

THE CHALLENGE OF THE CURRICULUM PARADIGM IMPLICIT IN LIFE -LONG EDUCATION FOR NATION-BUILDING IN NIGERIA

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Preliminaries

I like to approach the (ask before me by picturing it in four phases, namely: The Climate of Our Inherited Curriculum Vis-a-Vis a Conception of the Nigerian Nation; Tackling the Curricula! Issues Involved in Producing Effective Citizens; The Challenge of the Curriculum Paradigm Implicit in Life-Long Education, Necessary for producing Effective Citizens Vital for the Nigerian Nationhood; and The Tasks of the Teacher Involved in the Employment of Life-Long Education as a Panacea for producing Effective Nigerian Citizens.

The Climate Of Our Inherited Curriculum Vis-a-Vis A Conception Of The Nigerian Nation

Hitherto, curriculum development in Nigeria has been a systematic intellectual activity where curriculum models and or curriculum paradigms from the West have been adopted without any relevant research and consideration of the Nigerian social system. For many decades, the curriculum was thought of as a body of subjects and disciplines. The universities jealously guarded the teaching of these subjects and disciplines within their walls. The ideas intrinsic in these subjects and disciplines were transmitted to the secondary and primary schools and were completely divorced from the needs, culture and environment of the Nigerian peoples.

Although the use of the traditional subjects and disciplines for the purpose of curriculum planning and development remains one of the major bases for the categorization of knowledge, it is possible for distinctive lessons in these subject disciplines (geography, history, mathematics, chemistry, biology, religious knowledge, economics, etc) to pass for education in all its ramifications. Those who attack an employment of the individual subject disciplines for the purpose of curriculum planning and development in education justify their antagonisms on the following grounds:

- a. A negation of the importance of child-centredness in education;
- b. the problem of reconciling the pastoral care of the school with children's¹ curriculum activities;
- c. Dangers arising from a highly structured and arbitrary time-tabling arrangements associated with the subject-disciplines;
- d. A negation of the unity of knowledge; and
- e. A dampening of pupils' initiatives.

Based on the foregoing perspectives, the climate of the inherited curriculum engendered and propagated many issues and phenomena which educated the learner off his social environment. Thus, this curriculum was tailored at displaying not only insufficient account of a pupil's previous experiences but also his level of understanding and perception of phenomena. This curriculum fails to demonstrate a sufficient interest and concern about learners in spite of the view that they could constitute the focal points for educational programmes particularly for the young.

This curriculum makes a clear demarcation between a caring and catering for the pupil as a person on the one hand as well as a commitment to a development of his mind on the other hand. As adoption of a subject-based curriculum often leads to an inhibition of a close personal relationship is considered very necessary by educationists particularly if the teacher is to help the individual pupil and if this pupil is to trust the teacher (Okam, 1998).

The dangers arising from the arbitrary time-tabling arrangements associated with the traditional approach to the curriculum imply, among other things, a termination of worthwhile activities and inquiries because these cannot be confined within the boundaries of subject areas. Again, many learners and pupils who are exposed to a subject-based curriculum are often confronted with learning problems which arise from constant switch of attention from one subject matter to another.

Since the vital links between different subject-matter areas are usually not taught in situations where a subject based curriculum is emphasized, pupils are denied an awareness and knowledge of the support which one subject area can provide another. These learners usually demonstrate a glaring inability to accommodate practical and inter-disciplinary concerns and arrangements usually exhibited in career advice, civics and current affairs.

Thus, a subject-based curriculum arrangement is usually not dominated by a balanced notion

of 'structure'¹ and to this extent, it encourages role learning and memory work. Because of the comparative absence of 'structure' in programmes associated with this style of curriculum they are usually rendered incapable of being taught in imaginative ways capable of fostering discovery and problem-solving. As Pring (1987) noted, a subject-based curriculum is inextricably bound up with inflexibility of organization both of time and space. In this circumstance desirable educational activities such as 'outside activities' including 'field-trips'¹ and 'excursions' cannot be pursued.

The sum total of the foregoing reviewed developments emerged in the school curriculum to usher-in the following problems and concerns within the framework of the Nigerian populace namely:

- a. The inadequancies of its intellectual, academic and social-cultural contents:
and
- b. The resentment of the curriculum by different groups of people for a variety of dissimilar reasons.

By the time of her independence in 1960, Nigeria as a country, almost ceased to be constructive to a large extent in many ways. Thus, her populace will not apply their intelligence in creating national co-operation but rather persist in retaining the divisions in her social frameworks into hostile groups. There prevails a collective failure on the part of most Nigerians to apply the intelligence they possess not only for the purpose of self-preservation-but also for overcoming a major burden of preserving the unity of the country. Thus, in spite of being well aware of the horrors of the next war, since we already had a Civil War (1966 - 1967), Nigerian politicians and leaders including highly-placed individuals within the social fabric of the country continue to cultivate in the young those sentiments which will make it inevitable.

At present, many factors which have been allowed to operate vulgarly in many societal frameworks in Nigeria are all dragging or rather tending her society towards a situation of social disorder. Some of these factors which seriously impinge on forces of religious intolerance and religious bigotry, sexual harassment and sexual abuse, illiteracy, unemployment, drunkenness, child-misuse and child-abuse, armed - robbery, vandalization of public utilities, assets and property, 'slatism' and tribalism, nepotism, class feeling and competition have been allowed to prevail irrationally in Nigeria to the extent of producing in the young insanity, stupidity, readiness for homicide, economic injustice and ruthlessness. Nigeria, as a political entity, has become so intolerably tense, so charged with hatred, so filled with misfortune and pain that most people have lost the power of balanced judgement which is needed for emergence from the slough in which the Nigerian Society is staggering. The age we have found ourselves in Nigeria is so painful that many of the best minds in this country have been seized with despair.

Certainly, the greatest danger from which Nigeria suffers at the present time is the absence of any vivid sense of citizenship on the part of a large proportion of her inhabitants. This is largely attributable to the view that the average Nigerian does not have that instinctive sense of social cohesion which prevails in certain nation-states of the world such as England, France, Germany, Poland and Japan. And unless Nigeria acquires this instinctive sense of social cohesion which might lay the necessary foundation for a vivid sense of community feelings and nationhood amongst a good proportion of the Nigerian populace, there is a danger that the whole country might break down. The human societies associated with Nigeria are characterized by displays of disharmony in their political and social frameworks. For example, there are many negative circumstances and problems of uncertainties which do not only wedge Nigerians away from each other but which also militate against the economic advancement of the country as a whole. Thus most Nigerians are pillaged by problems of imbalances, inequality and the like which handicap the country itself from an emancipation from her erstwhile colonial history into a life which is based on an equal footing with others in the World of Mankind. This disharmony constitutes a major divisive force of great magnitude in terms of the corporate existence of the individuals that make up the Nigerian polity. Corbin (1983:1) has reflected this problem thus:

Within the Nigerian social framework, (here are barriers between groups and classes as a result of birth, occupation, language, race, religion; there are barriers between the generations, between townsmen and countrymen, between the schooled and the unschooled. Consequently, the Nigerian society is faced with the task of breaking down these barriers and increasing the opportunities for individuals and groups so as to be enabled to benefit from social opportunities which may be available to them.

In almost the same vein, Klineberg and Zavalloni (1968:239) revealed that a classic example of the problems of developing countries is offered in Nigeria. They reflected that in Nigeria, there prevails a low level of national identity amongst many of her inhabitants including students. In their comparative study of political orientations amongst students in African countries including Nigeria, Klineberg and Zavalloni (1968:239) found ethnic identity (rather than national) to be highest amongst Nigerian students than other students. They revealed their findings thus:

Nigerian students showed the highest frequency of tribal and regional membership as identity attributes; the highest frequency of case with others of the same tribe; the lowest frequency of a proportion agreeing that traditional authority and tribal structure may be useful to progress; and almost a unanimous perception of inter-group tensions within Nigeria as consisting a serious problem.

Corbin (1983) considers that our age in the context of the Nigerian social framework is so painful that there are rational grounds for despair amongst people generally. In other words, the means of happiness for humanity in the context of Nigeria seems not to exist. Even if the means exist, the Nigerian populace has not considered it necessary to choose to use them.

Tackling The Curricular Issues Involved In Producing Effective Citizens

In his attempts at expatiating on the role of education in the art of nation-building, Russell (1977) was prompted to make a distinction between the good citizen and the good individual. He endorses that in practical daily life, the education which results from regarding a child as a good individual is very different from that which results from regarding him as a future citizen. He reveals that although the good individual is he who ministers to the good of the whole and that the good of the whole is a pattern made-up of the good of individuals, his attitudes could degenerate into an exhibition of non-challance in sensitive issues involving humankind. On the other hand, Russell (1977) maintains that the attitude of the citizen is such that he is always aware that his will is not the only one in the world, and he is concerned in one way or another to bring harmony to the conflicting wills that exist in his community. Thus, while the attitude of the individual as such is subsistent, that of the citizen is essentially circumscribed by his neighbours. The citizen is first and foremost aware of his potentialities as an individual and this awareness governs much of the concessions, compromises and the ability to acquiesce what he initiates and adopts in the light of attempting to solve and resolve problems and or issues which confront him on the one hand and the larger society on the other hand. The fundamental characteristic of the citizen, according to Russell (1977), is that he co-operates in intention if not in fact.

Thus, the citizen, according to Banks and Clegg (1977), is usually expected to exhibit certain behavioural characteristics including the following: an appreciation of the nature and laws of social life; a display of intelligent and genuine loyalty to high national ideals; a possession of sense of responsibility as a member of social groups; a display of loyalty and a sense of obligation to his city, state, nation and to the human race; and a possession of the intelligence and the will to participate effectively in the promotion of the social well-being.

Based on the foregoing, Banks and Clegg (1977) further elaborated that it has become a norm to visualize the good citizen as possessing certain desirable attributes including: looking at things with a democratic slant; believing in decency and fair-play, forbearance and respect for others; commitment to an acquisition of the customs, traditions and nationalistic ideals of his country; a belief in the idea of progressive improvement of society; a desire to promote the general welfare and be pledged to raise and safeguard living standards for all, and a belief in universal education

Engle (1977) reminds us that the foregoing attributes or qualities of the good citizen clearly raise ethical, moral and philosophical questions which fall well outside of the scope of any strict subject or discipline. Banks and Clegg (1977) reveal that the functional inadequacies of education as mediated through the arts and the social sciences for the purpose of inculcating the norms of citizenship in the young, has become very obvious to be left too long unrecognized, unidentified and unattended to with all required immediacy. Thus curricularists have seriously urged for an urgent need to re-evaluate the educational system and the curricula of schools and colleges to enable us, as teachers, evolve and emerge with a new philosophy, goals objectives and instrumentation for a functional citizenship education in the light of a rapidly changing and technologically advanced world (Clegg and Schomburg, 1970; Banks and Clegg, 1977; Adaralegbe, 1981; Engle, 1977; and Okam, 1998). Banks and Clegg (1977) have entertained serious reservations about regarding the use of the traditional subjects in the classroom dispensation of citizenship education in schools and colleges. In particular, they

warned about the tenuous nature of history and the seeming failure of traditional history instruction for purposes of inculcating the tenets of effective citizenship thus:

Although it may be possible for history to contribute to the development of patriotism and to the making of good citizens, numerous difficulties have resulted from regarding history instruction primarily as a means of developing patriotic citizens. One serious problem is that there is no public agreement regarding the kind of patriotism that history develops, and what characteristics a good citizen exemplifies. Many social studies teachers and textbook writers consider history as a blind and uncritical acceptance of past and present events.

In essence, the problems which citizens face and the decisions which they must make in real life situations are usually global problems and global decisions. Global problems are always complex problems, cutting across subject-matter lines, involving both beliefs about facts and beliefs about values. Global problems, according to Herring (1969:19), are never resolved merely by marshalling the facts or ideas entrenched within the confines of a single subject discipline. This explains why Herring (1969: 19), himself a social scientist, argues that the social scientist has never claimed citizenship education as his goal. His revelations are reflected thus:

The problem of method in the social sciences ----- is best understood in relation to purpose. The more scientific the bent of the investigator, the less he is concerned with overall social problems or broad dilemmas that invite speculative thinking. His quest is for the concrete, the observable, the measurable, the definable.

Thus Berelson (1972), himself also a social scientist, does not make the claim that the social sciences are a sufficient or even necessary basis of good citizenship. Thus Engle (1977), Herring (1969) and Newmann (1977) caution that there are many good citizens and many good politicians who have never formally studied the social sciences and that there are alternative routes to good citizenship. Engle (1977), in particular, warns that we should show more respect for the social science disciplines and cease demanding of them more than they have in stock.

The Curricular Paradigm Implicit In Life-Long Education: A Challenge For Producing Effective Citizens Requisite For Nation-Building In Nigeria

Although the growing pluralism in the academic world of the social scientist might not be deplored, it is important to draw our attention to the problem it presents for those who are concerned with the organisation of the entire curriculum. This is because the curriculum builder is concerned not only with the structures of the individual disciplines, but also with the structure of the entire instructional programme within which the fields of knowledge find their place. He is also confronted with the problem of the greatest complexity - that of determining what knowledge from the vast array of intellectual resources the schools should teach for the purpose of attaining certain desired goals or ends (Bellack, 1965).

Besides, the critical times in which we live demand not only a change but a new orientation regarding our overall handling of issues which are central to citizenship during teaching-learning sessions. The profound changes taking place in the political, social and economic spheres in many parts of the world are already spelling a dire need for coping with the challenges and opportunities posed in the whole idea of citizenship education. Banks and Clegg (1977:220) have rightfully summarized the problem thus:

To perpetuate democratic ideals and a just society within the framework of" any nation, we need citizens who are not only acutely aware of the characteristics of a democracy, and committed to its ideals, but who are also aware of the inconsistencies associated with human ideals and their actual behaviour. Only then will they be able to help close the gap between the ideals and real. Clearly, citizens who are uncritical and non-reflective will not be able to improve the human condition in any given nation.

Thoughts of this nature, as reflected in the foregoing, have been gradually responsible for shifting the classroom dispensation of citizenship from the individual arts subjects and the social science disciplines to broad but integrated groups of knowledge spheres as represented in such subject areas as life-long education for a better handling and effective coping with the challenges and opportunities associated with the new subject area (citizenship education). Thus, the dissatisfaction of experts and critics with courses in citizenship training in schools and colleges have given rise to a spate of curriculum innovation in life-long education with the major aim of proffering some kind of general

education programmes in which instructions are geared towards cutting across the disciplines which special efforts are made to show the intimate relationships between these fields as concepts from them are brought to bear on social problems or issues raised in the curriculum for solution with particular reference to the citizen as he grapples with circumstances that impinge on nation-building within the framework or any given society.

A conception of life-long education, according to Faure (1972), covers the entire education process from the point of view of the individual and society. It is not only concerned with helping the child to live his own life as he deserves to do but its also designed to "help the future adult prepare for various forms of autonomy and self-learning. Life-long education, according to Dave (1972). seeks to view education in its totality. In this stance, it covers formal, informal and non-formal activities. Formal activity calls for a commitment to a planned course of activities executed within a school setting; informal activity is centred on an exposure to an unplanned course to activities taking place in a non-school setting; non-formal activity is hinged on a planned course of activities executed in a non-school setting such as the type operational in an open university. Life-long learning also embraces all structures and all stages of education (Mawes, 1975; Flude and Barot, 1979).

Although life-long learning is characterized by its flexibility and diversity in content, learning tools and techniques, an-d time of learning, it possesses certain significant elements, namely:

- (a) Life-long learning begins and ends with life, it should be seen as both preparation for life and as integral part of life. Therefore, it has to be an aid to life-long education, to traditional school learning and vocational education as well as the learning that leads to self-development and self-actualization (Biggs, 1973:230-233; Dave, (973: 11).
- (b) Secondly, life-long learning seeks continuity and articulation along its vertical and horizontal dimensions. Life-long learning advocate for what Alaezi (1990) considers as vertical and horizontal integration. This development and orientation is anchored on the view that each individual in the society should have the opportunity of getting any type of training he wants at any lime, not just during school period (vertical integration), and that there should be a link between the school and the community and the home, and that formal school learning should be related to community realities (horizontal integration).

That curricular imperatives associated with the subject-matter of life-long learning emanates from a variety of factors embedded into it. These vital elements according to Irvine (1981) presuppose that content development in life-long learning must, of necessity, require and derive from the said factors. These factors include the following:

- (a) The education system from which life-long learning derives its raison d'etre must be able to deal with large numbers of learners and or students.
- (b) 'line framework in> life-long learning must be so oriented as to accommodate itself to new and different populations.
- (e) The system (life-long learning) must be capable of utilizing new technological developments for educational purposes.
- (d) It has to be so oriented as to capitalize on the many other educational forces which exist in society.
- (e) It has to capitalize on bringing learners in contact with a wide variety of realistic learning experiences
- (0) It must accommodate itself to changes in the national resources available to man.
- (g) It must be capable of coping with increased amounts of information.
- (h) It must be concerned with economy of learning.
- (i) It must emphasize the development o!" learning skills.

- (j) The system should progressively involve the learner in making decisions about his educational programme so that ultimately he (the learner) controls his own learning,
- (k) It must emphasize human relations.
- (l) It must provide the means by which individuals can determine overriding purposes in their lives.
- (m) It must help individuals break down the dichotomy between work and play, (n) It must enable each individual, regardless of characteristics and previous condition, to realise and release the potential he possesses.

As a unique area of study, life-long education represents one of those modern curricula] arrangements which capitalizes on the use of methods to sustain the reasons for its existence as an important subject area. One of its assets is aimed at assisting young learners perceive the limitations of using single subject disciplines in interpreting events as they occur in society. The life-long education perspective is primarily engaged in describing and explaining human activities (whether social, cultural, political and economic) as they occur in society. In this development, life-long education is considered as representing a problems - solving discipline is considered as an interdisciplinary study of a topic, a problem, an issue or an aspiration. Thus life-long education is considered as representing a problems-approach discipline through which man including the citizen learns about problems of survival in his environment. This orientation stipulates that life-long education should assist each person or citizen acquire the analytical ideas and problems-solving tools that are developed by scholars in the various fields for the purpose of examining and solving societal problems.

Besides, life-long education is committed to transmitting and forming the values of citizens. Its philosophy is essentially geared to the maintenance and extension of the fundamental values of a democratic society with reference to the citizen. In this orientation, life-long education is considered as an applied field which attempts to fuse scientific knowledge with ethical, philosophical, religious and social considerations which arise in the process of decision-making as practiced by the citizen. The main aim is to improve the processes by which citizens use knowledge from a variety of disciplines and subjects areas in making decisions concerning their individual behaviour including taking decisions concerning questions of public policy.

Life-long education cannot afford to turn its back on the value component of citizenship education. As both scientific and ethical considerations are essential for the development of good citizens, then life-long education is, of necessity, concerned with the problem of how realms of science, arts and the humanities including morality can be made to complement one another, Thus, life-long education has to seriously dabble into ethical questions and speculate about future states to which human beings could conceivably aspire in order to participate in the reform of society for the possibility of bringing about positive achievements in nation-building.

The Tasks Of Teachers Involved in The Employment Of The Curriculum Paradigm Implicit In Life-Long Education For Establishing Necessary Foundations For Nation-Building In Nigeria

The implication of employing (he curriculum paradigm implicit in life-long education by the teacher for establishing necessary foundations for nation-building in Nigeria are considered below:-

Firstly, the life-long education teacher has to demonstrate a sound degree of professional competence and a working knowledge of the epistemology of the subject area. He needs to be aware that the skills he demonstrates in teaching the subject do not necessarily stem from his immense subject matter background (geography, history, economics, political science, sociology etc) but rather form an adoption of methods and styles which can contribute significantly in the achievement of objectives effectively put by Adaralegbe (1980:11) thus:

inculcating the right type of virtues and attitudes for the survival of individuals and society; the training of the mind in the building of valuable concepts, generalizations and understandings of the world; the acquisition of appropriate skills, abilities and equipment for the individual to live in his society; and the acquisition o('a relevant and balanced knowledge of facts about local and world phenomena.

Secondly, the teacher has to closely relate the subject matter of life-long education to the basic needs and lives of his students and himself. This subject matter has to be significantly relevant to all participants in the teaching learning process both emotionally and intellectually. The issues of "relevant curriculum content" in terms of the participants might involve shifting from the study of

strict logically organised subject matter of the subject area (geography, history, economics etc.) by the teacher to problems which affect life in a democracy such as Nigeria. After all, these problems are not confined to singular disciplines or subject fields that constitute the separate bodies of organised knowledge in all classroom circumstances, the life-long education teacher must represent in his leadership an exemplar of democracy in action in terms of his values, attitudes and behaviour. He assumes the task of not only propagating but also improving the way of life of society whether within the classroom context or without. He must be essentially interested in the incorporation of the benefits of socialisation in any teaching-learning activity.

Thirdly, one of the basic roles of (the committed life-long education teacher is to enable the learner acquire social skills which require him to transmit values: religious values, political values, cultural values, moral-values, social values, economic values etc. The practical demonstration of the traits associated with these values by the teacher might single him out as an object of identification whose desirable quantities or characteristics are to be copied and imitated by learners. Perhaps, the public's identification with those desirable traits of a particular teacher might positively demonstrate the extent to which society has found him competent in teaching-learning situations in social studies. The practical demonstration by students of those desirable attributes which they copy from their teachers could go a long way in increasing the level of citizenship education in schools in the final analysis.

Fourthly, if he is to create a lasting impact on his students, the life-long education teacher must possess a decision-making role. This criterion presupposes that, apart from being in authority by virtue of his social position and academic expertise, the life-long education teacher is expected to demonstrate a high degree of responsibility and accountability. His ability to plan lessons in his subject implies that he is not only cognitive of the aims and objectives of the subject but also versed in a knowledge of its philosophy as entrenched in the National Policy on Education. He can effectively establish learning and behavioural objectives for students and learners alike. His major function is to motivate, manage and control teaching-learning situations to the end of achieving learning objectives. If objectives in the teaching-learning enterprise are not being achieved, his decision-making role must enable him re-arrange the materials and resources, replace strategy and tactics, not necessarily altering the objectives.

Fifthly, apart from helping learners acquire socio-political values, the life-long education teacher has to contend with the view that a major purpose of the subject should be help learners think.

Conclusion

If Nigeria is to realise her dreams of employing the education process as an effective curricular instrument for achieving not only citizenship norms amongst individuals and learners alike but also for mobilizing them for national awareness and understanding in order to establish a strong basis for nation-hood, we need to devise ways of effecting changes in their readiness to perceive objects and situations in new ways. One of the avenues suggested for achieving this feat is bound to depend on teachers' cultivation of feasible curriculum paradigms for effective classroom dispensation of any desired content area. Among other things, this demand calls for teachers' effective manipulation of learners in terms of the cognitive structures which they have acquired as a result of their perceptions generally. In life-long education, an effective acquisition of these structures largely involves an exhibition of a better understanding and mastery, by the teacher, of the essential tenets and working knowledge of a variety of disciplines including the arts, sciences, humanities, philosophy and morality. This mastery must be explored by the teacher so as to enrich his pupils' experience through the use of concepts and their meanings in these subject disciplines apart from subjecting these learners to relevant exercises that emanate from them (the subject disciplines). It could follow that a clarification and a better understanding on the part of the teacher of his assumptions including his needs, attitudes, tensions and anxieties with regard to the content and methods of life-long education could also decrease undesirable biases and distortions which would have adverse effects of his leadership of learners. Thus the teacher could appropriately raise vital issues concerning himself as a result of an understanding based on his perceptions of life-long education for the purpose of maximizing the dividends that could accrue to learners through effective employment of the curriculum paradigm intrinsic in his subject area (life-long education). In other words, the teacher must demonstrate an intimate knowledge and understanding of the content of life-long education clearly beyond that ensconced in the curriculum and must be prepared to create conditions within which learners are truly able to become engaged in an understanding of the learning tasks associated with the epistemology and ontology of life-long education. This development could lead to a state of affairs where students and learners could be autonomously persuaded to perceive many aspects of the content of life-long education as constituting a major

curriculum paradigm for "Nigerianizing" them towards becoming effective and productive citizens within the context of Nigeria as a nation.

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