

# Curriculum Goals and its Attainment in Tertiary Institution of Nigeria; A Challenge of Implementation

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## Abstract

Implementing curriculum goals at tertiary institutions is a complex and challenging task. However, by understanding the challenges and complexities involved one can proffer solution to it. Therefore the paper examined the word curriculum, curriculum goals, characteristics of good curriculum in achieving its goals, which were discussed of a good curriculum, prerequisite for effective curriculum goals, university and its curriculum goals, colleges/institute of education and their curriculum goals, science and technology educational institutions and their curriculum goals. The paper discusses constructive curriculum to attain it curriculum goals, the principles of curriculum goals construction, curriculum implementation were also discussed, the needs for curriculum goals, its implementation for Nigerian Tertiary Institutions, complexity of curriculum goals implementation, challenges of curriculum goals implementation at tertiary institutions and solutions/recommendations of curriculum goals implementation to were proffered like, developing strategies to overcome these obstacles and ensure that their graduate are equipped with the knowledge, skills and attitudes required to succeed in an increasingly complex and rapidly changing world.

**Keywords:** Curriculum, Goals, Attainment, Tertiary constitution, Challenge, Implementation.

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## INTRODUCTION

The word curriculum is a difficult task because it has no definite definition to it, many scholars perceived curriculum from their different perspectives however the word curriculum came from the latin word "carrere" which we believed meaning to run a course, and traditionally a school curriculum has presented relatively a standardized ground covered by students in the race towards finishing a line (a certificate, diploma, or degree) from this early stage the word curriculum has passed into common stage and many people do think of it as a course of study; containing the body of subject matter officially taught in the school. Although this definition appear clear and simple it is however to narrow, some writers now think of curriculum as.

1. All learning experience that a learner has under the guidance of the school.
2. A programme of activities designed by the school to enable students attain, as far as possible, certain educational ends of objectives. And
3. Plan or unplanned experienced in the school that changes individual behavior.

Most Nigerian educational practitioners are used to the word EXPERIENCE in their definition of curriculum. The definition as all the learning experience a learner has under the guidance of a school was widely at the National Curriculum Conference in 1969. however, this definition is challenged by. For example, in his book *Class Culture of Society*. In fact Lawtons has written a number of books which are wide range ranging in approach to curriculum problems and argues that in the culture. He put it this way; certain aspect of our way of life, attitudes and values are regarded as so important that their transmission to the next generation is not left to chance in our society, but is entrusted to specially trained professionals (teachers) in elaborate an expensive institutions (schools)

Curriculum then is a contentious process of a conscious insight into the life of the society by the school with a view to bringing about improvement. This process comprises four broad and inter-related activities. One is the formulation of objectives (or setting of goals) the second is the selection of appropriate contents and learning experiences which will lead to the achievement

of the objectives. The third activity is the adoption of suitable methods of presenting the content or organizing the subject matter and learning experiences for the learners to deal with. Finally, at each stage, it is necessary to determine whether or not, and to what extent the objectives are being achieved. This is the evaluation exercise. A complete definition of curriculum must embrace at least four activities; the four step process can be obtained by answering the four questions posed by Tyler. The four questions which he identified were:

1. What educational purpose should the school seek to achieve?
2. What educational experiences can be provided that is likely to attain this purpose?
3. How can these educational experiences be effectively organized?
4. How can we determine whether these purposes are being attained?

Many definitions have been proposed for the term curriculum but a close look at each of them will show you one or two disadvantages. What curriculum mean has been extended beyond its dictionary meanings as a course of study to embrace the total spectrum of content, resource, materials and method of teaching through which the purpose of education are achieved.

### Changes in Definitions Overtime

It has been noted that the definition of curriculum changes over time from time-to-time and it also changes due to social conditions, conception of knowledge, the learner and, indeed, education. Clearly therefore, your definition of curriculum is a matter of your own perception.

Fafumera (1974) saw it as the whole of the educative process, that is, the total environment in which education take place. In other words, the content, the method, the physical and psychological environment.

Has (1980) defined curriculum as all the experiences that individual learners have in a programme of education whose purpose is to achieve broad goals and related specific objectives which is planned in terms of a frame work of theory and research or past or present professional practice.

As a process, curriculum can be seen as the development of educational experiences and activities which will achieve for the pupils and all members of society some predetermined objectives.

The International Bureau of Education at UNESCO, The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, says, "In the simplest terms, 'curriculum' is a description of what, why, how and how well students should learn in a systematic and intentional way. Curriculum as "a standards-based sequence of planned experiences where students practice and achieve proficiency in content and applied learning skills." The

structure, organization, and considerations in a curriculum are created in order to enhance student learning and facilitate instruction. Curriculum must include the necessary goals, methods, materials and assessments to effectively support instruction and learning.

Curriculum normally refers to the knowledge and skills students are expected to learn through interactions, experiences, planned and unplanned activities, events. It is concerned with both content and process. Content refers to what are students expected to learn. Process refers to an arrangement of instructional material provided to the students. The process includes the units and lessons that teachers teach; the assignments and projects given to students; books, reading materials, audio-visual materials provided in a course; and the different assessment methods used to evaluate student learning. This must be set in such a way that learners gain knowledge and understanding, develop skills, and alter attitudes. Lastly curriculum said to be planned or unplanned learning activities set by the school under the guidance of a teacher in order to change an individual behavior. El-Yakubu (2017).

### Curriculum Goals

The broad questions of what education is for, or what is a good education, is one that pervades the whole field of education and is not particularly distinctive to the curriculum field. The question, however, of the role of such concepts as goals in planning and development of school programs is a central one in the field of curriculum. Some of the earliest curriculum texts used these terms and ever since, some contemporary curriculum scholars have accepted them into common usage without criticism, particularly in the formulation of models for curriculum goals. For instance Dennis Lawtons Model which says the goals of education should come from the societal needs, his models explains how curriculum goals is shaped by cultural and societal values his ideas included cultural and society influence education that is curriculum is derived from the broader culture and values of society which ones comes from and practice.

When selection process that not all cultural aspect are included in the curriculum goals only selected values and knowledge should be taught, transmission through the school, school should serve as medium for passing down the selected knowledge. Impact on learners, curriculum goals affects learners understanding and shape their roles in the society. It should be dynamic in relationship as the society changes, so does the curriculum goals to reflect new values and knowledge. Curriculum goals must be clearly and precisely stated bearing in mind the societal values and the needs of the child. In selecting and stating the aims and objectives, consideration should be given to the learners age level of development, needs and interests. The economic

attainment, religion, philosophy and norms of the people should also be put into consideration.

## CHARACTERISTICS OF A GOOD CURRICULUM IN ACHIEVING ITS GOALS

### 1. Clear Learning Objectives:

- The curriculum should have well-defined and measurable learning goals that guide both teaching and assessment. These objectives should align with the overall educational mission and ensure that students know what they are expected to learn.

### 2. Relevance:

- The curriculum should be relevant to the needs, interests, and experiences of the students. It should reflect real-world issues, future careers, and the skills students will need to be successful in life. This helps make learning more engaging and meaningful.

### 3. Coherence and Logical Progression:

- A good curriculum ensures that the content is organized in a logical order. Topics and skills should build on each other, progressing from basic to more complex concepts. This helps students understand the connections between different areas of knowledge.

### 4. Flexibility:

- The curriculum should be flexible enough to accommodate diverse learning styles, paces, and needs. It should allow for differentiation, enabling teachers to adjust content or methods based on individual student needs.

### 5. Inclusive:

- A good curriculum is inclusive and ensures that all students, regardless of their backgrounds, abilities, or learning differences, can participate and succeed. It should promote equity and fairness, providing all students with the same opportunities to learn.

### 6. Engaging and Stimulating:

- A well-designed curriculum keeps students motivated and interested. It should incorporate a variety of teaching methods, such as hands-on activities, project-based learning, technology integration, and collaborative exercises, to keep the learning experience dynamic and exciting.

### 7. Assessment-Driven:

- A good curriculum integrates formative and summative assessments that help measure student progress and learning outcomes. These assessments should guide instruction and provide feedback for both students and teachers, helping to identify areas of improvement.

### 8. Holistic Development:

- The curriculum should not only focus on academic knowledge but also on the development of social, emotional, ethical, and physical skills. It should encourage students to

think critically, develop interpersonal skills, and engage in activities that promote their overall well-being.

### 9. Cultural Relevance and Sensitivity:

- A good curriculum reflects diverse cultures, perspectives, and experiences, fostering an appreciation for global citizenship and respect for diversity. It should include content that acknowledges and celebrates different backgrounds.

### 10. Continuous Improvement:

- A good curriculum is dynamic and adaptable. It should be periodically reviewed and updated to reflect changes in educational standards, technology, societal needs, and global trends. This ensures that it remains relevant and effective over time.

### 11. Promotes Lifelong Learning:

- A well-designed curriculum should encourage students to become independent learners who can continue learning beyond the classroom. It should foster curiosity, critical thinking, and a passion for knowledge that lasts a life.

## Goals of a Curriculum:

### 1. Academic Development:

- A curriculum goals to provide students with the knowledge and skills they need to succeed academically. This includes mastering core subjects such as mathematics, science, language arts, and social studies, as well as developing critical thinking and problem-solving abilities.

### 2. Holistic Growth:

- Curriculum goals goes beyond academics, the curriculum promotes the overall development of the learner, including social, emotional, physical, and ethical growth. It strives to create well-rounded individuals who are prepared for various challenges in life.

### 3. Preparation for Future Success:

- The curriculum goals is designed to prepare students for higher education, career opportunities, and citizenship. It provides the foundational skills needed for lifelong learning and adaptability in a constantly changing world.

### 4. Cultural and Ethical Awareness:

- A key goal is to expose students to diverse perspectives, cultures, and ethical frameworks, fostering a sense of responsibility, empathy, and respect for others.

### 5. Equity and Inclusivity:

- The curriculum goals create an equitable learning environment where all students, regardless of background, have access to the same opportunities for success. This includes accommodating different learning styles and needs.

### Prerequisites for Effective Curriculum Goals

For effective curriculum goals, many prerequisites conditions have to be satisfied. Among the most important of the society which the curriculum is to serve. As has been suggested earlier, goals of a curriculum in a society should know generally about the society's past and present life including its future life expectations. The significance of knowledge can hardly be over emphasized. To begin with among the important facts about education, is that the manner in which it serves a society today is a result of what the past suffered about today and how the education should be designed and implemented. It is on the basis of the knowledge of a society's past and present life that its curriculum planner can project and effectively plan for its foreseeable future life.

Secondly, there is a necessity for planner of curriculum to understand the social and cultural milieu of the society in which the education is being provided in a specific way. This refers to the fact that they should study and master all the aspects of the culture. In this connection they should concern themselves not just with its general nature as part of human culture; also they must pay particular attention to its special and unique characteristics, imperative for the understanding of the special and unique characteristics.

Thirdly, curriculum planners should be acquainted with the nature of knowledge. This is extremely important. But we should emphasize that the requirement is not limited to an understanding of the nature of knowledge merely in relation to the general classification into disciplines and how these generally affect the various life endeavors of mankind.

Fourthly, as curriculum planner in a society engage in the task, it is important that they bear in mind that, by and large, curriculum choices are rooted in philosophy. This means that the choices made about curriculum are largely and always a result of value judgement. Often, these choices are society-based or culturally influenced. Every society has its own philosophy and values which are supposed to guide and shape its curriculum choices. In order, therefore, to make the right choices for the educational programme of a society, the planners must carefully analyse the society's values source.

### UNIVERSITIES AND THEIR CURRICULUM GOALS

Universities are mostly researched institutions that are empowered to teach, develop high manpower and equip the learners with the necessary skills for successful living. According to the national policy on education (FRN, 2004), university of education shall make optimum contributions to national development. In line with this, the curriculum for university education is geared towards national development and sustenance of the individual in day to day useful living.

### COLLEGE/INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION AND THEIR CURRICULUM GOALS

College/Institutes of education may be run by the universities or they may be autonomous in respect of their curricula and other programmes they includes those institutions that produce teachers that are considered qualified within the context of professionalization. Such institution includes:

- A. College of Education
- B. Faculties of Education
- C. Institute of Education
- D. National Teachers Institute
- E. Schools of Education in the Polytechnics
- F. Other similar institutions

The curriculum goals of such institutions according to national policy on education (FRN 2004) includes the following:

- A. Production of highly motivated, conscientious and efficient classroom teachers for all levels of our educational system
- B. Encouragement to further the spirit of enquiring and creativity in teachers
- C. Helping teachers to fit into social life of the community and the society at large and enhance their commitment to national goals
- D. Provision of the teachers with the intellectual and professional background adequate for their assignment as well as making them adaptable to changing the situations
- E. Enhancing teachers commitment to the teaching profession.

### Science and Technology Educational Institutions and Their Curriculum Goals

Science and technology educational institutions includes those institutions that run post-secondary education programme in science and technology. They includes polytechnics, monotronics and college of education (Technical). polytechnics are science and technology higher (Tertiary) institutions. Monotronics are similar to polytechnics except that they are single discipline science and technological institutions for specialized programme such as agriculture, fisheries, forestry, surveying, accountancy, nursing, mining, petroleum and so on. Monotronics according to national policy on educations (FRN, 2004) have the status as polytechnics. They include such institutions as school of Nursing, College of Agriculture, Institute of Surveying, Etc., offering single discipline in more diversified forms.

### Constructing Curriculum to Attain Curriculum Goal

Constructing a curriculum that effectively attains its goals, requires careful planning, consideration of various factors and ongoing evaluation. By understanding the importance of curriculum construction, the challenges involved, and the principles of effective curriculum construction, educators and curriculum that prepare student for success. Olivia, P.F. (2018)

Curriculum construction is a very tasking exercise that would require a lot of considerations and decisions taking. In curriculum, there is decision making there is decision making process in which the emphasis could be to determine the nature of the society, values, organization of the curriculum design (Mkpa 1987), Elyakubu, (2017) in actual sense, then, decision would be taken in respect of educational objectives, content, materials and learning experiences as well as the organization of the content and learning experiences and the evaluation of the learning outcomes.

Certain question that could be raised in respect of the construction of a curriculum to attain certain education goals are:

- i. What are the educational objectives that the curriculum should achieve?
- ii. What should constitute the learning experiences in order to make the curriculum relevant to the learner
- iii. What should constitute the content of the subject matter in order to meet the objectives?
- iv. How should the curriculum be organized to make learning effective?
- v. How would the learners be evaluated to ensure that the objectives are met?

These questions are crucial for the construction of a relevant curriculum. The tertiary education curricula for universities, colleges or institute of education as well as colleges of institute of science and technology (Polytechnic or Mono technics) could take cognizance of these questions to endure meaningfulness.

To construct a curriculum that is effectively attain its goal is crucial for the several reasons.

1. Improve student learning: A well constructed curriculum ensures that students acquire the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to succeed in their academic and professional pursuits.
2. Enhances Teacher Effectiveness: A clear and comprehensive curriculum provides teachers with a road map for instruction, enabling them to plan and deliver effective lessons.
3. Supports Accountability: A well-constructed curriculum provides a framework for assessing student learning and evaluating the effectiveness of educational programs.

Despite its importance, curriculum construction can be a complex and challenging process:

1. Defining Clear Goals: Establishing clear and measurable curriculum goals can be difficult.
2. Selecting relevant content: Choosing content that aligns with curriculum goals and is relevant to students lives can be challenging.
3. Ensuring Coherence: Ensuring that the curriculum is coherent and aligned across

different subjects and grade levels can be difficult.

### Principles of Effective Curriculum Goal Construction

1. Alignment: Ensure that the curriculum is aligned with clear and measurable goals
2. Relevance: choose content that is relevant to students lives and prepares them for future challenges
3. Coherence: Ensure that the curriculum is coherent and aligned across different subject and grade levels
4. Flexibility: Build flexibility into the curriculum to accommodate diverse learner needs and contexts.

### CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION

Curriculum implementation is the process of putting into practice a planned educational program. It involves the translation of curriculum goals, objectives and content into actual teaching and learning experiences. Effective curriculum implementation is crucial for achieving educational goals and improving students outcome.

Curriculum implementation is the execution of the learners. The implementation exercise is performed at the classroom level, and teachers are involved in textbooks selection and other learning materials, they design their own lesson plans and teaching approaches in translating theories and instruction into practice. Curriculum implementation. To Obasi, Adaobi and Ajeka (2007) is the weaving together subject matter method to produce a desired learning outcome.

### The Need for Curriculum Goals Implementation for Nigerian Tertiary Education

Curriculum implementation is necessary for the development of the nation. This is because it is by the implementation that the educational goals are realized. The curriculum design could be the best and the construction could be the greatest ever known, but without the implementation, the whole efforts boils down to vanity.

The goals of the curricula for higher education in Nigeria are quite sound, lofty and standard and appear to be among the best in the contemporary world. The National Policy on Education has made sound articulation of goals for tertiary institution in Nigeria. These goals are incorporated into the curricula of the tertiary institutions for the national development. The objectives of the curricula of the tertiary institutions in Nigeria constitute a reflection of the goals of education in the country.

It is by means of curriculum that the objectives are realized and the goals attained. If there is effective curriculum implementation, there could be the

attainment of the goals of the University education, colleges and institute of education as well as the goals of science and technology educational institutions. It is the school that will fashion out the strategies for the effective implementation of many curriculum. Schools do it by ensuring the inculcation of attitudes necessary for the acquisition of skills, development of necessary values, knowledge and abilities in the learners for the development of the society.

Tertiary education curricula are geared towards the training and production of high level manpower. This curricular intention is not feasible unless the concerned curriculum is implemented. Implementation of a given curriculum for any level of education, especially the tertiary level becomes necessary for the production of high cadre manpower and for the over all development of the society.

### **The complexity of Curriculum goals Implementation**

Complementing curriculum goals at tertiary institutions involves a complex interplay of various factors including:

1. Diverse students need: Tertiary institutions cater to student from diverse backgrounds, with varying learning styles, abilities and motivations.
2. Rapidly changing technological landscape: The rapid pace of technological change requires curriculum goals to be adaptable and responsive to emerging trends and innovations.
3. Evolving employer expectations: Employers expectations from graduates are constantly evolving requiring curriculum goals to be aligned with industry needs and standards
4. Limited resources: tertiary institution often face resource constraints, including limited funding, infrastructure and human resource

### **Challenges of Curriculum Goals Implementation at Tertiary Institution**

Curriculum goals implementation is fraught with a lot of handicaps which are discussed as follows:

#### **1. Curriculum Overload**

There is curriculum overload at the basic education level. Ivowi (2005) and Anwuka (2005) assert that curriculum overload occurs because of the high number of subjects to be offered at the primary and Junior and secondary level of education. At the primary education levels, children are expected to offer eleven (11) subjects. At the junior secondary level, the young learners are expected to study and offer in the Junior Secondary School Examination twelve (12) to thirteen (13) subjects. These notwithstanding and as earlier noted, some global and emerging issues such as family life education, citizenship, environmental education, HIV/AIDS, drugs abuse among others are also introduced as curriculum contents to be learnt by the pupils.

#### **2. Large class Population**

Another disturbing issues in curriculum implementation is large class population. The recommended class size of learners according to the National policy on Education (FGN, 2004) is 30. The Universal Primary Education launched in 1976 brought about increase in school enrollment without adequate teacher production to match the school population (World bank, 1995, Bajah and Nwagwu, 2003). This increase led to overcrowded classrooms which are experienced at all levels of education.

The awareness of the advantages of education has contributed to overcrowded classrooms as everybody wants to go to school to be educated. Even in many primary school, a class is made up of 45-50 children when they should be be at most 15 for effective teacher-pupil interaction.

#### **3. Dearth of Instructional Materials**

Over the years, teacher has indicated that one of the greatest impediments to curriculum implementation is inadequacy of instructional materials. Instructional materials are aids for effective teaching and learning. Nwoji (2002) views instructional materials as devices that facilitate the transmission to a learner, the facts, skills, attitudes and values which promotes understanding and appreciation of concepts.

It is evident that no curriculum can be implemented effectively without due consideration of necessary equipment and materials. Unfortunately, there is death of instructional materials in basic education level.

#### **4. Teacher Factor**

These deal with the quantity and variety of teachers handling our classroom interactions process. Curriculum implementation cannot be effectively carried out if the teacher variables such as competence, availability, attitude, dedication and remuneration are faulty. No matter how lofty the educational goals are, how relevant the curriculum is, teachers are the determinants of effective curriculum implementation in the school.

#### **5. Examination Malpractice**

One of the major curriculum implementation issues is examination malpractice. In Fact, It has eaten deep into the society and these days even parents perpetuate and abate it. Ivowi (2005) confirms that the number of candidates has continued to overwhelmed examiners and because of that implementation of curriculum in schools, arising from so many factors, the battle against examination malpractice is far from being over.

#### **6. Learners Related Issues**

In our present contemporary society, our young learners seem to lack interest as a result of the new wave

of picking money-quick even with limited education. Hence, they fail to attend lesson within the first few days/weeks of resumption of classes especially the beginning of examinations- a situation that leads to poor performance be it at the primary, secondary or tertiary level. It also encourages examination malpractice in the desperate efforts to make up fraudulently the deficiencies of the learners (Mkpa, 2005).

### 7. Evaluation of Learning:

Evaluation of learning is necessary too in curriculum implementation. A good evaluation focuses on the cognitive, affective and psycho-motor behaviors. Evaluation data must be valid reliable for them to be useful to the educational systems. But affective domain is hardly properly assessed by teachers. Anwuka (2005) observes that often in stating objectives in lesson plans, teachers state effective objectives, but in evaluating learning outcomes, not much is done to reflect the emphasized effective objectives.

## Solution to Curriculum Goals Implementation at the Tertiary Institution in Nigeria

### 1. Availability and utilization of Instructional Materials

Successful curriculum implementation depends to a large extent on the availability and utilization of adequate instructional materials or learning resources. Instructional resources can be defined as all the resources a teacher uses to help explain or elucidate the topic/content/subject to the learner so that he is able to fully comprehend the topic (NTI 2007). Instructional materials generally make the teaching-learning process easier. They offer reality of experience, provide visual aspect to a process or technique, facilitate the understanding of abstracts concepts, save time by limiting the use of wordy explanation and provide opportunity for the learner to manipulate objects in the environments.

### 2. Management Support

Effective curriculum implementation is also dependent upon management support at all levels of education, including the basic education level. Mbakwen (2005) enumerates that management support can be given by:

- ❖ Provide adequate financial resources;
- ❖ Providing learning opportunities
- ❖ Providing support such as expertise, time and learning resources
- ❖ Disseminating information
- ❖ Facilitating communication at all levels
- ❖ Providing support to teachers and
- ❖ Developing ways for teachers to network and share ideas (p.13)

### 3. Teacher Effectiveness

The teacher is a critical resource for effective implementation and realization of the educational policies and objectives at the practical level of the

classroom. It is the teacher who ultimately interprets and implements the policy as represented in school curriculum, which is designed to actualize educational goals (omojunwa 2007). The obvious implication of this situation is the fact that the quality of a nation's education can only be as high as the quality of its teachers.

### 4. The Learner

The curriculum is planned to meet the social, intellectual, physical and integrative needs of the learners. Maduewesi (2003) regards learners as the most precious resource for molding. Learners are active participants and recipients in curriculum implementation. They have some work to do in the educative process. Most importantly, teachers should note that students should be ready and willing to learn, otherwise teaching becomes a futile exercise and learning will not take place.

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