

IMPROVING THE SYNERGY BETWEEN INFORMAL AND FORMAL EDUCATION IN CURRICULUM / INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN: THE BROAD- BASED APPROACH FOR LIFE- LONG LEARNING

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Abstract

Education devoid of life-long learning and development is tantamount to half - baked utilization of human resources. To this extent the paper, Improving the synergy between informal and formal education in curriculum/ instructional design: The Broad-Based approach for life-long learning, delves into integrating wide range extensive and comprehensive curriculum of formal and informal environment with the intent of producing enabled learners of critical thinking with suitable features for social, economic, political, environmental and moral life. By Broad-Based Education contents of formal and informal education are integrated to endear a balanced curriculum for a whole learning experience, skill building and relevant knowledge for the 21st century. Broad-based Education enables learning with emphasis, experimentation and experience wherein students are able to critically engage in projects to prove themselves. The paper enumerates benefits of Broad-Based Education to include, providing relationship between subjects by integrating several subjects to a single course, prepares learners' for the outside world, enable learners' critical thinking and skill building, offers greater opportunity for learners' believing in themselves, provides flexibility and accommodates all kinds of learners', thereby giving room for inclusiveness. The paper concludes that learners' need a wide range of knowledge to successfully adapt to the changing world, applying innovation in sustainable development. There is need for paradigm shift in pedagogy. From teacher centered to learner centered, rote learning to critical thinking, passive teaching to holistic, and active informal teaching which builds up ones daily life, for active life-long activities in social, economic, political, and moral life.

Key words: Broad - based approach, Curriculum and instructional design, Formal education, Informal education, Life-long learning.

Introduction

Education is the process of acquiring knowledge and skills through getting instructions and practices that bring about a change in an individual, that is the learner. Through education a learner is imbued with ability to express what is learnt, builds up individual reasoning, differentiate between right and wrong, gains information, acquires broader mind set and abilities. Education is also a pedagogical process where the educated are instructed by the educators for a change in behaviour. Education cut across age boundary to include the young and the old. It is an everyday experience, as both informal, non-formal and formal activities earns learners educational credibilities.

According to Agina-Obu (2018), Education is a process of involving instruction and training by which people learn to develop and use their mental, moral and physical developments to become useful to themselves and society. Imperatively, education involves the gaining of knowledge and skills in the form of literacy and numeracy which endears in individuals to become meaningful members of the society for development, meaning that such individual values what promote norms, morals, belief systems, peaceful co-existence and progress in the society. Buttressing Chazan (2022) opined that education refers to practical activity that has been part of the human experience through out the ages, with attending implications reflected on daily life. Practicality Education also refer to an activity filled system, for comprehensive learning. This is the reason for educational systems in every society to promote such activities that benefit learners and their society, thereby making learning a life-long affair, cutting across different facets of endeavours. By different endeavours and wide range of activities education becomes Broad - based implying the application of a process curriculum, person-centred learning and inclusive education.

Broad-based learning is an inclusion of experience and experimentation, blending curriculum into holistic learning where learning is team based, with learners finding solutions to social problems that will make them develop knowledge skills to adapt to future economy. Learning becomes multi-faceted, and that inculcate in learners abilities that can be applied in work place, critical thinking and basic judgement for social and moral life. Learners provide for themselves solutions to problems, engage in life long learning, search out what works rather than been told by teachers, and by so doing, build up team spirit, communication and problem solving skills in real world environment, through informal and formal learning. Anchoring on this, the paper outlined the benefits of broad-based learning as a curriculum/instructional design for life-long learning

in the 21st century Nigeria, where learners must come to terms with the dear needs to find solutions to problems militating against national development.

Concept of Informal Education

Fafuwa in Agina- Obu (2016) defines education as that which generation gives it's young ones, which makes them develop attitudes, abilities, skills and other behaviour which are of positive value in the society which they find themselves. Imperatively education is that which prepares the young ones for the society and this preparation take place in informal and formal setting. Informal education as earliest form of learning served as foundation for training a child. According to Lawal (2023) informal education is a learning process involving the traditional methods of passing knowledge and skills without an integrated syllabus. It is also a natural and life-long learning which takes place as occasion deems fit, provides easy learning, is learner-centred, occur from learners everyday experience, is not occasioned by syllabus and school institutions, not limited to space and is accessible especially with the internet and media. Most skills for survival are learnt in informal ways, they include; installation, confectionery, phone maintenance and repair, tailoring, generator maintenance, internet usage, and farming etc.

Characteristics of Informal Education

The Characteristics of informal education includes:

1. Informal Education evokes natural and life-long learning. Learners are spurred up by their experiences and expectations which motivates their learning tendencies.
2. It is learner-centred, that is to say that learners are opportune to choose what they want to learn, following their inspiration and aspirations.
3. Informal learning occurs at learners comfort, thereby making it fun to learn.
4. Is flexible and employs real life experiences and ideas.
5. Is broad-based exposing learners to vast activities.

Advantages of Informal Education.

Some advantages of informal education include:

1. Informal education is fundamental and indigenous which is in inconsonance with Okey-Kal (2023) who opined that it is the form of education that existed in Nigeria before the coming of the colonialist as it focuses on learners interest and nurtures them to bring out the best in them.

2. Informal education is broad-based, exposes learners to vast activities anywhere, any time.
3. It Provides for competitiveness especially among private establishments.
4. Is less expensive and time management effective.
5. It arouses self-motivation and improvement, which according to the European education directory (2022), it is like natural education which makes you feel like finding answer to questions and getting results.

Formal Education

Formal education is a well structured, systematic and institutionalised education for learners who are taught through syllables of planned curriculum. Formal education is organised in schools for the purpose of andragogy. Formal education is school-based classroom institution, organised for learners to acquire knowledge passed across by the teacher, who decides on the content and materials for learning. While teachers take the lead, students are to participate. Teachers adhere to instructional objectives and goals as outlined by Educational bodies like the Ministry of Education for its instructional process, to inculcate knowledge and skills in learners. An example of Formal Education is the 6-3-3-4 system representing six years of Primary, three years of Junior secondary (Basic education), three years of Senior secondary and four years of Tertiary education.

Characteristics of Formal Education

The characteristics of formal education include:

1. Systematically planned and organised institution which takes place in definite environment known as the school.
2. Formal education provide strict discipline in learners. Both the teachers and learners realize that they are engaged in the education process, and both know their duties. (Sinwa. 2017)
3. Formal Education is characterized with structured curriculum planned in a straight forward manner used for the purpose of instruction by the teacher.
4. It has uniform program operated for same category of learners within a particular period of time. For instance schools all over Nigeria are subject to same syllables, same subjects, same content and same period for delivery and completion of syllables.
5. Regular payment of stipulated fees by parents and care givers of learners in form of school fees, exam fees, uniform fees etc.

Advantages of Formal Education.

Listed below are some advantages of formal education:

1. Learners are taught by teachers, who also perform the role of counsellor, mentor, and role model to them.
2. It is the most basic knowledge that is to be acquired by every individual to learn various other things.
3. Formal education according to Ito (2017) focus on breaking knowledge and skills up into distinct disciplines, teaching in age segregated classes, teaching by lecturing and using textbooks, and measuring your success through tests.
4. Formal Education provides one with a certificate that is officially recognised and accepted all over the world. Agreeably Plato (2022) maintains that formal education ends one with certificate.
5. Professionals and experienced teachers are hired to teach the pupils through harmonised employment schemes by the Government.

Curriculum and Instructional Design

The word ‘curriculum’ is derived from a Latin word ‘Curere’ which means a race course. It could be running on a wegger, a race ground or a career. It means a race course which one runs to reach a goal. It could be running to win a medal or certificate like students whose course is to complete and win high grades, academic award and certificates. Curriculum therefore implies the activities that occur in the school which enable students to run competitively to become worthy in character and learning. Curriculum has been viewed as school syllabus, as list of subjects, as teaching scheme and as broad-based experiences which Othniel in Agina-Obu (2016) opines, is a sequence of potential experiences set up in the school for the purpose of disciplining children and youth in group ways of thinking and acting. While curriculum is the guideline which constitutes different content for instruction. Instructional Design is the process of achieving or delivering the content to achieve learning experience and material, taking into account learning objectives, learning activities and assessments.

Learning Objectives

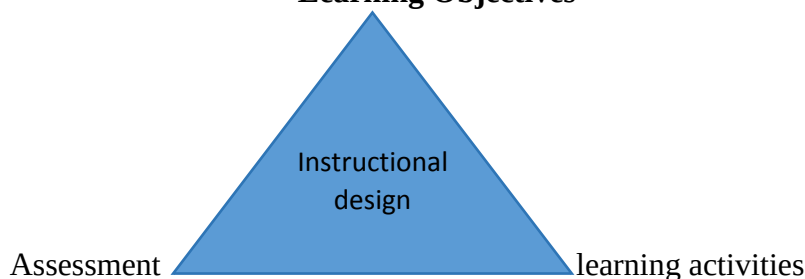


Fig1: Authors' diagrammatic representation of instructional design (2023).?

To achieve the desired learning outcome is to set the objective which becomes a driving force to measure what and how successful was the learning process. Learning activities are deployed to form learning experiences, they are planned actions for driving through lessons, which make imprints on learners and gain them experiences in the course of learning. Examples are reading, writing, quizzes, games etc. Learning are achieved through test, exam, project, research etc.

Broad -Based Learning for Life -Long Education

Broad based education refers to that which provides a critical habit of mind, in particular, learning how to think critically about the various features of our social life, to make sound judgements based on factual evidence, as well as social and moral principles .(University of Montana 2022). England Education Act in Ogier (2022) stipulate that a maintained school satisfies the requirement of the section, if it is a balanced and broadly based curriculum which:

- (a) Promotes the spirit,cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society and
- (b) Prepares the school for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life.

Broad-based education in preparing learners for life ensures that they do not loose their area of specialisation, but become versatile having gained knowledge on different areas and are able to solve problems arising from different fields.

To meet the challenges posed by the present economic and social conditions of Nigeria, learners of Broad-based education are able to transfer learned skills such as problem solving, communication and critical thinking to work place, developing themselves and contributing meaningfully to National Development. Broad-based learning also endears life-long education, which is refereed to as learning in different environment and conditions, integrating traditional and modern learning opportunities for personal and societal growth. Life-long education concerns itself with discovering ones potential and the development of such potential. Life-long learning is therefore holistic, providing broad and life-long learning for sustaining human development. For United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Development (UNESCO) formal education tends to emphasize the acquisition of knowledge to the detriment of other types of learning essential to sustaining human development. To that effect, there is the need to think of learning as a life course for knowledge, attitudes for work, citizenship and personal fulfilment. Buttressing Kapur (2018) opined that life-long education is about acquiring different types of abilities, knowledge, interests and qualifications to get adapted to the knowledge-based society and values of

different forms of learning. By integrating Broad-based learning into life-long education, learners develop values and competencies that are able to turn them to professionals who are well filled into the society.

Benefitsof Broad-Based Learning

Benefits of Broad-based learning include the following:

1. It integrates several subjects into a whole, making it possible for learners to access them as well as see the relationship among them.
2. Allows learners speciality, with additional knowledge on other fields, courses or subjects.
3. Develop in learners critical thinking skills, connectivity and creativity towards personal and societal problems.
4. Encourage team work, tolerance and team spirit in learners through broad connections.
5. Create employment opportunities having exposed learners to different fields of study.

Improving synergy between Informal and Formal Education.

Focusing on improving the synergy between informal and formal education is paramount to mitigate gaps resultant from the challenges of the 21st century Nigeria in the political, educational, social, environmental and economical frontiers. X-raying concept of informal and formal education with attending benefits suggests a synergy for educational development pari -pasu National Development in the following ways:

1. **Problem solving skills and common sense:** A blend of organised set of planned instruction of in formal education and daily life experiences embedded in informal education will make learners develop understanding on solving problems in a step by step form. This improves common sense and builds problem solving skills.
2. **Learning for new skills:** Both informal and formal education involve learning, which can be acquiring new skill or obtaining knowledge from books and other matters, and both can involve teachers and learners (study.com 2023).
3. **Garners theory and practice:** Knowledge and practice can be built by a synergy between informal and formal education as concepts and contents of lesson are made tangible through practices, building learners experience.
4. **Life-long learning:** Since informal education encourages learners to quest for more knowledge, it can be a tool for formally inculcating new

ideas to learners, build up zeal and zest for change and adaptation to 21st century development.

5. **Thinking outside the box:** Muashi (2023) advocates that since informal education encourages learners to think outside the box, fostering creativity and innovation, it offers the opportunity for learners to explore diverse areas, discipline, themes and topic that can enhance formal education.
6. **Enhancement of soft skills:** With informal education soft skills such as communication, empathy, emotional competence, compatibility, team work spirit, competitiveness doggedness built from formal education compliment hard skills of formal education, and this keeps learners going and on their toes.
7. **Encourage Broad-based learning:** Synergy of informal and formal education encourage broad-activities expelling the dichotomy between these types of education and brings to bare vast knowledge and experiences beyond walls of confinement, for transformation of lives and sustained development.

Conclusion

Education can be better off in Nigeria with synergy between formal and informal type of education, a faster dynamics of solving challenges embedded in the 21st century whether in education, politics, technology, environmental, economical and social spectrum. With the adoption of experience and planned knowledge which informal and formal education provides, and learners, exposed to broad-based and life long learning, creativity, critical thinking, discipline and professional skills, personal development are garnered by learners which makes them positively impact their societies

Suggestions.

The paper outlines the following suggestions:

1. That teacher be trained on combination of informal and formal pedagogies in classroom for better literacy and skills performance.
2. Learning activities be conducted outside classrooms to make experience and development of skills.
3. That similar concepts in different subjects be taught together to enable learners appreciate synergy in real world. That is learning should be broad-based.

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4. That education be instructed for acquisition of knowledge and building of skills to solve challenges of the real world in technology, agriculture, environmental, political terrain etc.
5. That learners adopt life-long learning for new skills and competences for developing one's mindset, gain deeper knowledge, develop professional skills which impact on organisations and institutions.

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