

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT IN VOCATIONAL AND TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION: ADOPTING BEST PRACTICES AND STANDARD PERFORMANCE

RELEVANCE OF TYPEWRITING AND SHORTHAND IN MODERN CURRICULUM

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Abstract

Curriculum has been an important determinant of the extent of quality of education offered in an educational system. That is, the resultant output thereof in any educational system is a consequence of the curriculum developed for such a system. Owing to the above argument, the author believes in strong terms that most courses and curriculum in our institutions have by far been outdated. Therefore, we can no longer continue with such types of curriculum and courses. The author is of the view however, that such courses should be scrapped-off by curriculum experts and be made to be in line or be fine-tuned to current challenges in the workplace environment. If at all, it must be taught, it should be part of History of ICT Development in the Office Environment, just like the study of First generation of computers in Introduction to Computer, where students are not carrying ENIAC up and down. *The continuous teaching of courses like typewriting and shorthand is an involuntary attempt on the part of educators to sabotage the future career progress of students.* The truth remains that there are some courses that will not and will never put food on the table of our graduates and even if they do, it will cause hunger in the family. Such courses should not be tied or known with Vocational and Technology Education, a mother course whose main aim is to make learners useful. Currently, there are courses being offered in the university that neither have lucrative job prospects nor have business advantage. Take for instance, Geology. How can one open a business with knowledge in Geology? How can one get a well-paying job with typewriting? These are the considerations that has necessitated this work. In an era such as this, a material in this direction has become all important.

Introduction

This material was written in response to a somewhat heated argument which erupted in a class on Tuesday 29th January, 2018. The class is the pioneer set of M.Ed students in the Department of Vocational and Technology Education, Faculty of Education, Niger Delta University. The course lecturer, Dr. A. C. Egumu presented topics from the course outline for groups of students to researched on and present. The first topic which was on Issues and Practices in curriculum development in Vocational and technology education was apportioned to Mr. Usman and his partner. In his submission, he (Usman) mentioned inadequate and obsolete infrastructure and equipment as a major issue in curriculum development and cited the teaching of typewriting and shorthand as one factor of obsolesce in the curriculum. This inspire the author who already was on a path to pressure curriculum experts to strike out the teaching of typewriting and shorthand from the system – a system that is striving at all cost to meet up with best global practices.

On the issue of obsolesce of typewriting and shorthand, it is no longer a new knowledge that typewriting and shorthand cannot put food on the table for a business education graduate. In a class of Theories in Vocational and technology Education, Dr. Paul Igbongidi defined Vocational

education as a course that put food on the table. In furtherance of his definition, vocational education is work, work, and work. In essence, we have talk the work, now, let us work the talk. If vocational education is all about survival with attained skills, why still teach typewriting and shorthand? Who does it help in your environment? How many offices do our curriculum developers visits and see typewriter and shorthand? The author is of the view that there is a disconnect somewhere. If our curriculum expert understands that typewriting and shorthand have no more value and still teach it, then something is wrong somewhere.

The continuous teaching of courses like typewriting and shorthand is an involuntary attempt on the part of educators to sabotage the future career progress of students.

At this juncture, the author wish to give an imaginary scene. Imagine Donald Trump is to drive through the gate of the school and see students carrying typewriter to class to learn. Have you imagined the kind of words he will use this time around? I believe at the end of the day, you will be thinking towards changing your citizenship from being a Nigerian.

Why should we teach typewriting and shorthand at all? Is everything really ok with the system? Where are we going with this? Have you ever asked? Just imagine, the author's younger sibling, who is already writing html codes and doing all the author's website jobs, coming to school to learn skills for his survival, which the author may have convinced him to take, and you come and teach him typewriter. Who does that? He will run for his life. He will reject the course, the institution and everything that has to do with such course.

What do educators really want with shorthand? Do they really want the students to come together, plan themselves and refuse to attend a typewriter class before our educators and curriculum planners can revisit the curriculum? What are they really waiting for? What benefit is there that we cannot see in computers that we still teach it? In a different organization where the author have much managerial control, the author will never subject himself to be ruled by administrators who are not ICT compliant, because this is where the problem is coming from. The author can never support the appointment of a manager or an administrator who is not on social media. Because people of such nature like colonial things and will support the teaching of typewriting and shorthand and this will not only stagnate the growth of the organization but also kill the conceptual skills of staff with high intellect.

At this point, educators should ask themselves. Of what relevance is typewriting and shorthand? How has it benefited them or their products? Ask your secretary, madam, how can typewriting and shorthand help you in this office? Can you as an educator or curriculum expert pay your child's school fees to study typewriting and shorthand if there was a full blown course of study like that? If you were as student now, with your level of intellect, would you have entered a typewriting and shorthand class? If not, why teach our children an outdated course? Why?

Arguments for and Against the Relevance of Typewriting and Shorthand

Arguments and counter arguments have been rife on the relevance of typewriting and shorthand. Perception on the relevance of typewriter and shorthand is highly influenced by extent of ICT compliance of the individual preceptor. Some authors are of the school of thought that the curriculum experts are not fools and that they have a purpose for adding typewriting and shorthand to the curriculum. These persons maintained that typewriting and shorthand are foundational courses to learning computers. They believe that the knowledge of typewriter should assist in

transiting to computer application. Persons who maintained this school of thought intend to tell us that since our fathers trekked from Bayelsa to Lagos for trade purpose, that for we to fully know the routes to Lagos, we should then trek to Lagos too in this our contemporary time. After successfully trekking to Lagos on the first trip, we can start driving our vehicles to Lagos on subsequent trips because we have known the routes through trekking. What a weird and wonderful thinking. You see? This is why the author stated it earlier that he cannot allow persons who are not ICT compliant to lead him because these set of administrators are like clog in the wheels of development and when under them, progress is a slow process if at all there is any under their administration and supervision.

Take for instance, immediately the author was admitted to study M.Ed. (Management), the Head of Department who is highly ICT compliant has added him to a WhatsApp group where post graduate students can easily ask questions and get answers instead of lamenting and looking for their classes as in the case of under-Gs. Up till now, the writer never suffered to locate a class. You are deformed, you do well to make your post in the WhatsApp group and you will see lecturers whom you think are sleeping reply you immediately. Unfortunately, my friends in the same programme in just another Department away are suffering looking for classes, fellow colleagues, list of courses, lecturers and in fact everything. No class after three days, no communication as to the way forward, no group like ours, no list of courses like ours, no coordination like ours. Up till now, after three days since lectures started, they have not even had a single class while all the author's classes held from the first day. In fact, the three days of lectures seems like hell. The Dean and Head of Department only can confirm it. And we just love it this way – quality in learning.

There is another argument by a colleague (Usman mentioned above) that there are teachers whose certificates carries only typewriter and shorthand. That these persons, it was alleged are fighting hard to retain the course to remain relevant in the system. If we are to go by this argument, the author now wish to ask our curriculum planners – should we make a whole system look inadequate because some persons' certifications are affected? If yes, then, I drop my case. But if no, then curriculum planners must be up and doing.

For the records, there is no correlation between typewriter and computer. If you think there is an advantage still attached to typewriter, that we should still leave it in our curriculum, come forward and list only ten advantage to the author, the author shall counter you with a thousand importance of computers. Of course the author knows that there are no ten reasonable importance still attached to typewriter at this age. But even if, what is ten importance compared to thousands?

It should also be differentiated at this point that knowledge in typewriter does not lead to better knowledge in computing. That is, typewriter is not an elementary form of computer. You can know typewriter for a hundred years, but such knowledge will not help you in computer application and programming. But you can know computer and then see no relevance with typewriter because it is highly restricted and inefficient. If your problem is learning the keys, then you have Mavis Beacon, a computer application that teaches you how to type fast and accurate. Of course, there was a time when it was very useful, it enjoyed its glory then. But contemporarily, its relevance is highly questionable.

At this point, the author will like to draw the curtains, believing that our educators in Nigerian institutions will do something soon about the ugly situation, else, another article which will look at the psychological competence of curriculum developers as a prerequisite for effective curriculum development will be added to the current one as volume 1 number 2. The paper will juxtapose between ICT and non-ICT compliant curriculum developers and see how their knowledgeableability of current trends affects their curriculum drafts.

Conclusion

This material is not intended to spite, disregard or portray curriculum planners and Nigerian institutions in a bad light, rather, it was borne out of genuine reasons harbored by the writer years back towards improving the current system. Therefore, the author sincerely regrets and apologizes on any part of this material which may be interpreted otherwise. Nevertheless, it is the hope of the author that our curriculum experts will do something in this direction – readjust the curriculum.

Recommendations

In order to eliminate the ugly situation above, the following recommendations are hereby put forward:

1. Curriculum planners must meet as a matter of urgency to call for adjustments in the curriculum as seen from time to time in the secondary school curriculum. Before now we have Integrated Science, but now, we have Basic Science. You see how educators should think? It is not true that Integrated Science is outdated, but many other aspects have to be added to it or merged, hence, the need for the adjustments.
2. A critical assessment of the relevance of typewriter and shorthand should be done and findings submitted to appropriate authorities for prompt actions.
3. During the assessments, employers and students should be called to know from them, the relevance of the course to them since they are the ones who will study and use typewriter knowledge and graduates.
4. Employers must be consulted on the relevant needs in required in modern office. This should go beyond normal theoretical approach.
5. If the removal fell through, typewriter and shorthand should be replaced with Computing in Vocational Education and it should be a 100 level course and probably spanning to through levels.
6. All practicing students must own a laptop or at least, an android phone.

Dedication

This paper is dedicated to the Dean, Faculty of Education, Prof. Akpoebi Clement Egumu, who inspired this work through his method of teaching. He gave us the opportunity to critique the curriculum and tell the authority what is to be done to overcome the problems that we see and to my highly esteemed Head of Department, Dr. Festus Chukwunwendu Akpotohwo who created a forum for post graduate studies in the Department to interact where this paper was first shared.

About the Author



Born Michael Aki on 28th July 1987 to the family of Julius Ahwusi Aki of Ona Quarters in Agbarha-Otor Kingdom, Ughelli North Local Government Area of Delta State, he is the first Son and the eighth child of 9 children. He attended Ogelle Primary School, Ughelli (1994-1999), Otovwodo Grammar School, Ughelli (2000-2004), Niger Delta University, Bayelsa State (2009-2013). He Obtained B.Ed (Accounting) in the Niger Delta University and currently engaged in a Master's M.Ed. (Mgt) programme in the Niger Delta University.

Currently, he is the *Lead Researcher* at MJE Resources, Wilberforce Island, Bayelsa State. He is the sole administrator of its affiliates/subsidiaries at NDU Admissions and UTME (Facebook), MJE Resources (Facebook), MJE Resources.ng (Facebook), and www.admissionsandutme.com.

Now known as Michael Oghenenyoreme Julius, the author have a penchant for learning and education in general. His major objective for writing this paper was based on his disgust for seeing students still carrying typewriter in this modern age to class for study. The author strongly opposes the teaching of typewriter in this age of unfettered accessibility to internet. The author is of the view that the continued teaching of typewriter was due to the fact that agitators like us have been very easy with curriculum developers, hence, the lackadaisical attitude towards scrapping of the course. In fact, students themselves have been lazy and thoughtless. The thought of not being failed and borne in mind by their lecturers has caused many students to be cowed, else, there are students who will not offer this course. As time permits, a further study in this direction may force the author to meet with stakeholders in the field of Vocational and Technology Education to brainstorm further on the best approach to ensure that our curriculum developers do something meaningful about the situation. The need to be serious with our planners have become overwhelming.

Regards.

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