

Curriculum implementation



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Curriculum implementation entails putting into practice the officially prescribed courses of study, syllabuses and subjects. The process involves helping the learner acquire knowledge or experience. Curriculum implementation cannot take place without the learner. The learner is therefore the central figure in the curriculum implementation process. Implementation takes place as the learner acquires the planned or intended experiences, knowledge, skills, ideas and attitudes that are aimed at enabling the same learner to function effectively in a society.

Curriculum implementation refers to how the planned or officially designed course of study is translated by the teacher into syllabuses, schemes of work and lessons to be delivered to students.

According to Tanner, D., and Tanner, L. (1995) Curriculum implementation refers to the stage when the curriculum itself, as an educational programme, is put into effect.

In other words curriculum Implementation refers to the actual use of the curriculum or syllabus or what it consists of in practice. Implementation is a critical phase in the cycles of planning and teaching a curriculum.

Curriculum can be implemented in two extreme ways; laissez-faire approach or the “let-alone” approach and authoritarian control. let-alone” approach gives teachers absolute power to determine what they see best to implement in the classroom. In effect, this allows teachers to teach lessons they believe are appropriate for their classes and in whatever way they want to teach such lessons. There is no firm of control or monitoring whatsoever.

In authoritarian control, teachers are directed by authority figures through a memorandum, to follow a curriculum. Teachers have no control or leeway over the subjects they are teaching. The school head exercise absolute power in directing teachers to teach certain subjects in specified ways. In other words, this approach is dictatorial way of imposing curricular implementation in the classroom.

Curriculum implementation involves development and evaluation: To implement these new practices into a fairly complex new environment will not be done by just copying a master-plan or a model from some other place, but will involve some process of selection, construction, problem-solving, interpretation, and re-invention which ‘situates’ and changes the original model. This feature necessitates that the implementation process and its products is monitored as it proceeds, and that the information produced thereby is used for fine-tuning or re-directing the implementation process.

Implementation is obviously complex: “ Even if the need and the idea is right, the sheer complexity of the process of implementation, has, as it were, a sociological mind of its own, which frequently defies management even when all parties have the best of intentions.”

Factors that influence curriculum implementation must be considered first if a curriculum is to be effective and meet the required results. All in all, there are many factors that influence curriculum implementation at any given time and situation. However, this paper only tackles three of the factors. The factors will include; the teacher, the learner and the resources materials and facilities.

Putting the curriculum into operation requires an implementing agent.

According to Stenhouse “ the teacher is the agent in the curriculum implementation process”. She argues that implementation is the manner in which the teacher selects and mixes the various aspects of knowledge contained in a curriculum document or syllabus. Implementation takes place when the teacher-constructed syllabus, the teacher’s personality, the teaching materials and the teaching environment interact with the learner.

If the curriculum is what teachers and students create together, as Wolfson (1997) states in Curriculum Implementations, the teacher must play a more significant role in designing the curriculum. Teachers must be involved in curriculum planning and development so that they can implement and modify the curriculum for the benefit of their learners.

They select and decide what to teach from the prescribed syllabus or curriculum. Since implementation takes place through the interaction of the learner and the planned learning opportunities, the role and influence of the teacher in the process is indisputable. One could be thinking, “ I understand that teachers are pivotal in the curriculum implementation process, but what is their role in the curriculum planning process?” If the teacher is to be able to translate curriculum intentions into reality, it is imperative that the teacher understand the curriculum document or syllabus well in order to implement it effectively.

For Stenhouse, quality curriculum implementation necessitates curriculum research and evaluation as well as teacher development in the process of implementation and under practitioners’ participation. Implementation must

attend to specific local conditions and to process experiences of the persons involved in the process of implementation. Curriculum development is not just the production of written goals and materials before classroom practice but, at the end, concrete interaction in the classroom between learners and teachers aiming to develop situations with high learning potential. Teachers are a constant factor in the education system and thus have a key role for classroom innovation. If they are not motivated to engage with an innovation, then nothing will happen.

Learners are also a critical element in curriculum implementation. While teachers are the arbiters of the classroom practice, the learners hold the key to what is actually transmitted and adopted from the official curriculum. The official curriculum can be quite different from the curriculum that is actually implemented. The learner factor influences teachers in their selection of learning experiences, hence the need to consider the diverse characteristics of learners in curriculum implementation. For example, home background and learner ability can determine what is actually achieved in the classroom.

Curriculum implementation cannot take place without the learner. The learner is therefore the central figure in the curriculum implementation process. Implementation takes place as the learner acquires the planned or intended experiences, knowledge, skills, ideas and attitudes that are aimed at enabling the same learner to function effectively in a society.

No meaningful teaching and learning can take place without adequate resource materials. For the officially designed curriculum to be fully implemented as per plan, the government through the Ministry of Education

and other stakeholders should supply schools with adequate resource materials such as textbooks, teaching aids and stationery in order to enable teachers and learners to play their role satisfactorily in the curriculum implementation process. It is suggested in Curriculum Implementation that the central government must also provide physical facilities such as classrooms, laboratories, workshops, libraries and sports fields in order to create an environment in which implementation can take place. The availability and quality of resource material and the availability of appropriate facilities have a great influence on curriculum implementation.

In conclusion factors affecting successful implementation are in a systemic relationship: Set of factors “ form systems of variables that interact to determine success or failure” “ Single-factor theories of change are doomed to failure. Effective implementation of the curriculum depends on the combination of all the factors”. For example, a curriculum without resource materials and facilities cannot be implemented at all. The complexity of the implementation process makes predictions of success risky. However, it makes it very profitable for curriculum makers to actively engage in this elusive process of supporting implementation