

## EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION SKILL: A PANACEA FOR CURRICULUM MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY CLASSROOM IN NIGERIA

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### Abstract

This paper titled “effective language communication skill: a panacea for curriculum management and implementation in the 21<sup>st</sup> century classroom in Nigeria” aimed at acquainting teachers with the rudiments of effective language communication skills in a successful curriculum management and its implementation for a meaningful teaching and learning process. The paper discussed aspects of introduction, concept of curriculum, concept of curriculum management, concept of curriculum implementation, role of activity in curriculum implementation, role of methodology in curriculum implementation, concept of language communication skills, displaying effective listening skills and the 7C’s of effective communication. Finally, conclusion was drawn and recommendations were provided.

**Key words:** Language Communication Skill, Curriculum Management, Implementation

### Introduction

It is a universal consensus in the academic cycle that teachers and students are attached to one another and communicate with each other through language in a variety of ways and capacities. The effective language communication between teachers and students in the instructional process help to translate the curriculum in to action. An effective language communication skill is therefore an essential component in curriculum management and its implementation in the teaching and learning process (Kabir, 2024). Language communication skill, curriculum management and implementation are complementary disciplines and strong elements for successful interactions in classroom situations. There are several roles that individual teacher plays in effective language communication that has direct bearing with curriculum management and implementation in and outside the classroom and on daily basis, depending on the context of an interaction. However, what every interaction in the teaching and learning process has in common is the need for clear and effective language communication skill which serve as the fulcrum upon which all the other components of curriculum, its management and implementation revolves around.

### Concept of Curriculum

The relevance of curriculum in the teaching and learning process can never be overstated. Curriculum is known as an authentic document of plan of action which contains and enshrined all that education entails in the teaching-learning process. Curriculum plans, designs, organizes, develops, promotes and evaluates issues that have direct bearing to education. It contains the objectives, contents, methods and evaluation procedures. Curriculum and education are therefore intertwined, integrated and inseparable with the former complementing the latter (Kabir, Salihu & Alhassan, 2025).

In education, it is the curriculum that determines what happens, how it happens, with what it happens and how to be sure that it has happened. To this end, developing and sustaining any

idea means to look extensively on it thereby bringing out all issues at stake which can be: relevant, effective, challenge free, problem solving and provides the way forward as solutions. Wiles (2020) posited that curriculum in education provides a framework that helps prepare academics and teachers. It helps them to develop and support the focus for understanding the learners and the society. Curriculum establishes practical experiences that are consistent and thoughtful. This explains why no meaningful progress can be made in education if issues and activities are not adequately and appropriately planned, designed, organized and developed in the curriculum. Curriculum includes all subjects and activities which the school has control or for which it has responsibility. Hence, for the curriculum to achieve the set objectives, it needs to be implemented adequately; and for the implementation to be successful, it requires effective language and communication skills on the part of the teacher who is considered as the most important figure in the curriculum implementation process (Aliyu, 2020 & Okam, 2023).

### **Concept of Curriculum Management**

Curriculum management is concerned with effective teaching and learning. The process consist of managing what students are expected to learn, assessing whether or not it was learnt and seeking ways to improve students learning (Richard, 2022). An effective curriculum management process includes continuous improvement through revision and redesign of existing content, pedagogy, tools and approaches. Through effective curriculum management, teachers and schools authorities use assurance mechanisms to demonstrate accountability to constituents such as students, parents, trustees, public officials and accrediting bodies that the school meets its learning goals for its students (Flinders, 2023).

Moreover, curriculum management evaluates whether students are learning the content and achieving the goals that have been set. This involves instantiating the goals through learning objectives, assessing each learning objective and comparing the results to agreed-upon benchmarks. In addition, as an important component, curriculum management provides a mechanism for making improvements to students learning by examining areas of strengths and weakness. To put the peg in the hall, curriculum management calls for effective monitoring and evaluation of the entire teaching and learning process in school (Canter, 2023). In view of this development, effective language communication skills play a pivotal role in an effort to realize the potentials of curriculum monitoring and evaluation.

### **Concept of Curriculum Implementation**

Curriculum implementation is the actual engagement of students with planned learning opportunities. It is a crucial stage when in the midst of learning activities, the teacher and students are involved in discussions aimed at promoting learning. The teacher in view of this adopts an appropriate method and resources to guide his or her learners. The students on their part are actively involved in the process of interaction with learning activities and experiences (Akuma, 2017 & Lorenz, 2023).

Furthermore, Bediako (2019) maintained that curriculum implementation is the arrangement of the pre-planned curriculum through assessment of the facilities, resources and environment to ensure that the planned curriculum is instructionally translated without hitches. Hence, the classroom is the teacher's clinic where curriculum implementation finally takes place in the form of lesson delivery on daily basis. Curriculum implementation is therefore a process through which all the relevant curriculum plans and inputs are brought into direct contact with

learners through a wide variety of language communication skills and activities so that learning experiences and mastery can be maximized and sustained in the teaching-learning process.

### **Role of Activity in Curriculum Implementation**

The relevance of meaningful activities in the teaching and learning process can never be overemphasized. Abebisu (2021) stated that one of the developments associated with the Nigeria's curriculum is the place it has accorded activities in the implementation process. Indeed, the Nigeria's education curriculum has advocated for activities in lesson delivery through varieties of teaching approaches. It also recognizes the potentialities for translating the right type of skills and virtues through a unified view of knowledge that requires activities to support learning and nation building.

Despite this provision in the curriculum, especially at this age of knowledge construction, it is an alarming fact that, in our schools and institutions of learning, knowledge is more received than constructed (Abebisu, 2021). In other words, other domains that enable learners to use language and communication skills that stimulate practical skills are almost relegated to the background. This is because, at the implementation level, teachers stick to conventional approaches that attached more importance to receiving and rote learning at the expense of engaging learners in to activities as enshrined in the curriculum. Going by this, no meaningful achievement can be made in addressing the emerging developmental challenges in the Nigeria's education sector, if concepts planned in the curriculum are not implemented effectively.

### **Role of Methodology in Curriculum Implementation**

The term "method" means the ways, approaches, procedures, and kinds of activities that teachers and students engage in the interactive process with a view to inducing, inspiring, and facilitating learning for accomplishing a set of instructional objectives. Method include utilization of appropriately selected curriculum materials, content and learning experiences, motivational strategies, an application of learning theories and a demonstration of a knowledge of developmental psychology or other aspects of educational psychology in the teaching and learning process (Alan, 2023).

One needs not to stress much on the relevance of modern teaching methods in all the institutions of learning. It is an open secret that methods of teaching have its roots in anything educational, irrespective of the level and stage in schools. However, with the ever changing dynamics and the advancement of information and technology, the need to employ various appropriate and more effective methods of teaching has never been higher.

There have been a number of methods and techniques devised from time to time to make the teaching and learning process real and effective. A careful study of each of these methods reveals that each has its merits and demerits. It constitutes an error to suggest however that, all these methods can be applicable in teaching one or all concepts at all the time. We may achieve much success in the teaching process if we could identify a suitable and effective method to employ in teaching certain concepts and contents. To this end, we can say, all methods are applicable, but some methods are more applicable in teaching certain concepts than others (Hall, 2020).

Moreover, Ben-Yunusa (2008) asserted that, the choice of any method largely depends on the teacher, the students, the content and the teaching-learning situations. It should be noted that a teacher could register a good degree of success in teaching through the employment of one method in certain context, while the use of this method could be quite unsuitable for another context. At the same time, a method employed successfully in teaching certain concepts in a given class, under

certain conditions, might not be appropriate for teaching another concept under the same conditions. Hence, an employment of the same method of teaching might be found quite unsuitable for teaching the same class under different conditions. To this end, utilizing effective language and communication skills suitable for a particular method to a particular level of learners is essential.

### **Concept of Language Communication Skills**

Effective language communication is the process of exchanging ideas, thoughts, opinions, knowledge and data so that the message is received and understood with clarity and purpose (Lawal, 2024). In the classroom situation, language communication is the act of transferring information from one person 'a teacher' to another 'student'. Abdullahi (2023) considers effective language communication as the transmission or exchange of information, knowledge or ideas by the teacher through speech, writing or electronic media to the students.

There are several elements that are involved in creating and maintaining genuine and lasting communication in curriculum management and implementation process. These elements include among others, utilization and recognition of body language clues and using effective listening skills. Hence, communication encompasses both verbal and non-verbal elements. Through these elements, teachers can record an improvement in the quality of classroom interaction, as well as increased confidence in engaging with students in a social and leadership capacities.

As a teacher in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, one of the most important factors in communicating with students is the non-verbal communication. It is obvious a teacher may be aware and in control of his or her utterances, but often, the non-verbal clues he or she send may be revealed to students unnoticed. Garba (2021) posited that teachers can reinforce, contradict, substitute, complement or emphasize their verbal communication with the non-verbal communication such as gestures in the curriculum implementation process. As a teacher who is dealing with individual students on daily basis, it is essential to comprehend these non-verbal features of communication for effective and smooth lesson delivery.

Furthermore, non-verbal clues are so strong because they communicate in both ways (teacher-to-students and vice versa) in a subconscious level, causing individuals to regard the non-verbal communication as "true" communication because it provides real clues and emotions. When a teacher utilizes verbal language and body language as congruent, it works to enhance the overall quality of the lesson delivery and allow it to resonate with the students receiving the instruction. On the opposite end of the spectrum, there can also be a sense of mistrust developed when teacher's body language does not match up to what is being verbalized (Peters, 2024). Body language also works to display teacher's confidence and other desirable traits. As a 21<sup>st</sup> century teacher, it is important to let the students under your care know that, you are confident in the work you do.

### **Displaying Effective Listening Skills**

Effective language communication goes beyond the knowledge and experiences a teacher sent; it also includes how students receive these knowledge and experiences. If a teacher simply hears what individual student tells him or her, then he or she misses out on a vast array of information directed at him or her. Listening is an active process that involves processing and analysis (Dianne, 2022). There are key verbal indicators that can alert a teacher to an individual student's feelings such as cadence of their voice and the specific words uttered. In addition to these verbal indicators, there are also a number of non-verbal indicators such as the body language previously discussed. While listening in the implementation process, it is important for a teacher

to consider both verbal and non-verbal clues as they lead to active understanding of the lesson that is being delivered.

As a teacher involved in the curriculum management and implementation process, the following tips as stated by Olaofe (2010) should help you develop effective listening skills:

1. Face the students and maintain eye contact
2. Be attentive, but relaxed
3. Keep an open mind
4. Listen to the words and try to capture the picture of the student's body language
5. Don't interrupt and don't impose solutions on your students
6. Wait for the student to finish his or her question before you clarify or answer
7. Allow students to ask questions to solidify understanding
8. Try to feel where necessary, what the student is feeling
9. Give the students regular feedback where necessary
10. Pay attention to what the student did not say possibly through non-verbal clues, among others.

### **The 7 C's of Effective Communication**

As the term implies, effective communication should reflect the following as stated by Dianne (2022):

- i. **Completeness** – To communicate effectively, it is paramount for the teacher to disseminate the knowledge and experiences in its totality. The students should get all the necessary information they require in order to comprehend the lesson. There should be no hidden information or explanation what so ever.
- ii. **Conciseness** – This implies wordiness that is, teacher's ability to communicate the lesson and information with the economy of words. In other words, a teacher should use as few words as possible to deliver the lesson and or information.
- iii. **Considerate** – This entails a teacher putting him or herself in the shoe of students. This also includes students' opinions, background, mindset, educational level and so on.
- iv. **Clarity** – Effective communication in the teaching and learning process should be simple and clear of ambiguity. The language should reflect students' cognitive development.
- v. **Concreteness** – This entails a teacher to be specific and explicit with facts, figures and statistics in the curriculum implementation process. Knowledge is holistic and as such, there should be no contradictions.
- vi. **Courtesy** – This suggest that a teacher should be honest, polite and enthusiastic in the lesson delivery. This aspect of communication should be reflected by teachers in and outside classroom.
- vii. **Correctness** – This means that, there should be no grammatical errors in communication. A teacher is expected to choose appropriate words for the target students.

Furthermore, the effectiveness of language communication in any school setting determines to some degree the success of the institution. Communication in this context can be:

- a. **Top-to-bottom** - In this situation, information flows from the management to teaching staff affected down to the students. This is critical especially as major decisions of forming the

syllabus and scheme of work are taken at highest levels. Therefore, schools need to have efficient channel of communicating the decision throughout.

- b. Peer-to-peer – A lot of a teacher’s daily work depends on having a good connection with co-teachers and students. Indeed, having a good communication with the school management, co-teachers and students is crucial in getting duties done.
- c. Bottom-to-top – In this communication, information is disseminated from students, to teaching staff and to school administrators. This will enable students to contribute to decision making on their own learning process. This will also serve as a kind of feedback to the teacher and or the school management.

### **Conclusion**

With the massive demand for education among the teeming populace and the decay of educational infrastructure, coupled with the disturbing reality of the dwindling standard and quality of education in Nigeria, the relevance of effective language communication skills on curriculum, its management and implementation cannot be dispensed with. This is because; effective language communication skills are paramount to a successful curriculum management and implementation. It is worthy to acknowledge that; curriculum is the fulcrum on which everything in the education process revolves around. It is the curriculum that put in place all that is required in terms of policies, concepts and theories of education as a plan of action which when successfully followed, adhered to and implemented will lead to prosperity and academic excellence. Hence, if teachers are keen to addressing the challenges facing classroom interactions, they need to acquaint themselves with effective language communication skills as the basic rudiments of translating curriculum management and its successful implementation in to reality.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the discussions of the concepts, this paper recommended the following:

1. Teachers should as a matter of urgency work towards effective utilization of language communication skills that will enable them implement the content provisions enshrined in the curriculum.
2. Government and school authorities should ensure that teachers are well in tune with the adequate language communication skills to stimulate management and implementation of concept of curriculum through regular organization of educational workshops, conferences as well as in-house capacity building initiatives.

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