters of an evaluation – such as the concepts of study, the processes and methods required to generate vital information.

There are various models of evaluation which can come handy in curriculum evaluation. Among these models are:

- **CIPP: Context – input – process – product**
- **ATO: Anticident – Transaction Outcome**

CIPP was proposed by Stufflebean. The model, (CIPP), was developed to help improve and bring about quality assurance through the accountability in school programmes. The four phases of this model represented by CIPP, are context, input, process and product. The curriculum evaluator can apply any phase of the model to:

- Context evaluation
- Input evaluation
- Process evaluation
- Product evaluation

Context Evaluation

In context evaluation, if the focus is on curriculum for instance, the curriculum evaluator may need to state the existing socio-political, economic and cultural situations that gave birth to the curriculum. The context provides indept background information that helps to determine curriculum setting, the target group (students), the available resources with the geo-political system in terms of finance, man-power among others.

Input Evaluation

The input arm of curriculum evaluation in CIPP has to do with the quantitative and qualitative measures of human, material and financial resources.

Process Evaluation

Here the implementation procedures and process are considered. The process aspect of the curriculum is very crucial. This is the stage where the interaction among the variables in education is considered. Such consideration could be on the interplay of:

- Teachers
- Students
- Instructional materials
- Teachers' classroom management
- School management
- Finances
- Students achievement
- School infrastructure
- School Facilities etc.

The importance of this stage is that it helps to identify problems or bottlenecks in the programme being evaluated, in this case – the curriculum being evaluated.

Product Evaluation

Here, consideration is given to the effect and impact of the course of the implementation of the programme or the curriculum. This stage considers the outcome or achievement of the curriculum. The effect and the impact of the programme on education socio-economic and political life of the people is also considered here.

Antecedent Transaction Model (ATO)

The model was proposed by Robert Stake. It is one of the models that impact on decision making. The model is represented by the acronym **ATO** as in:

- A – Antecedent**
- T – Transaction**
- O – Outcome**

The antecedent aspect of 'ATO' represents the prevailing or the existing conditions prior to the introduction of the programme, such as curriculum. The prevailing condition may be political, social, economic situation in a country. It could also be the existing human and material resources (quality and quantity).

For instance, in curriculum evaluation, the evaluator may want to know the kind of curriculum being implemented, the category of teachers that are available and the instructional materials and other facilities available within the curriculum implementation.

Transaction in 'ATO' stands for the inputs and interaction that take place during the process of implementation. While the 'outcome' of 'ATO' model of evaluation stands for the available or measurable effect as a result of the various implementation phases - such as effects of political, social and economic situation, learning outcomes, programme efficiency and the general effect on humanity or the entire society.

ATO model of evaluation helps to detect the resources as well as their quality and quantity on ground for good transactions to take place - to produce the desired outcomes.

Curriculum Evaluation and Quality in Education

Evaluation is very concerned with the quality of educational programmes. According to Rathore and Schuemer (1998), evaluation (is not) an end in itself, evaluation should rather provide information which can be used to maintain or improve the quality of products and process. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the curriculum evaluator to discover whether or not a particular educational programme continue to be effective in attaining specific educational objectives.

Curriculum evaluation can also determine the nature of deterioration observed in a curriculum - whether such deterioration cuts across the entire curriculum, or parts of the curriculum. Evaluation can reveal if the defects in the curriculum was unintended or a combination of the above.

In addition, the curriculum evaluator can identify the cause or source of such defects or deterioration. Of course, this is done through careful data collection and analysis. As already hinted in this paper, sometimes, a number of factors may cause deterioration in an educational programme. For example, if an educational programme is not adequately funded or if teachers as the implementors of the curriculum fail to implement the curriculum in the intended form, such curriculum will not yield the desire result. Evaluation can reveal such defects. Without knowledge of cause and source of deterioration, it is very

difficult to work out any relevant, and effective solution and prescriptions for remedy. Also, when the causes or sources of any deterioration is identified, and measures are taken to improve the effectiveness of the deteriorating curriculum, it still behoves on the curriculum evaluator to take necessary steps to investigate how remedial actions or measures are working. Through the employment of these processes, there is no doubt that quality education could be maintained and sustained.

One of the major gains of quality education is improved performance of students in public examinations. Therefore, if quality education is truly considered desirable in the African Continent, then Curriculum evaluation must be allowed to thrive within the educational system. It must be noted that curriculum evaluation should not only be involved in an implemented curriculum, but rather, the evaluator must be involved even at the planning stage of a new curriculum. By doing so, appropriate evaluation strategies would have been built into the programme/curriculum to enable it withstand adversities in the course of implementation. Quality education is synonymous with socio-political and economic stability of a country. It is hope that stability will return to the body polity of many African countries so that education can take its rightful place in these nations. Quality education is a task that must be achieved in Africa, if curriculum evaluation is rightly involved and allowed to flourish.

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