

## **An Examination of Curriculum Planning in Nigeria: Problems and Way Forward**

**Victor Olugbenga Ayoko**

Department of Educational Foundation, Faculty of Education,  
National Open University of Nigeria  
victorayoko@gmail.com

**Abayomi Isaac Araiyegbemi**

University of Nigeria, Nsukka Department of Educational Foundation,  
yomisaacng@gmail.com

**Cosmas Victor**

School of Post Graduate Studies, Prince Abubakar Audu University, Anyigba,  
Cosmosvictor1978@gmail.com

**Ukpoju Bartholomew Ojochenemi**

Kogi State College of Education, Ankpa.  
Department of Educational Foundations & Management Studies.  
barthsixtus@gmail.com

**Abstract:** The curriculum planning in Nigeria has been facing various challenges over the years, hindering its effectiveness and efficiency. The purpose of this study is to identify and analyze the barriers to effective curriculum planning in Nigeria. The paper is a review paper that depend secondary data. The secondary data were collected from print and online publications. The paper identified poor funding, shortage of curriculum planning experts, poor capacity development of curriculum experts and lack of data on learners' information. This has resulted to poor curriculum planning in Nigeria. Based on the findings, the paper recommends that government should increase the funding of education, employ more curriculum planning experts, ensure accurate data generation and provide constant training and retraining program me for the planners.

**Keywords:** Curriculum, Planning, curriculum planning.

### **1.0 Introduction**

Akudolu (2011), defined curriculum as covering educational goals, the content or fact to be learnt, the learning experiences, the outcome of learning encounters and the learning environment. For Igbokwe (2009), a Curriculum is also referred to as a systematic and organized body of knowledge through which the goals of education can be achieved for the fulfilment of the needs and aspirations of any given society. Esu&Emah (2014) viewed curriculum consists of knowledge, skills, values, activities and many more, which students learn through various school

subjects. The curriculum is also defined by Offorma (2014) as the document, plan or blueprint for an instructional guide, which is used for teaching and learning to bring about positive and desirable learner behavioural change.

Kapoor, (2020) viewed curriculum as springboard that provides direction and impetus to student learning. It sets the requirements for student learning based on the state of society and its valued skills as well as the subject and age-appropriate proficiency in it. For a curriculum to have the desired outcome, it needs to be structured with due consideration to its purpose, goals, instruments or methods of learning, resources, and proof of its success.

Curriculum objectives are specific goals or targets that outline what students should know and be able to do by the end of a particular instructional period or course. They serve as a guide for teachers to design their lessons and assessments, and for students to understand what is expected of them. The realization of curriculum objectives depends on curriculum planning.

## **2.0 Concept of Curriculum planning**

Curriculum planning refers to the creation of curriculum. Thus, a curriculum can help in the organization of various elements of curriculum, such as the core objectives (e.g. a competence to achieve), subjects, unit definitions, activities, assessments, and resources (Irewolede, 2014). Careful planning is required to ensure first, that the lessons actually touched on the required topic, and also that they meet school and governmental standards of basic education. A curriculum plan is one of the best ways for teachers to look objectively at what needs to be taught over the course of a semester or term or year, then organize an effective way to get from beginning to end. Curriculum planning develop well-coordinated, quality teaching, learning and assessment programed which build students' knowledge, skills and behaviour in the disciplines, as well as their interdisciplinary and or physical, personal and social capacities (Kirk, 2017).

Curriculum planning (also known as curriculum mapping) concerns itself with the second aspect in order to fulfill the first part – the end goal. It acts as the roadmap that enables educators to steer their students toward the attainment of the intended outcome. Curriculum Planning is the process of detailing what is learned, how it is learned, why it is learned, and when it is learned, in line with a defined goal and key milestones. Curriculum planning sets down a tiered approach to a subject for stage-wise and grade-wise learning. Starting at the top, a curriculum plan can have multiple stages of meticulously detailed actionable steps. Each stage charts out a plan of action to achieve the intermediate goal, adding up to the final learning outcome (Kapoor, 2020).

Curriculum Planning is the process of building a program me of learning experiences calculated to result in the attainment of set goals for a particular people (Davidson 2005). Curriculum planning is the making of choice of learning experiences for a group of people which is appropriate and desirable for them. Curriculum planning puts educators in the driving seat to develop and execute an optimized learning strategy. It gives them the freedom to choose the best approach for this purpose, keeping in mind institutional values, preferred teaching styles and student needs. To achieve this, curriculum planning takes into account the goals for student learning, methods that can be utilized to achieve these goals, the material required to assist the learning process, formative assessment to gauge the learning and finally summative assessments that can measure the learning outcome (Kapoor, 2020).

The process of curriculum planning takes place in two phases – Strategic and Implementation. For the strategic phase of curriculum planning, educators first need to zero in on the goals in context to their grade, course or subject. Next, they need to outline the objectives. Objectives are different from the goal in that, that they are more detailed, time-bound and specific. They may include the various milestones that need to be achieved as the learning progresses. The implementation phase of curriculum planning includes finalizing the instructional design, learning materials, teaching methodologies formative assessment design a summative assessment (Kapoor, 2020).

## **2.1 Benefits of Curriculum Planning**

**The benefits of curriculum planning according to Kapoor, (2020) includes;**

### **Helps Translate Learning Goals**

A thorough curriculum plan integrates various scheduled activities and learning milestones, providing a breakdown for aligned and conscious progress of the learning experiences. It offers clarity on the purpose of education to all stakeholders including educators, parents and students.

### **Structured Learning**

A curriculum plan provides the central structure for educators to design and organize their lesson plans. It plays a key role in standardizing the flow of the course. It assists educators in aligning teaching material and pedagogies making the teaching activity more efficient.

### **Promotes Coherence**

Curriculum planning makes different aspects of the learning experience consistent and coherent. It helps educators coordinate their efforts across different subjects, topics and grades to deliver learning continuity.

### **Effective Assessment**

Curriculum planning helps track student rate of progress compared to the mapped learning. Setting clear learning objectives guides the teachers' choice of formative and summative assessment to gauge student learning and growth.

### **Self-Evaluation**

Curriculum planning offers educators regular reference points to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching styles, instruction design and learning methodologies. It provides a source of corresponding feedback to make necessary adjustments to the teaching activity.

### **Facilitates Collaboration**

The process of curriculum planning helps teachers collaborate and leverage their shared experience, insights and expertise to design an efficient and supportive learning environment. It builds consistent instructional standards and helps reduce duplication of effort.

### **Aids Efficacy**

A curriculum plan offers immediate feedback and opportunities for sustained alignment with the learning goals. Educators can address learning gaps immediately and effectively, improving the efficacy of the teaching activity

### **Comparative Tool**

A curriculum plan provides teachers with a reference point to reflect and refine teaching strategies and instructional design to introduce suitable pedagogies year on year. Equipped with a comparative device, teachers can adjust their teaching practices to be more precise and deliver enhanced results.

### **Time Management:**

With a well-thought-out strategy and blueprint in place, teachers are free to focus on their day-to-day lesson plans and formative assessments. A curriculum plan helps teachers plan, prioritise and allocate their time effectively. It supports the teaching-learning activity by ensuring all aspects receive the necessary attention.

### **Supports Different Learning Styles**

Designing a curriculum plan helps educators factor in resources, materials and teaching techniques to support different learning styles. This not only helps educators engage students better and improve the learning outcome but also reduces the demands of last-minute

introductions in the lesson plan thus creating a joyful learning experience for all. A well-designed, thought-through curriculum plan creates optimal learning experiences, facilitating the reaching of a learning goal in an intentional and planned manner. Even though sometimes it might seem like a long and laborious process, curriculum planning is an exercise that aligns teaching efforts with learning outcomes. It provides teachers with a roadmap for higher teaching efficacy and improved learning results. These plans help keep all stakeholders on the same page, greatly assisting in saving time and ensuring consistency on a day-to-day basis (Kapoor, 2020).

### **3.0 Method**

This paper discussed problems facing curriculum planning in Nigeria. Among other things discussed was the concept of curriculum and curriculum planning in Nigeria. The study used secondary data. The content analysis method was adopted for the selection of data. The data were collected from the following sources review of published articles from reputable international journals such as CEON, Elsevier, Hindawi, JSTOR, IEEE, Learn Techlib SAGE, Nebraska and Springer amongst others (adopted from Ukpoju, 2020).

### **4.0 Data Analysis and Discussion on Challenges Militating against Curriculum Planning**

The following are the challenges militating against effective planning of curriculum; poor funding, Shortage of Curriculum planning experts, poor capacity development of curriculum experts and lack of data on learners' information

#### **A) Inadequate Funding**

Inadequate funding is a very big problem facing curriculum planning in Nigeria. The budgetary allocation released by the government for the administration of education in Nigeria is inadequate. Curriculum planning in Nigeria drives its funding from the national budget of education that have been described by Ukpoju, (2020). As inadequate. The level of success of curriculum planning depends on availability of adequate funding. Financial resources are needed for the effective Curriculum planning, funding has been identified as an indispensable instrument. This is because funding serves as the life-wire for the management and administration of Curriculum planning, development, implementation and evaluation. The high demand of funds in the educational administration which include the Curriculum planning was one of the reasons why UNESCO recommended that 26% of the annual budget of any nation should be set aside for the administration and management of the educational sector.

#### **B) Shortage of Curriculum experts**

Shortage of Curriculum planner or experts is a major problem facing the Curriculum planning in Nigeria. There are shortage of Curriculum specialist in all programmed offering in the Nigerian educational institutions. Curriculum specialists according to Online. Emporia, (2019) and Ukpoju *et al* (2020) provide support to teachers by helping create and revise materials used in the classroom. They analyze student data to assess and improve the school's implementation and evaluation of classroom material. Their job typically involves research and requires them to find appropriate textbooks and curricula in order to improve the learning outcomes of the school's student body. Educators with classroom experience find themselves well-suited for this role. Curriculum specialists apply primary research to developing appropriate teaching materials for students. Their knowledge and experience in classroom settings provides them with insight on the kinds of curricula, activities, and assignments most likely to raise the standards of learning while inspiring children to learn through new textbooks, helpful technologies, and unique teaching methods.

#### **C) Poor Capacity Development of Curriculum Experts**

Poor capacity of curriculum planners working in the various agencies and commission in charge of Curriculum planning is affecting the curriculum planning programme in Nigeria. Training is very important for the development of Curriculum. Training helps planners to improve their

skills and ability of Curriculum planning. The causes of poor quality output of Curriculum planners in Nigeria include: poor attendance of workshops, conferences, seminars, in-service, unpreparedness in terms of skills development. Curriculum planners should be motivated towards attending professional development programmes as to enhance planners' quality outputs. Therefore, making available opportunities for planners' intensive and continuous professional development programme will enhance quality Curriculum planning. The Curriculum planners in Nigerian public institutions do not enjoy staff development programme and this is affecting their productivity. Research has it that many civil servant working in the public institutions like Curriculum planning and development are not constantly going for training and retraining programmed and this is affecting their effectiveness and productivities (Ogunode & Ohibime 2021).

#### **D) Lack of Data on Learners Information**

Lack of learner' data/information is another big problem facing the Curriculum planning in Nigeria. Curriculum planners needs learners' information at every forms of educational system to able to plan a suitable Curriculum that will capture their interest and age. In Nigeria, these data on student information are not available for consideration for the Curriculum planning (Ogunode & Ohibime 2021). ZYX (undated) noted that during the process of curriculum planning, it is crucial to put the needs and interests of the learners first so as to design a curriculum that is efficient and achieves the goal. A well-designed curriculum should cater to the needs of learners in various categories that is, gifted learners, slow learners, mentally retarded, etc. This means that a well-designed Nigerian school curriculum has to take the intellectual abilities and disabilities of the Nigerian students into consideration. In Nigeria, the disabilities and weaknesses of a child are often not regarded as something important and is neglected. You will find that the Nigerian curriculum does not cater for every child (ZYX).

#### **4.1 Finding**

The paper revealed that poor funding, shortage of curriculum planning experts, poor capacity development of curriculum experts and lack of data on learners' information are the challenges militating against effective planning of curriculum in Nigeria.

#### **4.2 Conclusion and Recommendations**

The curriculum planning in Nigeria has been facing various challenges over the years, hindering its effectiveness and efficiency. The purpose of this study is to identify and analyze the barriers to effective curriculum planning in Nigeria. Poor funding, shortage of curriculum planning experts, poor capacity development of curriculum experts and lack of data on learners' information were identified as the challenges militating against effective curriculum planning in Nigeria. This has resulted to poor curriculum planning in Nigeria.

Based on the findings, the paper recommends that

1. Government should increase the funding of education,
2. Employ more curriculum planning experts
3. Ensure accurate data generation
4. Provide constant training and retraining programme for the planners.

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