

Journal of Assertiveness

Volume 12 No. 1, November, 2017

ISSN 2276 – 9684

CURRICULUM STRATEGIES FOR UNIVERSITY LIFELONG EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Lifelong education has to do with learning that spans throughout lifetime. It aims at individual's personal or professional development as well as employability. For these aims to be fully realized, certain curriculum implementation strategies must be followed. Lifelong education although can take place at any stage in life, it is mainly offered at the University level of education for adult such that its concept are closely related to that of adult education. This paper proposes curriculum implementation strategies for University lifelong education. It also submits that the most effective way to eradicate unemployment among Nigerian youths and adults is to offer lifelong education to enhance their chances of self-employment, sustainability and effective citizenship.

Keywords: Curriculum, lifelong education and implementation strategies.

Education is a lifelong process not just a preparation for an unknown kind of future living. The whole life is learning which itself starts from birth and spans through life time, therefore education can have no endings as it runs through ones' entire life. Education is seen in general terms as a lifelong process which leads to the development of individuals and eventually the society. This can take place throughout a lifetime or through out a whole generation. Learning has always been recognized as a means to improve personal quality of life.

Lifelong education is the "on going" voluntary and self-motivated pursuit of knowledge for either personal or professional reasons (Skolverket, 2000). It not only enhances social inclusion, active citizenship, and personal or professional development, but also self sustainability as well as competitiveness and employability. Thus, from the development of a self-consciously adult education came the view that education should be lifelong. To an extent lifelong education could be regarded as an aspect of adult

education, not because it is confined to adults but because adulthood, maturity defines its limits.

Many adults are involved in lifelong education because of some transition in their lives which may include marriage, job changes, the birth of children, retirement etc (Smith, 2001). For a variety of reasons, new patterns of career and working life have emerged for both men and women whereby the traditional sequence of education – work- retirement has been replaced by several entries to and exists from the labour market. This presents the need and an opportunity for universities to create new forms of programme to support learners involved in such transitions over the long term and to offer flexible responses to the challenges they face; hence the need for lifelong education which offers acquisition of knowledge not only within the walls and boundaries of institutions. The key questions in lifelong education is “where to learn”, “when to learn”, “what to learn’ and ‘how to learn’ throughout life in order to meet the demands of the transitional life style.

This paper therefore looked at the curriculum strategies which could be effective for providing lifelong education at University level in Nigeria to improve on individuals personal development, employability and citizenship.

Concepts of Lifelong Education

Most people associate learning with formal education at school, college or university etc. However, ‘schooling’ is only one type of learning. There are many other opportunities for an individual to further increase his/her knowledge and develop the skills needed throughout life. This is provided through lifelong education. Lifelong education helps learners to create and maintain positive attitudes to learning both for personal and professional development at any point in life.

Lifelong education may be broadly defined as education that is pursued throughout life: education that offers learning that is flexible, diverse and available at different times and in different places. Lifelong learning crosses sectors, promoting learning beyond traditional schooling and throughout adult life. Life, long education has to do with;

- Learning to know: mastering learning tools rather than acquisition of structured knowledge.
- Learning to do: equipping people for the types of work needed now and in the future including innovation and adaptation of learning to future work environments.
- Learning to be: education contributing to person’s complete development mind and body intelligence sensitivity, aesthetic appreciation and spirituality.

Gultekin and Erdogan (2016) explained that lifelong education can instill creativity, initiative and responsiveness in people thereby enabling them to show adaptability in post-industrial society through enhancing skills to manage uncertainty, communicate across and within cultures, sub-cultures, families and communities. Lifelong education

offers learning that has life wide dimensions that transcend narrow economic and vocational aspects. It is seen as a holistic view of education and recognizes learning from different environments. Lifelong learning can enhance our understanding of the world around us, provide us with more and better opportunities and improve our quality of life. Lifelong learners are motivated to learn and develop because they want to; it is a deliberate and voluntary act.

There are two main reasons for learning throughout life: for personal development and for professional development. These reasons may not necessarily be distinct as development and can improve ones employment opportunities and professional development as well as enable personal growth.

Curriculum Strategies for University Lifelong Education

Lifelong education manifests itself in many ways. There is no single model or strategy that describes its delivery across higher education providers. Learning opportunities for giving experience can be created either within the curriculum or through optional extra-curricular activities.

- **Curriculum differentiation:** Curriculum differentiation for all students as ensuring that what a student learns, how he/she learns, and how the student demonstrates what has been learnt is a match for that students readiness level, interests, and preferred mode of learning (Mohammadu, Maleki and Abbds, 2011). Lifelong education provided by Nigerian universities should offer flexibilities to account for students differences. Differentiation should be a constant best practice in lifelong education, not an occasional event. It should also be systematic. The system that guides it should offer a rationale and research base for its recommendations.
- **Development of courses:** New courses should be developed while old courses are converted into formats that promote flexible access to learning in order to increase participation and reduce costs. Waltson (2003) opined that should ensure that universities there are entry level courses in each area of provision wherever possible, and a clear and coherent progression pathway into more advanced programmes and articulation into more advanced programmes and articulation into relevant higher education provision wherever possible.
- **Curriculum integration:** Curriculum integration involves the combination of two or more related subjects into a single broad field of study. In order to overcome fragmentation and compartmentalization of the subject curriculum. It allows learning and teaching to be presented holistically (Umoh, 2016). In curriculum integration, curricula contents and teaching methods are considered UNESCO institute for education (2001) stated that new technology, and teaching approaches include those based on new

technology, these should be integrated into lifelong educational programmes where possible to increase access and fully engage learners in their learning.

- **Selection method:** Lifelong education rests on the belief that individuals are, or can become self-directing. Independent learning strategy still focusing on self-directed learning such as dissertation with external influence will go a long way in offering experiential and contextualized learning experiences (Aberdeen College, 2012). Curricular activities can become more focused aiming at developing a knowledge and skills base that relate to specific areas and subject contents through individual and group project.

- **Extra curricula activities:** Providing lifelong skills through effective awareness –raising of extra-curricular opportunities like marketing, students can be engaged widely in a variety of ways like the use of software to track those who engage in one activity and then make them aware of other opportunities that may be of interest. Also, practical opportunities like internship for gaining experience can be created through optional extra-curricular activity that complements learning in the curriculum. Such activities are normally not formally assessed. This guidance primarily addresses curricular learning, but it recognizes the value of extra-curricular activities as providing important opportunities for access, networking, practical experience and support for the students. Extra-curricular learning in isolation, however, may not provide a student with sufficient knowledge and skills to create and sustain their own learning experiences; these should be offered alongside above mentioned curricula activities.

Expected Outcomes from Implementing the Strategies

Lifelong education can instill creativity, initiative and responsiveness in people thereby enabling them to show adaptability in post-industrial society through enhancing skills to

- i. Participate fully in learning
- ii. Manage uncertainty
- iii. Research and collect evidence
- iv. Negotiate conflicts
- v. Communicate across and within cultures, sub-cultures, families and communities

Conclusion

Lifelong education is process where knowledge is continuously shaped and revised to give birth to new experience. Lifelong education is usually undertaken by adult. Selecting strategies for implementing University lifelong education in Nigeria, university lecturers should ensure the use of strategies that allow the individuals to scope with the challenges of their traditional lifestyles.

Recommendations

Recommendations for selecting strategies curriculum which could be effective in offering lifelong educational experiences while implementing university lifelong curriculum include:

1. The use of curriculum differentiation which caters for individual differences among learners.
2. Integration of activities in and out of classroom into a comprehensive learning experience.
3. The use of community-based research and other extra curricular activities to provide students with exposure to the world beyond campus.
4. A problem-based approach to curriculum design can be used to encourage students break out of the boundaries created by academic disciplines and pursue the diversity of knowledge the need to address complex societal challenges.
5. The university should expand beyond molding students around a set curriculum to providing a wide selection of on-and-off campus resources that will equip students with lifelong experiences needed for the careers and lives they want.

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